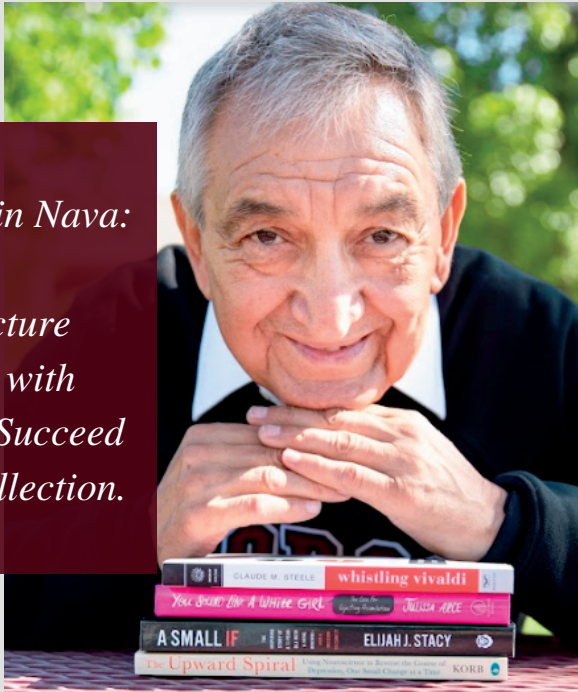


# NORCO COLLEGE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

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NOVEMBER 2023



*Benjamin Nava:  
Age 74,  
Architecture  
student, with  
Read 2 Succeed  
book collection.*

## MR. BENJAMIN NAVA

While it might not seem obvious, life's limitations can inspire us to strive for things we may not have been able to reach otherwise. It pushes us to see beyond the physical and dream of endless possibilities. The story isn't about overcoming adversity but changing how we see adversity. It will lead us from questions like, "why is this happening to me?" to questions like, "What can I learn from this, and how will this help me grow?"

Shaping one's perspective, shapes destiny.

Benjamin Nava is a walking example of endless possibilities. At the age of 74, he returned to college to pursue a degree in architecture—his end goal was to build homes for those less fortunate.

Currently, Benjamin is homeless and living out of his car. Obtaining his degree is not a hobby. For Benjamin, obtaining this degree ensures his livelihood. And while he could be thinking about getting his own home, he is constantly dreaming about the homes he will build for others.

## GROWING UP

Benjamin was born in Chihuahua, Mexico, and grew up among Indigenous Natives. His village was full of good people who also suffered the plight of limited opportunities. They didn't have access to quality healthcare, formal education, or technology. Instead, their neighborhoods were filled with cantinas. Benjamin often saw drunk people sleeping on the sidewalk and knew this lifestyle was not for him.

Benjamin got into the construction field and came to America for work. When he arrived in California, he found an adult education program at a high school in Oceanside that allowed him to study and learn the English language. His love for learning led him to Mira Costa College, where he took several math courses, English, and accounting classes. Benjamin worked for Local 89 in San Diego for over ten years before retiring.



Benjamin eventually made his way to Norco College and knew he needed to finish his education. In his words, “I’m looking for opportunities, and education will open that door for me.” He described Norco college as a “...step to reach what I want. Norco College is helping me discover who I am and what career options are right for me.”

At Norco College, Benjamin is active in student life, including the Men of Color, a student group that builds community through brotherhood. He is loved by many on campus and seen as a motivating factor for other students to reach their goals.

*When Benjamin was asked  
What advice he had for  
adults considering  
returning back to school,  
here is what he had to say:*



“If an immigrant, with little English, can come to America looking for opportunity and take advantage of American Education, so can you.” He further encouraged people not to sit in their homes, thinking about going back to school, but instead to apply, enroll, and come learn. Benjamin continued, “It won't be easy. I sleep on the street in my car. No matter the obstacles, it is possible to reach your dreams if you believe. I don't have the internet. I take showers at the gym with my membership. If you want something, it is possible. The obstacles will make you strong!”

“A few weeks ago, Benjamin had heart surgery, and right when he was able, he came back to school, stating, “Nothing will stop me. I have faith that I will reach what I want.”

Benjamin’s end goal is to have his own business building homes, and he dreams of one day living in a home and visiting other countries. For now, Benjamin is focused on academics. In his final words on college, “Take advantage and be educated. This (Norco College) is a good college. To the young people with family and help...don’t waste your time.”



*"No matter the  
obstacles it is  
possible to  
reach your  
dreams."*

If you are an older adult considering returning to college, give Norco College a try. We have a support team ready and willing to help you enroll in classes and apply for financial aid if needed. 99% of all Norco College students graduate debt free. Now is the time to get the skills you need for the job you want. Visit <https://www.norcocollege.edu/futuremustangs> to learn more.

*Benjamin Nava was also featured on the cover of the latest Norco College mailer. To view the digital version of the mailer, [click here](#).*