

1997 Honored Alumni



The 1997 class of honored alums: Inset, Nevada Barr (Photo by T. Bennett Photography).

Left to right: Ken Rodrigues, Lewis Cryer, Tom Bordonaro, Lori Holland, and Candice Hatch (Photo by Doug Allen).

- **"Cal Poly gave me the spirit to overcome adversity and strive to be my best."**

– Tom Bordonaro Jr., Agribusiness '82
College of Agriculture

A Republican elected as assemblyman in 1994 to represent San Luis Obispo County and parts of Santa Barbara County, Tom Bordonaro serves as vice chair of the Governmental Organization Committee. During his legislative career, he has voted to reduce taxes for both individuals and businesses, worked on family and education issues, and requested funds to expand Vandenberg Air Force Base.

- **"Cal Poly emphasizes educating the mind and learning by doing. Both are invaluable to architects, enabling us to both design and build."**

– Kenneth A. Rodrigues, Architecture '76
College of Architecture and Environmental Design

Kenneth Rodrigues is the founder and president of Kenneth Rodrigues & Partners of San Jose. The designer of many notable projects, he is currently designing the Netscape World Headquarters, a 30-acre, \$33 million facility in Mountain View, Calif.

- **"I'm a firm believer in Cal Poly's learn-by-doing concept, both in my life and my career."**

– Lori Holland, Economics '81
College of Business

Lori Holland is chief operating officer and chief financial officer of Wood Associates Inc., a full-service promotion company. She has helped establish manufacturing operations in Asia; completed three major international acquisitions and many debt and lease financings; and developed, implemented, and managed information systems worldwide.

- **"Cal Poly helped me learn how to learn and gave me a foundation for my life and career."**

– Candice L. Hatch, Environmental Engineering '75
College of Engineering

Candice Hatch is a registered professional engineer and vice president and Northwest forest products manager for CH2M Hill, an engineering consulting firm. She is responsible for business development, project execution, and business operations pertaining to air quality consulting services nationwide.

- **"I've lived by the beauty and profit of retaining a willingness to learn."**

– Nevada Barr, Speech Communication '74
College of Liberal Arts

Nevada Barr's Anna Pigeon mystery novel series has earned critical praise from *The New York Times Book Review*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Philadelphia Enquirer*. Her career as an author grew out of earlier forays into teaching storytelling and writing industrial training scripts, travel stories, and restaurant critiques.

- **"A day doesn't go by that I don't reflect on something positive that happened while I was in San Luis Obispo."**

– Lewis Cryer, Physical Education '66
College of Science and Mathematics

Lewis Cryer is president and chief operating and executive officer of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Properties Inc. (PRCAP), which oversees television production, advertising sales, and network negotiations for rodeo coverage on ESPN and ESPN2. He is also president of the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame and Museum of the American Cowboy, and president of the Justin Cowboy Crisis Fund. **CP**

Danny Gans makes a good impression

by Joanne N. Sbranti-Estrada (JOUR '78)

As he sang in the showers of Jespersen Hall, Danny Gans' voice would waft through the halls of the old jock dorm. The Cal Poly baseball star had a knack for impersonating famous people, and Jespersen was where he first honed his talent.

"They had great showers there," Gans recalls. "The water would come out so hard it would take your skin right off, but I'd stay in there 30 to 40 minutes just singing."

He also hung out on Jespersen's fire escape, gazing over the football field as he mimicked the voices and mannerisms of John Wayne, Ed Sullivan, Sylvester Stallone, and others.

"I tried out my material on everybody — in the dining hall, at the ballpark, during class," the 41-year-old Gans says. "But I never really thought I would do it professionally."

What Gans did for kicks at Cal Poly in 1977 and 1978 he now does for sold-out crowds and standing ovations in Las Vegas.

Gans has one of Nevada's hottest acts. His "Man of Many Voices" show at the Rio has earned him honors like Las Vegas Entertainer of the Year, Headliner of the Year, Show of the Year, Best of Las Vegas Critics' Choice, and Best of Las Vegas People's Choice.

"For 18 years I've been trying to make it. Now it's really starting to happen for me," Gans says.

It hasn't been easy, and it wasn't what he dreamed about when he transferred to Cal Poly as a left-handed power hitter in 1976. His focus then was completely on baseball.

"In my mind, not only was I going to make it to the major leagues, but I was going to be one of the best that ever played," confides Gans, whose Cal Poly teammate was baseball all-star Ozzie Smith.

After his second season with the Mustangs, Gans was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers and entered the minor leagues.

"Within the first month of the season, I was leading the minor leagues in home runs. There was talk of me being traded to the San Diego Padres and going up to the major leagues before the end of the season," Gans says. "Everything looked fantastic. Then I was playing first base and a guy running down the line spiked me, went over my heel, and severed my Achilles tendon. That was the last time I played ball."

The career-ending injury reminded him of advice once offered by Cal Poly Education Professor Lou Pippin.

