'A man of integrity': Former Poly president Robert Kennedy dies

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Cal Poly President Emeritus Robert E. Kennedy, who presided over the university for more than 12 years and continued his involvement with the university after retirement, died on Dec. 25, 2010. Cal Poly students may confuse Kennedy with the presidential family from Massachusetts or know him for the name plastered across the library front, but he was much more to the university than just a name. Kennedy was the seventh president at Cal Poly; he took the position in 1967.

The leadership Kennedy exuded during his time as president inspired Joe Sabol, an agriculture professor hired in 1972.

"Dr. Kennedy became an inspiration and a friend to me," Sabol said. "Not only was he a great leader, he truly believed in the learn by doing philosophy."

Sabol said Kennedy was a great man, husband, listener and father.

"He wasn't a physically big and tall man like some of the presidents who preceded him, but he was very bright and stood up for what he believed in," Sabol said.

Julian MePhee was one of Cal Poly's presidents prior to Kennedy. Kennedy served as MePhee's assistant before he became president himself. It was during this time that Kennedy learned how to be a leader, Sabol said.

"He was a student of MePhee's," he said. "Although they did not have exactly the same style of leadership, Kennedy learned how to make his own mark."

As stated in a Cal Poly press release, the university was divided into four colleges in 1967: Agriculture, Engineering, Applied Arts and Applied Sciences. By the time Kennedy retired in 1979, the university had not only doubled the number of enrolled students to 16,000, but Cal Poly was divided into seven colleges: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Engineering, Applied Arts and Applied Sciences, Business Administration, Public Administration, Human Services, and Education.

Everything comes up roses for Cal Poly parade float

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The Cal Poly Rose Float won the Viewer's Choice Award as well as the Fantasy Award at the Rose Parade on New Year's Day. Of the 44,730 votes cast, Cal Poly's float received 10,802, earning Cal Poly its third consecutive Viewer's Choice Award.

"It's a three-peat," mechanical engineering junior and Rose Float committee member Laura McDonald said of their success.

Rose Float adviser Josh D'Acquisto said the Viewer's Choice Award has existed for three years and Cal Poly has won all three.

Program leader and mechanical engineering senior Matt Mastro said winning the award was a testament to the support both universities receive from students and alumni.

"Winning is once was great, then twice was amazing, but three times is something really special," he said.

The float was awarded the Fantasy Award for their creativity in displaying fantasy and imagination.

Cheers erupted from Rose Float committee members when McDonald announced in a post-parade meeting that they are the first team to ever win two awards in one parade, and we've done that twice."

D'Acquisto said the Fantasy Award is a special honor because it is the only award in which Cal Poly's entirely student-built float competes with professionally built ones.

"There are people who are in the business of float building," he said. "Their career is building floats specifically for the Tournament of Roses Parade."

Cal Poly's float is one of six 'self-built' floats, and the only student-built float in the parade.

The float featured moving children building a rocket ship, a moving crane and a spinning planet. The ship was said to take the children's imaginations to new heights. The float held more than 12,000 roses, 8,500 mums and 9,500 carnations.
Kennedy
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Architecture and Environmental Design, Business and Social Sciences, Communicative Arts and Humanities, Engineering and Technology, Human Development and Education and Science and Mathematics.

Everson Chandler, who worked in Student Affairs during Kennedy's tenure, said the departments weren't the only things changed during Kennedy's presidency.

"Cal Poly was a brand new innovation when Kennedy arrived," Chandler said. "There were only four permanent buildings and many temporary things. During Bob's time as president, the construction of many more buildings happened."

The campus grew in size to 6,000 acres with the construction of major buildings students still utilize today. Science North, Computer Science, the Julian A. McPhee University Union, Yosemite Hall and the Sierra Madre dorms were among the buildings constructed during Kennedy's presidency, as stated in a Cal Poly press release.

In terms of the job, Kennedy was intense; it meant a lot to him, Chandler said. Even after his retirement, he was still interested in the campus and its development.

Jim Landreth, the vice president of finance during Kennedy's presidency, described him as a man of integrity.

"His vision for Cal Poly was phenomenal," Landreth said. "He kept a positive relationship with the Chancellor's Office which made support for things that the university was considering easier to come by with the trustees."

Kennedy also maintained good standing with his colleagues at the university.

