

## NEWS RELEASE

**News Contact:**

Cathy Summa-Wolfe, College of Marin, 415-485-9528, cathy.summawolfe@marin.cc.ca.us

### **COM STUDENTS WILL PARTICIPATE IN 79<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT** *Green Architect Sim Van der Ryn will be Commencement Speaker*

**KENTFIELD, Calif., May 23, 2006**—College of Marin will hold its 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Commencement Ceremony on Friday, May 26, at 7pm at the Kentfield Campus Diamond Physical Education Center. Of the approximately 333 students receiving degrees and certificates this year, about 115 students will participate in the formal ceremony. The youngest graduate is 17 and the oldest is 76

Frances L. White, Ph. D., Superintendent/President will welcome the graduating class. Anita Martinez, ABD. Vice President, Student Learning will introduce the student speaker, Giovanna Mazzei. Greg Brockbank, J.D., President of the Board of Trustees will introduce the Commencement Address Speaker Sim Van der Ryn. Dr. Martinez will present the graduating class. Dr. White and Brockbank will confer the degrees and certificates. David Rollison, M.A., Academic Senate President, will give the closing address.

Commencement student speaker Giovanna Mazzei is a psychology major and outgoing president of the Associated Students at College of Marin (ASCOM). She is passionate about advocating for underrepresented individuals and building community. She has been enrolled at the College of Marin since graduating from Redwood High School in 2002. She is planning to transfer to a four-year university in spring 2007. Three years ago Mazzei and ASCOM partnered with the Marin-based Community Violence Solutions non-profit organization to raise awareness of sexual assaults as part of the National Clothesline Project. Mazzei organized the first annual Clothesline Project at the COM, and under her leadership it has become an annual event helping raise understanding about the occurrence of and prevention of sexual violence in our community. She is a volunteer advocate and crisis counselor for survivors of sexual assault. Her experience at the College of Marin has given her the confidence that she can succeed in achieving her career and academic goals.

“The College of Marin is a great educational environment, and you get more personalized attention from the experienced and knowledgeable faculty and staff than you would at a larger school,” Mazzei said.

Commencement speaker Sim Van der Ryn Center is the Director of COM’s new Center for Regenerative Design. The Center will guide the college towards further integrating environmental sustainability principles into the College's facilities, educational programs, and campus operations. The Center will also serve to strengthen connections between COM and Marin County. **Van der Ryn** is acknowledged as a leader in "sustainable architecture." He is also a researcher and educator. Van der Ryn's driving professional interest has been applying principles of physical and social ecology to architecture and environmental design.

Van der Ryn distinguished himself among those designers and planners who have pioneered sustainable design at the community scale and the building-specific scale. He has designed everything from single-family and multi-family housing, to community facilities, retreat centers and resorts, to learning facilities, as well as office and commercial buildings. Van der Ryn was appointed California State Architect in the administration of Governor Jerry Brown, during which time he developed the United States' first government-initiated energy efficient office building program and led adoption of energy standards and disability access standards for all construction in California. Van der Ryn has been presented with numerous honors and awards, including: the Goff Chair of Innovative Architecture, University of Oklahoma (2001); Fellowship of the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts (1997); Rockefeller Scholar in Residence, Bellagio, Italy (1997); the President's Award for Planning, American Society of Landscape Architects (Colorado Chapter); Arbolera de Vida Master Plan, Albuquerque, New Mexico (1997); the Nathaniel Owings Award, California Council American Institute of Architects (1996); a Commendation for Excellence in Technology, California Council American Institute of Architects (1981); and a Guggenheim Fellowship (1971).

**About College of Marin**

College of Marin has been providing exceptional educational opportunities for students of all ages since 1926. Each semester, nearly 8,000 students are enrolled in over 1,100 credit classes. An additional 6,000 students take advantage of the College's many outstanding community education and community services classes. The College administration is located in Kentfield, CA. The College also operates the Indian Valley campus in Novato, CA. College of Marin is fully accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges