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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cal Poly Has 675 New Alumni Thanks to December Graduation Ceremonies

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly has more than 675 new alumni in the wake of its mid-year commencement ceremonies.

Cal Poly hosted three separate indoor commencement ceremonies Saturday, Dec. 8, in the Associated Students' Recreation Center.

To view a photo slideshow from all three ceremonies, click on the image at right.

You will need Macromedia's <u>Flash player</u> to view the slideshow. <u>Click here to</u> download the Flash player, free.

Students from the College of Engineering and Orfalea College of Business were honored at a 9 a.m. ceremony. Students from the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design were honored at the 1 p.m. ceremony. And students from the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental



Sciences, College of Education and College of Science and Mathematics were honored at the 4 p.m. ceremony.

Each of the ceremonies featured a different speaker.

George A. Bekey, Ph.D. – Professor Emeritus of Computer Science, USC, and a Research Scholar in Residence at Cal Poly, spoke at the 9 a.m. ceremony.

Bekey is an emeritus professor of computer science and founder of the Robotics Research Laboratory at the University of Southern California. His research interests include autonomous robotic systems, applications of robots in biology and medicine and human-robot interaction. He received his Ph.D. in engineering from UCLA. During his USC career he was Chairman of the Electrical Engineering Department and later of the Computer Science Department.

From 1997 to 2001 he served as Associate Dean for Research of the School of Engineering. He has published over 240 papers and several books in robotics, biomedical engineering, computer simulation, control systems and human-machine systems. His latest book, entitled Autonomous Robots, was published by MIT Press in 2005. He is the founding editor of the two major international journals in robotics.

He officially retired from USC in 2002, but continues to be active on a part-time basis at the university, as well as in consulting and service on the advisory boards of several high technology companies. Dr. Bekey is also affiliated with Cal Poly, where he is a research scholar in residence and an adjunct professor of biomedical engineering.

The speaker at the 1 p.m. ceremony was alumnus Matt Kwan, Managing Partner for Finance & Operations with Sandbox Studio.

Kwan is the co-owner and co-creator of Sandbox Studio, a photography studio that provides creative, production

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and digital services from its offices in San Francisco and New York. Sandbox does work for clients such as Nordstrom, Tommy Hilfiger, Apple, Hewlett Packard, Target, Pottery Barn, and Nike.

Kwan -- a 1992 Cal Poly Art and Design graduate -- started the firm along with two co-workers 15 years ago. Sandbox is now a multi-million dollar, bi-coastal studio. In 1995, they became one of the first studios in the nation to use digital photography commercially. Kwan lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with his wife of 17 years, Brandy (also a Cal Poly graduate), and their seven children. He enjoys martial arts and holds a black belt in Ju-Jitsu.

The speaker at the 4 p.m. ceremony was Diana Barnhart, the 2006 California State Teacher of the Year and a Cal Poly Honored Alumna. Barnhart graduated from Cal Poly with a B.S. Biological Sciences in 1968 and an M.S. Biological Sciences in 1977.

Barnhart has been with the San Luis Coastal School District for 23 years. For the last 21 years she has taught science at Los Osos Middle School where tarantulas, snakes and eyeball dissections capture the children's attention.

A strong proponent of integrated learning, she works to provide a wide view of the natural world, weaving physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, geology and odd treasures from world travels into every unit of study. She explains that her students don't just study science, they do science.

In 2006 she was named Cal Poly Honored Alumna by the College of Science and Mathematics.

Her husband, John, is also in education and they have raised two sons in San Luis Obispo. Her father and 11 other family members all graduated from Cal Poly.

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