"A feeling of teamwork doesn't always exist in administration, but with Kennedy there was," Chandler said.

Landreth shared stories of Kennedy as a man with a sense of humor, often uniting everyone in the office.

When Kennedy retired from his presidency at Cal Poly, the California State University trustees voted to name the campus' new library building the Robert E. Kennedy Library in honor of his dedication to the university, as stated in a press release.

"His contribution to higher education — and most importantly Cal Poly — was undeniable; that is why his name is on that library," Landreth said. "All of us old timers respected him and we miss him."

A memorial service for Kennedy will be held on Jan. 15 at the San Luis Obispo United Methodist Church at 11 a.m.

Float
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Cal Poly San Luis Obispo collaborates with Cal Poly Pomona and each school creates half of the float. In October, the two parts are united in Pomona and then transported to Pasadena, where they are decorated with the flowers the week prior to the parade.

McDonald said working with Pomona has taught her how to collaborate with people of varying leadership abilities.

"You gain a lot of personal relationships," she said. "You learn a lot about different people and different leadership characteristics."

"It's a team of creative people working toward the same goal," she said. "That's pretty great."

Currently the committee is accepting submissions for the concept contest, which helps them choose the theme. Anyone is able to submit an idea for a float, and the committee votes on all the submissions. The committee then submits its top five theme ideas to the Tournament of Roses board, which will release the theme for 2012's float by the end of February, D'Acquisto said.

Both McDonald and D'Acquisto encouraged any students interested to become involved. But, D'Acquisto said, the Rose Float is a year-round commitment.

It's a team of creative people working toward the same goal.
That's pretty great.

-- Laura McDonald
Mechanical engineering junior

The committee of about 20 people started working on the float in April and spent roughly 1,000 hours on it.

"We definitely had some 20-hour days," McDonald said.

In addition to the committee there are anywhere from 10 to 100 volunteers who assist in the design, decoration and construction of the float.

"During deco week, we get about 100 people out to help us," McDonald said.

McDonald said she felt very proud of the float and her team for the awards they received, and the highlight of working on the float is the relationships she builds with fellow students.

"We're starting right now on the 2012 float," he said. "It truly takes a year to put it all together. There are so many aspects of it, I think that might surprise some students."

The Rose Float is open to any and all students, regardless of major.

"About half of us are engineers," McDonald said. "But there is a pretty good mix. I just want everyone to know that it's not a major-specific thing at all. We want everyone to participate."

Mastro said now is a better time than ever to get involved.

There will be an informational meeting on Jan. 13 at 7 p.m. in the University Union.
"I work of art," said Viola Moten, Parks' former home. Artist Ted Ellis will commemorate 14 at 1026 Rosa Parks Ave., the three hours later, after the man 805 Caricton Washburn School The wife received the disturb— curator of Troy University's Rosa from a wife. Soon, more than 30 worked, officials said Tue.sday. Ellis," which will he on display at lis creates an original painting of Parks Museum. The event coincides with the public is invited to watch as El— Chicago Court Apartments. The wife was found safe at home by police. "This event is open to all and we invite the public to come and observe the artist create a historic opening of Ellis's exhibit, "Our hand's phone Monday evening, a chagrined cell-phone user. This • • •

State
SAN MATEO (MCT) — A simpler and confiter garbage pickup service began Monday for 440,000 residents between Burlingame and East Palo Alto — and after five years of prepara— the first day went off without a hitch. The launch of the Recology of San Mateo County contract means new trucks, bins and bins, different pickup days and times for some, simpler and more fre— recycling and food com— posting. It is being billed as one of the largest solid waste switchers in the nation's history. The company replaces Allied Waste as the solid waste contrac— tor for 12 cities and unincorpo— rated areas in the service region. • • •

DINUBA (MCT) — The city of Dinuba, California, after struggling with layoffs and budget cuts over the past two years, has struck gold. City officials only recently discovered that the state had shortchanged Dinuba millions of dollars in tax revenue from online sales at the city's Best Buy distribution center. Those Best Buy revenues, officials said, will about double the city's $1.9 mil— lion annual sales tax receipts. That was a bonus the city nev— er expected when Best Buy came to town in 1999. The state discovered it had not been sending Dinuba proceeds from Best Buy so the state sent the city the difference. The result: Dinuba's third-quarter sales-tax revenues were $3.27 million.

