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May 13, 2015 11:00 A.M.

Don Muna named GCC Distinguished Alumnus

Internationally acclaimed filmmaker Don Muna has one more accolade to add to his list of accomplishments: the 2015 Guam Community College Distinguished Alumni Award. A panel of GCC staff, administrators, and alumni chose Muna for the honor because of his success after having received his GED® from the College in 1999.

Muna will be honored during the Commencement ceremony, which is scheduled to take place on Friday, May 15, at 6:00 PM at the UOG Calvo Field House.

"I've been recognized for my work here on Guam and around the world, but the honor of being selected to receive GCC's 2015 distinguished Alumni Award is by far the most meaningful to me," Muna said upon learning of the award.

A self-described "different kind of learner," Muna is the son of Juan Atoigue Muna and Guadalupe Pereda San Agustin Muna of Sinajana. He dropped out of George Washington High School in 1993, and earned his GED® at Guam Community College in 1999. He then adopted a "siña hit" (can-do) attitude in order to realize his dream of becoming a professional filmmaker. He moved to the mainland with his brother Kel, and together they established a videography business in San Francisco and Los Angeles, officially forming the Muña Bros.

The Muña Bros. returned to Guam in 2007 and immediately began working on their first feature film, *Shiro's Head*. Don co-wrote, co-produced, co-directed, co-edited, and also played the lead character in the film, which was released in 2008. *Shiro's Head* received international acclaim, winning the Silver Ace Award at the Las Vegas International Film Festival, Best of Festival and Best Feature Film at the Sandhills Film Festival in Fayetteville, North Carolina, as well as being named a Grand Jury Award Finalist at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival. The film won accolades at four other international film festivals, including festivals in France and Japan.

In 2011, the Muña Bros. co-founded the Guam International Film Festival, which provides opportunities for local artists and emerging filmmakers to flourish through filmmaking workshops and exposure to international cinema and film industry-related business.

The Muña Bros. released their second project, the feature-length documentary *Talent Town*, in 2014. The film focused on the intersection of culture and talent on Guam, addressing the challenges that local artists face, including negative stereotypes of the artists themselves. The Muña Bros. toured the film in Hawaii and in several mainland cities. On Guam, Don teamed up with the GCC English Department during spring semester 2015 to show *Talent Town* to GCC students, inspiring them to explore their own talents through writing, filmmaking, performing, and other mediums. Don feels *Talent Town's* overall positive message has been effective for the island's cadre of young talent. "It might take a long time and you'll probably have to work your a-- off, but you really CAN do amazing things right here at home."

Don currently serves as the producer/director and cinematographer for the local company Foresight Films, and presents film study lectures at GCC, the University of Guam, and GDOE schools. He has served as a production coordinator for Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC), and has worked on several international films.

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