April 11th marked the opening day for prospective 4 year college athlete’s to sign their National Letter of Intent (NLI), a binding agreement between the athlete and the institution where the athlete intends to attend that institution and that institution intends to provide athletic financial aid (athletic scholarships). Ohlone College's 2012 Northern California Player of the Year Chereese Thomas signed her NLI with San Jose State April 11th in Epler Gymnasium. “This is the epitome of what our goal is with our women’s basketball program here. We want our student athlete’s to reach their highest potential level, we want them to achieve their goals and that happened today.” Coach Julia Allender said.

Chereese Thomas graduated from Dublin High School in 2010 where she was a stand out athlete for the girls varsity basketball team for 4 years. She was a NCP Top 40 member in 2010 and an all league selection on more than one occasion. “When we first saw her play we were attracted to her character, her competitiveness and work ethic. We know with those characteristics player’s ceilings are much higher than those without, we know they will develop faster, be able to transfer to high level programs and have much more of an impact on our team’s success. She has demonstrated that those are engrained in her and I couldn’t be happier for her.” Her numerous accolades throughout her 2 years at Ohlone are proof of her driven characteristics as well. As the starting point guard for both years Chereese earned herself 2 tournament MVP’s, 4 all tournament selections, 2 conference MVP’s, 1 All-State selection and the 2012 Northern California Junior College Player of the Year while leading the Renegades to a 23-1 conference record, 2 Conference Championships, 2 20 plus win seasons and into the 3rd round of the playoffs.

“This is a very important moment for me and I would like to thank my parents and grandfather for supporting me through everything. I would really like to thank Julz (Coach Julia Allender) because to tell someone your dreams and aspiration is really a hard thing to do but I was able to do that with her. I worked hard to accomplish this goal of mine and everyday for two years she helped, supported, cheered and worked with me to make this possible. It means a lot to me to get this opportunity. We did this together and playing at Ohlone was the best experience I have had.” Thomas said.

In the past 3 years Ohlone transferred 8 players 4 year schools on basketball scholarships. The University of Idaho, University of Hawaii-Hilo, Academy of Arts, Bluefield State College, Cal State University Monterey Bay, Waldorf and now San Jose State University. “We work hard to move our kids on to the level they want to play at.” Allender said.