ILLINOIS (MCT) — In a spectacular misunderstand— ing sparked by an accidental cell phone call, a worried wife caused SWAT teams to swarm the Ill— inois school where her husband worked, officials said Tuesday. The wife received the disturb— ing, garbled call from her hus— band's phone Monday evening, Winnetka police said. In the popular vernacular, it was a butt call, the bane of many s chagrined cell-phone user. This time, it led to a frantic 911 call from a wife. Soon, more than 30 gun—toting officers converged on Carleton Washburne School The all-clear sounded nearly three hours later, after the man was found safe at home by police.

National
ALABAMA (MCT) — Artist Ted Ellis will commemorate the historic home of Rosa Parks during a live, on-location paint— ing from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan. 14 at 1026 Rosa Parks Ave., the Cleveland Court Apartments. The public is invited to watch as Ellis creates an original painting of Parks' former home. "This event is open to all and we invite the public to come and observe the artist create a historic work of art," said Viola Moten, curator of Troy University's Rosa Parks Museum. The event coincides with the opening of Ellis's exhibit, "Our History, Heritage and Culture: An American Story, the Art of Ted Ellis," which will be on display at Troy University's Rosa Parks Museum from Jan. 13 to Feb. 24.

International
PAKISTAN (MCT) — The brazen assassination Tuesday of a popular and progressive Paki— stan's governor allied with the na— tion's president threw an already reeling U.S.-backed govern— ment into even greater turmoil. Salman Taseer, the governor of Punjab province and an avowed opponent of religious extremism, was shot to death at an open-air shopping center that is frequented by foreigners and the Pakistani elite. The gunman was a member of the governor's own elite police security contingent, officials said. They said the gunman's motive was anger at the governor's call for a pardon of Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian woman facing death for allegedly defaming Islam.

ARGENTINA (MCT) — At least three robbers made the most of New Year's celebrations to empty more than 130 safe deposit boxes in a Buenos Aires bank. The vice president of the state— owned Banco Provincia, one of the largest banks in Argentina, said Tuesday that the institution would launch an investigation in parallel with the work of police. The robbers, who wore masks as they robbed the bank and were not immediately identified, rent— ed an adjoining business space in mid-2010 and bored a hole through the wall into the bank. The rented space had not been opened as a public business. From late Friday, the suspects entered the bank and by Monday they had emptied more than 130 safe deposit boxes.
Obama to replace economic adviser

Jim Puzzanghera
Los Angeles Times

President Barack Obama is expected to name a replacement this week for top economic adviser Lawrence H. Summers, and the top candidates have had ties to the financial industry that the president has lambasted for its role in precipitating the Great Recession.

Summers' last day as director of the National Economic Council was Friday. His deputy, Jason Furman, has taken over the job as the White House finishes a search that began when Summers announced his resignation in September.

Candidates to replace Summers include Gene Sperling, a former economic adviser to President Bill Clinton who has done consulting work for investment banker Goldman Sachs Group Inc., and Roger Altman, chairman of investment banking business Evercore Partners and a former deputy Treasury secretary under Clinton.

Another possible replacement, economist Richard C. Levin, is secretary under Clinton, president of Yale University and finishes a search that began when Summers left. But the scramble to pass key legislation in the final weeks of the year, including a temporary extension of the Bush-era tax breaks, delayed the search.

The incoming administration is finding the right person for Summers' job and the Obama administration's economic policies.

His appointment to the White House post probably would add to Geithner's increased influence on Obama's economic team.

Obama referred to Sperling in September as "one of my top economic advisers" in praising his work on a small-business jobs bill. And Sperling was a key player in negotiations with Congress over the tax-break extension.

But Baker said Sperling's work for Goldman was a drawback, even though he called Sperling "an honest guy."

"His deal with Goldman Sachs doesn't look good," Baker said. "You give someone $900,000 ... it's hard to believe that doesn't ingratiate themselves to some extent with Sperling."

The president is considering a number of qualified candidates, and he has not made a decision or offered a job," said White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki. "The most important qualification is finding the right person for the job who can lead the team at this pivotal time in the recovery."

