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**Marketing and Public Affairs Department**

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Written by: Jose Salazar, Senior Communications Specialist

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**COM Professor Earns Back-to-Back Recognition Among Galveston County’s Top Educators**

**(Texas City, TX)** — College of the Mainland (COM) professor Bernie Smiley has once again been recognized among the area’s top educators, earning second place in The Daily News Readers’ Choice Awards for Best Professor. This marks the second consecutive year Smiley has received recognition in the annual community poll.

In 2024, Smiley was named Best Professor by the Readers’ Choice Awards. This year, his honorable second-place finish underscores his continued impact and recognition from the Galveston County community.

"I'm a lifelong member of Galveston County," said Smiley. "To be recognized here, where I was born and raised, makes it even more meaningful."

Smiley has taught full time at COM since 2003, influencing countless students through both classroom discussions and personal engagement. Known for his “aggressively optimistic” approach, he encourages students to pursue opportunities, meet challenges head-on and embrace new perspectives.

"You might be right, or we might both be right. We just have entirely different perspectives on what's going on here," he said. "So, let's talk about it, and that allows everybody to broaden their mind, which is exactly what college is supposed to be about."

Smiley encourages anyone interested in exploring COM to take the first step. He highlights the college’s affordability, student support services and the benefit of small class sizes that foster one-on-one connections.

"We're here because we believe in education and we believe in the community college system," he said. "I love what I do."

Smiley’s recognition reflects COM’s commitment to student success and the strength of its faculty. COM professors are consistently praised for their ability to connect with students, provide individualized attention and prepare graduates for success in the workforce and beyond.

**Photo:** College of the Mainland Professor Bernie Smiley stands in his office surrounded by shelves filled with personal photos and mementos.

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***College of the Mainland is a learning-centered, comprehensive community college dedicated to student success and the intellectual and economic prosperity of the diverse communities we serve. Taxing districts include the independent school districts of Dickinson, Hitchcock, Santa Fe and Texas City/La Marque. Its service area includes League City, Friendswood, Kemah, Bacliff and San Leon.***