Cal Poly PREFACE Reading Program Engages 3,000 Freshmen, 185 Volunteers

SAN LUIS OBISPO – When 3,000 freshmen arrive at Cal Poly next week, they will all have something in common. Whether they plan to major in crop science or construction management, English or engineering, they will all be familiar with Doris Haddock, a.k.a. Granny D, whose book by that title is this year’s PREFACE program selection.

Launched in 2002, PREFACE: The Cal Poly Shared Reading Program, aims to enrich the academic life of the university across all disciplines and provide students with a common intellectual experience.

This year, incoming freshmen and their parents have been asked to participate by reading “Granny D, You’re Never Too Old To Raise A Little Hell.” During Week of Welcome (Sept. 13-17), the students will discuss the book in small groups facilitated by 185 volunteers from across campus and the community. Volunteers include faculty and staff members, student WOW leaders, and almost 50 local alumni and community members.

Author Granny D will visit campus Oct. 15, during Homecoming and Parents’ Weekend, to give a public presentation and answer questions about her remarkable story, said Patricia Ponce, PREFACE coordinator.

“The book describes Haddock’s walk across the United States at the age of 89 to draw attention to campaign finance reform, a trek that lasted 18 months and received national press,” Ponce said. “Her purpose was to encourage individuals to practice democracy by illustrating that a single person can have an effect on the political process. It is a compelling story and example in an election year.”

Media are welcome to cover the book discussion groups. For times and locations, contact Ponce at the above phone number.

About Doris Haddock:
Haddock, a lifelong activist, was born in Laconia, N.H., in 1910. She attended Emerson College in Boston for three years, leaving when she married James Haddock, an Amherst graduate. Married women were not allowed to attend Emerson; however, Emerson awarded her an honorary degree in 2000. She is the mother of
two children, and a great grandmother of 16.

Haddock started her political quest with her husband in 1960, when she helped stop the planned atmospheric testing of hydrogen bombs in Alaska, saving a fishing village at Point Hope.

After the defeat of Senator McCain and Senator Feingold's first attempt to remove unregulated “soft” money from campaigns in 1995, she became interested in campaign reform and led a petition movement. In 1999 at the age of 89, she decided to walk across the United States to demonstrate her concern. Some 3,200 miles later, Haddock finished her walk in Washington, D.C., in February 2000 before 2,200 people representing a wide variety of reform groups -- thereby demonstrating that Americans care about campaign finance reform.

Haddock's political activism did not stop with one walk. During the 2001 McCain-Feingold debate, she walked continuously around the Capitol building for seven days. During the final three days of debate, she walked 24 hours a day, stopping only for catnaps and food. This was done in subfreezing winds and rain. She met with 35 senators during this vigil and conveyed the feelings of people she met along the road.

A life-long activist, she is currently running for a seat in the U.S. Senate from New Hampshire at the age of 94.

For more information on the PREFACE program, call Ponce at 756-1380 or go to www.preface.calpoly.edu.

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