White House officials had hoped to name a new NEC director before Summers left. But the scramble to pass key legislation in the final weeks of the year, including a temporary extension of the Bush-era tax breaks, delayed the search.

The emergence of Sperling as the perceived leading candidate is disheartening to some liberals. After he left the Clinton administration, Sperling earned $887,727 from Goldman Sachs in 2008 for advice on its charitable giving, according to a Bloomberg report.

"Going to Wall Street for your top staffer ... is very bad both for policy and for political reasons," said Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research. "Wall Street to my mind is still the villain here, and good policy would mean reworking Wall Street."

Sperling has said his work for Goldman involved consulting only on its 10,000 Women initiative to provide business and management education to underserved women around the world.

Sperling, who headed the NEC from 1997 to early 2001, has worked since 2009 as a counselor to Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner, so is familiar with Summers' job and the Obama administration's economic policies.

Obama has lambasted for its role in precipitating the Great Recession.

Dying birds in southern U.S. still mystify experts

Julie Cart
Los Angeles Times

Scientists still don't know what's causing flocks of birds to drop from the sky in the South, even as several hundred more fell onto a Louisiana highway.

The puzzling phenomenon started on New Year's Eve when thousands of blackbirds were found dead in central Arkansas. Townsfolk spent their holiday weekend removing the remains of between 4,000 and 5,000 dead red-winged blackbirds. Scientists have descended on the town, trying to find a cause for the mass die-off.

In the latest incident, roughly 500 birds were discovered scattered on a rural road in Louisiana's Pointe Coupee Parish, 300 miles south of the Arkansas site. Officials there are stumped as to what caused the birds to plunge to their death.

Wildlife officials in both states were sending carcasses to researchers at the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wis., and the University of Georgia. No one is yet connecting the two mass deaths, but the Audubon Society is closely monitoring the situation.

"Scientists are still investigating what happened to the birds in Louisiana and Arkansas, but initial findings indicate that these are isolated incidents that were probably caused by disturbance and disorientation," said Greg Butcher, Audubon's director of bird conservation.

"The birds that died — red-winged blackbirds, common grackles, brown-headed cowbirds and European starlings — are abundant species that flock together in large nighttime roosts during the winter months. Roosts can contain from tens of thousands to 20 million individuals or more, according to Audubon."

The U.S. Geological Service's website lists about 90 mass deaths of birds and other wildlife from June through Dec. 12.

Five list deaths of at least 1,000 birds and another 12 show at least 500 dead birds.
Jerry Brown had been in the governor's office less than a day, but already the Republican Schwarzenegger's team had started to write the script. Brown's inaugural speech highlighted his goal of realigning the relationship between state and local government, a wonky topic Schwarzenegger would rarely have avoided. Brown's team stressed the need for Californians to make sacrifices, a point Schwarzenegger, as the former Gov. Gray Davis also attended, had made in his inaugural address.

The stark change in style referred to the transformation Sacramento went through during the last time Brown was governor. In the 1970s, when he succeeded Ronald Reagan, Bruce Cain, a professor of political science at the University of California-Berkeley, says Reagan, a movie star like Schwarzenegger, ran the government as if it were a corporation, with a clear hierarchy and lots of planning. Brown conducted business as though the state were a Silicon Valley startup, with a fuzzy chain of command and the governor involved in minute decisions.

The Brown administration wouldn't even commit to the new governor's schedule on his first day in office. Maybe he would eat a hot dog with the union rank and file who were celebrating his inauguration, they said, or maybe he'd hang out at his left a few blocks from the Capitol and get himself moved in. He hadn't decided by midmorning.

Ultimately, he went with the hot dog. But in a scene that had played out time and again on the campaign trail, Brown wandered through the crowd at the Capitol on Monday trying to find his destination. Supporters crowded around him and his wife, Anne Gust Brown, as the couple sought the frankfurter tent.

Brown arrived at the inauguration ceremony riding shotgun in a BMW with barely an entourage. The incoming attorney general, Kamala Harris, who is far from a household name in California, seemed to overshadow him in her large SUV and what appeared to be a security detail.

At a private reception in the governor's office, which Schwarzenegger and former Gov. Gray Davis also attended, security was lax. The governors' key advisers gathered around conference tables lined with pineapple, peppermi and mushroom pizza. Curious tourists ducked in to greet the new governor and shake his hand. "Who are you?" Brown asked one woman, who told the Los Angeles Times she was a state worker but declined to give her name.

