

**OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AWARD 2019  
BENITA OLIVAS – Class of 1970**

Benita Olivas has supported the college dreams of Latinas and other students for nearly thirty years. Benita is a native of Denver, Colorado -- a “displaced Aurarian” who lived in the Auraria neighborhood, before it was uprooted to become the Auraria Campus.

Benita attended Elmwood Elementary, Baker Middle School and graduated from West High School. Her fondest memories of WHS was that she was able to go through elementary all the way to high school with the same group of students. She felt WHS had a great camaraderie among its students. She participated on the Singing Christmas Tree and her favorite subjects were writing, singing and art -- at which Benita clearly excels. As a first-generation student, she attended and earned a postsecondary education from Metro State College and moved on to earn a Graduate Certificate in Academic Advising from Kansas State University.

Benita has been actively involved in the Denver community on a number of fronts serving as a student advocate, mentor and artistic inspiration. Benita has worked in the Colorado Community College System for 29 years at CCD. She loves working with students from diverse backgrounds, helping them find their passion and fulfill their dreams.

Benita’s years and wealth of knowledge have given the college insight to the trends occurring (serving higher numbers of Latino students). Benita offers servant leadership, works feverously to help students be successful. For many years, she has helped create amazing displays for the Haunted Harvest event, which allows for safe Trick or Treating to our community.

Outside of working for CCD, Benita is a fine artist, photographer and painter of murals. She also provides artists workshops for teens, and has worked with students to develop mural art that develops pride in their heritage. Benita has also been a visible inspiration as a local community artist, with her work displayed in several art shows and organizations. Recently, she was commissioned and completed work on three murals at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Eagle & Wildlife Property Repository.





*Artwork at 2014 CCD Haunted Harvest in the theme of "The Book of Life"*



*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Eagle & Wildlife Property Repository*



*Artwork by Benita Olvas*