Cal Poly Announces Oreggia Family Foundation Support

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Oreggia Foundation Makes Second Major Donation to Cal Poly College of Agriculture

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- The Oreggia Family Foundation has donated $474,000 to Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, in addition to earlier gifts by Arden Oreggia of $425,000.

"We are looking forward to a continuing partnership. This is not a one-time gift," stressed Oreggia Family Foundation trustees Robert Taylor and Denny Bertelsman, before presenting Cal Poly College of Agriculture Dean David Wehner with a check for $474,000 Jan. 27.

"Partnerships with industry leaders and foundations are crucial to the education of our students, and we're proud the Oreggia Family Foundation has chosen to continue Mr. Oreggia's support for our students and our programs," Wehner said. "The support of the Oreggia Family Foundation will have a significant effect on our college. It will help our students have access to better equipment and enhanced programs."

The Oreggia Family Foundation was created in part by the estate of longtime Salinas Valley dairy rancher and farmer Arden John Oreggia. Oreggia, who passed away in late 2005, grew up on his family's dairy. He spent more than 60 years of his life growing produce on the Oreggia Ranch near Gonzales and was a pioneer in introducing asparagus to the valley. He was a principal grower for Salinas Marketing Co-op and built the family business, John Oreggia & Company and Oreggia Farms. He served in the Army during World War II, but did not have the chance to go to college.

He was preceded in death by his sister, Sabina, who passed away in 2003. Her estate also passed to the Oreggia Family Foundation, including her interest in the Oreggia Ranch.

Before his death, Oreggia became familiar with Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, taking a keen interest in its creamery and dairy operations. He donated $225,000 to the college in 2004, and an additional $200,000 in 2005 to support the hiring of a full-time creamery manager for Cal Poly, and purchase new commercial-grade equipment for its ice cream lab.

Thanks to the latest donation, the college will award $45,000 to the new Wine & Viticulture program in support of enology; $68,000 towards the Cal Poly Creamery, where students make Cal Poly Cheese, as well as milk and ice cream; $24,000 for discretionary projects; and $337,000 to purchase new equipment for a variety of departments in the college.

Taylor and Bertelsman, as trustees of the Oreggia Family Foundation, presented the check to Dean Wehner on January 27, while watching as students completed a test-batch of vanilla Cal Poly Ice Cream on equipment paid for by foundation donations.

"What's going on in that room is exactly what Arden Oreggia wanted to see going on there," said Taylor.

About the Cal Poly College of Agriculture

The College of Agriculture at Cal Poly is the fourth largest undergraduate agriculture program in the nation, with more than 3,500 students. The college awards an average of 650 baccalaureate degrees each year in its 18 majors, nearly half of all baccalaureate agriculture degrees granted in California. The college emphasizes Cal Poly's "learn-by-doing" teaching philosophy, offering small classes and close faculty-student interaction, along with both theoretical and hands-on instruction. Students have numerous opportunities to participate in applied research projects, many of which are sponsored by agricultural industries. For more details, visit http://cagr.calpoly.edu/.

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Editors note: Photos of the Oreggia Trustees and Cal Poly faculty and students at the creamery's ice cream production unit are available; contact Teresa Hendrix at thendrix@calpoly.edu to receive jugs.