"He thought I was somebody from his entourage," she said. "He said, 'You act like you know what you're doing.'" Brown pointed for several photos, sandwiched between Davis and Schwarzenegger. On leaving the reception, Schwarzenegger shook Brown's hand. Brown said, "I'll call you." Brown's late-afternoon party at the state railroad museum was a subdued affair, contrasting the new governor's donors less than $100,000.

The new governor's presence had hardly been felt in Sacramento since the Nov. 2 election. He never even named a transition team. Schwarzenegger had a transition staff of 67, including such notables as George Shultz, Willie Brown, Pete Wilson, Eli Broad and Carly Fiorina. Warren Buffett was an economic adviser.

Brown's key advisers, the best observers can tell, are a longtime bureau­crat from the attorney general's office, a confidant from Brown's first stint as governor more than 30 years ago and Brown's wife. He has yet to appoint a chief of staff. He doesn't have a press secretary or a communications chief either. In­siders say he is planning to replace the 14 people who have been fielding the hundreds of media requests from tele­vision, radio, print and online journal­ists reporting on the government of the largest state in the country.
Creeky Tiki restaurant expands onto Higuera

San Luis Obispo has its bars and its restaurants. However, the new kid on the block — Creeky Tiki — has lit up Higuera Street since its expansion onto the main road on Nov. 22.

The original Creeky Tiki, tucked away behind Paper Sky and Cowboy Cookie N’ Grubs, has existed for about eight months. The small storefront boasts a huge patio area, with views of the river and mission and room for live entertainment. When now-managing partner Mike Maquez was looking for a career change, he found potential in the little grill.

Maquez, who had been manager of Firestone Grill for five years, was looking for something different. As a family friend of Brett Butterfield — one of the owners of the Creeky Tiki — Maquez went to the Creeky Tiki to confide in Butterfield for some career advice, which he found right outside the door.

The key? The vacant storefront on Higuera, formerly Johnson’s Children’s store — which conveniently connected with the Creeky Tiki patio onto Higuera.

"I got the advice, walked outside the door, and noticed this vacant space," Maquez said. "I looked in there, and I said to myself, I wonder if we could expand this place? So I ran back inside and I was like, 'Hey Brett, what do you think about this idea?'"

Butterfield consulted his managing partner J Walsh, and decided to bring Maquez on board as a managing partner. They also teamed up with Mike Sabucci to piece the plan together and take over the space on Higuera.

Interestingly, that patio area was once home to the hottest bar in town called The Spindtle. Maquez said, "It used to be the biggest bar in San Luis in 1979 to 1980," he said. "It used to go off. It was the place to be."

Thus, Maquez saw the Creeky Tiki as a means to revive that same fire.

The first obstacle? Attaining a liquor license for the bar. However, a few loopholes allowed them to carry the license over to the storefront.

"The police chief has put an umbrella over the bars," Maquez said. "They said there's no new bars coming into San Luis Obispo on Higuera Street."

Yes because the original Creeky Tiki already had a liquor license, all they had to do was transfer it over. The liquor license has allowed for the restaurant to have a full bar, along with a full tiki bar outside for patio patrons.

"Well, we were already existing, and this was an expansion onto Higuera," Maquez said. "We pulled the liquor into this space."

The décor of the space eminates a grassroots feel with old surfboards and vintage surf and skateboard magazines (courtesy of Maquez’s father) replacing the lit-up “Bud Light” or “Corona” signs adorning so often in other bars.

"That’s the feeling, you know?" Maquez said. "Just rooky, and there’s meaning behind it."

And the music is different, too.

"We don’t play top 40," Maquez said. "We play 1960s rock, classic rock, underground hip-hop, punk rock. It’s not the commercialized kind."

The restaurant and bar, which now includes a large multipurpose space, is also reaching out to the community through hosting special events.

"It’s all one venue and there’s multiple aspects to the space," Sabucci said. "We’re not just a bar."

One such event was the world premiere of the surf film "Intersections," which packed the surf-themed bar with, well, surfers.

"It was about 300 surfers from throughout the county," Maquez said. "We’re not going after the hard-core drunk fighting crowd. That can go somewhere else. It’s a more rooky feel."

Growing Green.

In 1998, SESLOC introduced Online Account Transactions, and Cal Poly members were quick to embrace the new environmentally friendly technology.

However, just as the automobile reduced the need for village blacksmiths, online transactions, direct deposit, debit cards and smart phones reduced the demand for in-branch teller services.

The 7-teller branch with lines out the door soon transformed to a three-teller branch with an occasional line, in spite of growing membership.

Changing Channels.

We’ve turned a page and begun a new chapter. While SESLOC bids a fond farewell to their cozy location in the University Union, SESLOC service to members continues — even on campus — through multiple transaction channels, and through their continuing on-campus educational presentations to clubs, organizations, and individual classes.
Trading card exhibit slides into SLOMA

The Artist Trading Card exhibit will be showcased at SLOMA through Jan. 31.

Amber Kiwan
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An Artist Trading Card exhibit, which opened yesterday at the San Luis Obispo Museum of Art (SLOMA), will display miniature pieces of art in the form of trading cards created by artists from all over the Central Coast all this month.

However, these trading cards — known as ATCs in the art community — are unlike the classic prototype as they do not feature baseball players or Pokémon characters. ATCs are miniature pieces of art that can consist of anything the artist wants — the cards can be drawn or painted, cut and pasted, portraits or landscapes and everything in between.

SLOMA exhibition coordinator Patrick Terjak said the ATCs play a representative role in the artistic community.

"The cards represent a subculture of the artist world," Terjak said. "It's an easy way to branch out and meet others who have the same interests."

The cards can be traded on the Internet or at live trading sessions organized by artists in the same area. The cards are the same size as commercial trading cards, 2.5 by 3.5 inches, which makes them easy to mail to fellow artists.

SLO Co. ATC Traders — a local group for ATC artists and traders in the San Luis Obispo area — brought this exhibit to SLOMA. This local group is part of a larger trend that began in Switzerland in 1997. The movement gained popularity via the Internet and now hundreds of people from all over the world are creating and trading ATCs.
Oprah sets out to OWN cable television

Steve Johnson
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

If you had thought Oprah Winfrey, out of modesty or good taste or simple human exhaustion, might have been tempted to keep some of herself out of her new cable network, think again.

When Winfrey calls this 24-hour-a-day venture the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN), she means it.

There she is, in this first week, hosting an oft-repeated one-hour special explaining the programs you'll see, plus the broader hopes and dreams of the channel. Rather than capitalist success, we learn, it is to help you live, in the now-familiar phrase, "your own best life."

There she is in a show called "Oprah Presents Master Class," popping in to underscore lessons that we're perfectly capable of drawing ourselves from what celebrities including Jay-Z and Diane Sawyer have to say.

She, of course, appears in "Season 25: Oprah Behind the Scenes," a (thus far) prettily candid look at the making of Winfrey's syndicated daytime talk show during this, its final, season.

Oh, and there she is, too, at the end of the first episode of "Ask Oprah's All Stars," walking out with a "surprise" Champagne toast, to the delight of the studio audience and her first-teamers, Suze Orman and Dr. Phil and Oz.

Just as her last successful media launch, O: The Oprah Magazine, features O: the Oprah persona on its cover every month, OWN: The Oprah Winfrey Network doesn't miss an opportunity to show off its nameplate.

It paid off in strong initial ratings. Tuning in for Saturday for the "Season 25" show during OWN's first prime time was a very strong audience of 1.2 million viewers. The "All Stars" were just shy of a million the next night, and the "Master Class" episode featuring Sawyer tallied 600,000. Considering OWN is available in just two-thirds of U.S. households, even 600,000 is a respectable number.

And here's the thing. Even as the network is slowly ramping up to a full schedule, teasing the new series it'll offer in strong initial ratings, it's already doing a pretty good job at a challenging thing: transposing the philosophy of a women's magazine — her women's magazine, in particular — to television.

If you're looking to be told how to live better than you currently do, OWN is ready to help. Prepare to take notes as Dr. Oz tells you how to — no joke — have better bowel movements. Sawyer urges you to be curious and "Enough Already! With Peter Walsh" teaches you to throw out what you don't need.

But if you are an admirer of well-crafted television and business chutz­pa, it would be disingenuous if you didn't offer at least a salute in the direction of the Winfrey flag.

Because of her celebrity, wealth and influence, people sometimes forget — and no longer can see — how extremely well-crafted "The Oprah Winfrey Show" is. It's been lucky enough to have, in our era, a skilled host and an unerring taskmaster. In the behind-the-scenes "Season 25" series, we hear her explaining that the people she hires have had to pretty much make the talk show their own, and it shows.

Segments are produced to near perfection and almost never overstay their welcome. Guests are chosen not just because they sort of fit the theme, but because they are dynamic, television-friendly exemplars of that theme. The show rolls down its highway not like one of the modest vehicles Winfrey gives her audience members on occasion, but like a luxury sedan.

OWN surely won't be able to maintain that standard for each of its 168 weekly hours — some of its programming is shifting over from the Discovery Health Network that it subsumed. But the signature early shows have some of the same fit and finish.

"Master Class" is a beautifully produced hourlong interview of a single celebrity that's as high-class as the accompanying picture book the network sent to promote it. Archival footage is deftly blended with, for instance, Jay-Z's affecting story of achieving and maintaining success. Only the Oprah interludes here feel forced.

"All Stars" showcases three Oprah acolytes who rub a lot of people the wrong way on their own, but who together have an undeniable chemistry. And the first show, hosted by Robin Mcade and produced by "Survivor" honcho Mark Burnett, sailed through its two hours of credit-card counseling, a "Fat family" wanting to change and studio audience surveys about such topics as debt load and lost virginity.

"Oprah 25," meanwhile, gives us an inside look that's surprisingly frank, or gives the appearance of being surprisingly frank. With her rise to prominence, Winfrey essentially shut the doors to her sausage factory. This program opens them up, at least a little, letting us see Winfrey's tightly controlled but unmistakable ire that, for instance, staff let her go on with an emotional interview after a micro­phone started failing. We also see her producers, in that same interview, determined that the episode they are taping really needs one of the guests to say that he is sorry for past deeds.

This is what might be called the "soft open" phase of the Oprah Winfrey Network. Like a restaurant just wanting to work some kinks out before it "officially" opens, OWN is serving up enough food to get you through a meal, though the wine list is incomplete and some main dishes aren't ready yet.

Still waiting to debut: Winfrey's own talk show, which won't get going until after her daytime syndicated show ends; the talk show winfrey hired Rosie O'Donnell to host, in the apparent belief that Winfrey's is the one bridge Rosie wouldn't dare burn; and a space of celebrity-based reality efforts, from the Judds slugging it out, emotionally, on tour, to Ryan and Tamra O'Neal trying to kiss and make up after years of estrangement, drugs and at least one gun.

There's a reality show in the offering called "Kidnapped by the Kids" that looks to be an unabashed tear-jerker. Prove it, Mommy. Prove you love me more than your Blackberry. And then they go camping, or some such, to bond in the special intimacy of a nationally televised program.

The Oprah Winfrey Network won't be for everyone. People who were sick of Oprah even before this might experience actual physical revision. And it almost goes without saying that it won't be for anyone as much as it is for Oprah Winfrey.

But if you are an admirer of well-crafted television and business chutz­pa, it would be disingenuous if you didn't offer at least a salute in the direction of the Winfrey flag.
Education can bridge the economic gap

Dopie McManus is a columnist for The Los Angeles Times.

Here's a familiar fact: Economic inequality is rising in the United States. The rich have gotten richer, the poor have stayed poor, and families in the middle have seen their incomes stagnate.

But it's less familiar that Opportunity in America isn't what it used to be. Among children born into low-income households, more than two-thirds grow up to earn a below-average income, and only 6 percent make it all the way up the ladder into the affluent top one-fifth of income earners, according to a study by economists at Washington's Brookings Institution.

We think of America as a land of opportunity, but other countries appear to offer far more upward mobility. Children born into poverty in Canada, Britain, Germany or France have a statistically better chance of reaching the top than poor kids do in the United States.

What's gone wrong?

Links to globalization, the economy is producing high-income jobs for the educated and low-income jobs for the uneducated — but few middle-income jobs for workers with high school diplomas. Thanks to the decline of public schools, it's harder for poor kids to get a good education.

And Harvard sociologist Robert Putnam argues that thanks partly to the rise of two-income households, intermarriage between rich and poor has declined, choking off another historical upward push for the underprivileged.

"We're becoming two societies, two Americas," Putnam told me recently. "There's a deepening class divide that shows up in many places. It's not just a matter of income. Education is becoming the key discriminant in American life. Family structure is part of it too."

Increasingly, college-educated Americans live in a different country from those who never made it out of high school. As a group, adults with college degrees have an unemployment rate of 5 percent, steady or rising incomes, relatively stable families (their divorce rate declined over the last 10 years) and few children out of wedlock. Adults without a high school education, by contrast, face an unemployment rate over 15 percent, declining incomes, a higher divorce rate and have lots of kids out of wedlock. (Among black women who didn't finish high school, 96 percent of childbearing is outside marriage; among white women who didn't finish high school, 43 percent.)

And those mutually reinforcing conditions tend to stick from generation to generation. That's nice for affluent kids but a bad break for the underprivileged.

"Success in life increasingly depends on how smart you were in choosing your parents," Putnam said. "And that flies in the face of the fundamental American bargain — that every kid ought to have access to the same opportunities."
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Second-year quarterback Mark Sanchez has now led his team to two playoff berths in his first two seasons as quarterback of the New York Jets. "I feel light years ahead of where I was last year, just mentally, knowing the schedule, understanding what a playoff game feels like, anticipating the kind of energy that you get from their crowd and how you need to be loud at the line of scrimmage, little things that I had to experience first to understand first and I feel a lot better." From here on out, though, he might have to keep a watchful eye out for Ryan, just in case he decides "I think our offense is. We're kind of hitting our stride and that's what you want going into the playoffs. "That's what he means. It's just like if you're sick and you play a really good game, everybody's going to say, 'Well, you might as well be sick every week.' It's just the way it goes."
Wrestling wraps up nonconference, gears for Pac-10

THE MUSTANG DAILY

Cal Poly wrestling team will square off against Oregon on Jan. 14 before starting its Pac-10 schedule on Jan. 21.

Jets' Sanchez says he's ready to go

RODERICK BOONE

The Mustangs concluded the day with a 30-15 victory over Menlo College without the help of Abel and heavyweights Atticus Dayne, who was defeated by Caleb Gerl of Cal Baptist. Dayne's loss, one of a few tough defeats over break, remains steadfast in his drive toward the NCAA Championship.

"While it's never fun to lose, I'm thankful I'm suffering these losses now and not in March when it really counts," Dayne said.

Pearce Swerdfeger filled in for Abel at 157-pounds, but performed just as well as the starter, pinning his opponent with time running out in the second period. DeRoche concluded his big day by wasting no time in pinning Adam Obad in just 33 seconds.

Boris Novachkov, a junior who is ranked No. 2 in the nation at 141-pounds, earned a pin over Kyle Wirkuty of Southern Oregon and a forfeit against Cal Baptist and finished his day with a 17-4 victory over Christian Martinez.

The Mustangs traveled with a small squad to Reno where DeRoche led the way with a 2nd place finish, only losing 10-2 to Shane Osmey of Wisconsin. In all likelihood, the two will square off again in Mont Gym on Jan. 14 when the Cowboys take on the Mustangs.

Cal Poly's match against Boise State still looks like it will be the premier duel meet this season, but the Cowboys outpaced the Broncos in Reno to win the tournament, which gives Cal Poly a difficult one-two punch of opponents in mid-January.

Ryan Smith, who wrestles at 197 pounds, was pinned by top-seeded Erik Schuh of Ohio in the semifinals, knocking him to the consolation matches where he was pinned again. Smith rebounded in his final match, easily defeating Niko Brown 10-0 to take fifth place.

Abel also took fifth at 157-pounds, but was upset in the second round by Chanson's Dan Waddell in a close 9-6 match. After winning two straight, the fourth seeded Vince Salminen knocked Abel into the 5th/6th place match with a 18-5 major decision. Abel's opponent forfeited the next match.

The team placed ninth while future Mustang opponents Wisconsin, Boise State and Cal State Bakersfield took the top three spots.

However, much of Cal Poly's sub-par performance can be attributed to the fact that the Novachkov brothers, Filip and Boris, did not wrestle.