"Professor Pippin sat me down one time and said, 'You need to think about what you're going to do when baseball is over. You should really consider trying to do [impersonations] professionally,'" Gans recalls. "He encouraged me. We'd have five minutes left in class, and he'd say, 'Hey, Danny, want to get up and try out some of your material?'"

That led to Gans' first nightclub experience at The Dark Room in downtown San Luis Obispo, where his fledgling act was a mix of comic impersonations and songs.

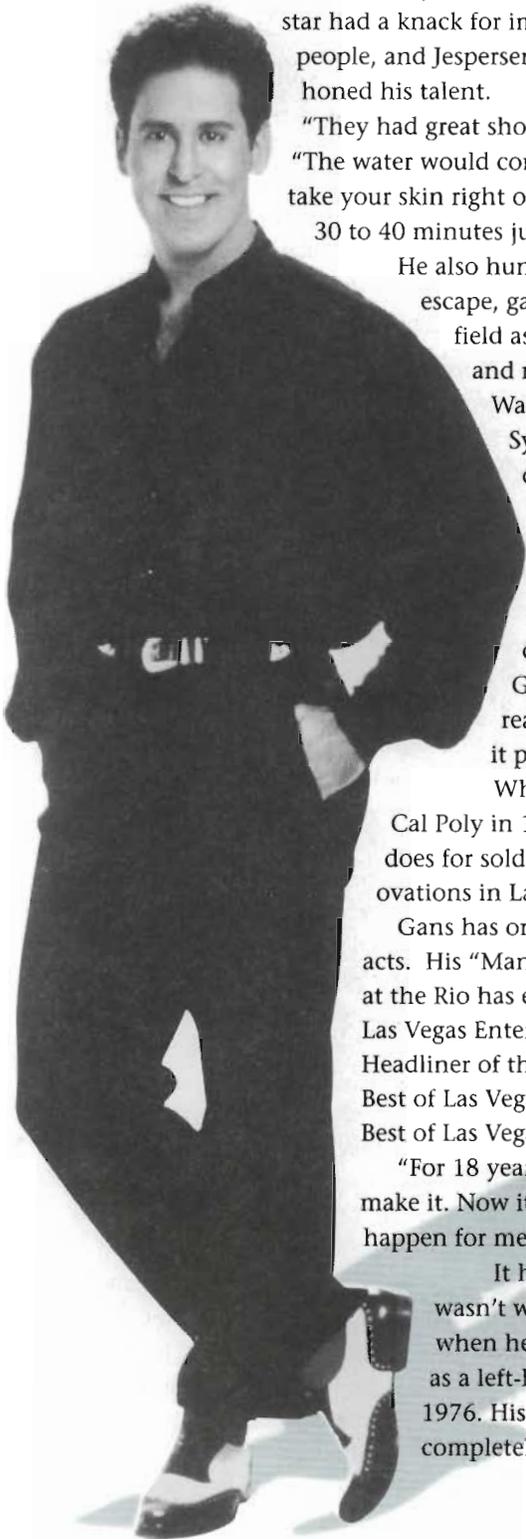
"I'd do Elvis with some of the ball players singing doo-wop in the background," Gans says.

With his baseball career over, Gans began taking his act seriously.

"I realized I had to do things other guys weren't doing," Gans says. "That's when I really focused on singing impressions."

For more than 15 years, he toured the country, traveling more than 200 days to nightclubs and corporate conventions. He also did a stint on Broadway, and played a recurring role as a medical examiner on USA Network's "Silk Stalkings."

Now his 85-minute act is packed with music, and his repertoire includes 300-plus voices. Backed by a three-piece combo, Gans uses his incredibly versatile



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An invitation to come home

by Diane K. Sheeley

Economic Development Manager, City of San Luis Obispo

Danny Gans . . .

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voice to sing like Tom Jones, Randy Travis, Garth Brooks, Anita Baker, Prince, Stevie Wonder, George Burns, Willie Nelson, Kermit the Frog, Rod Stewart, Billy Joel, Johnny Mathis, Natalie and Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Michael Jackson, and dozens of others.

His long-term gig at the Rio, which began about two years ago, ended most of his hectic traveling. He and his wife, **Julie (Russell) Gans (HE '80)**, and their three children now split their time between homes in Las Vegas and Los Angeles. 

Rediscover the life you left behind. The city of San Luis Obispo invites all alums to consider establishing or expanding their businesses in the home of their alma mater. Whether you graduated two or 20 years ago, you will undoubtedly recall the special quality of life that you enjoyed in San Luis Obispo.

As part of the city's economic development program, the City Council recently adopted a business recruitment strategy that identifies industries matching the character, environment, employment, and product needs of its residents. The three primary

target clusters include computer software/multimedia, light manufacturing/light industrial, and business/customer service centers. The city is also working to develop the airport area into an attractive, future-oriented business center.

The city of San Luis Obispo is proud to be the home for the many businesses and industries who have chosen to put their roots down into the community. For more information regarding business development opportunities, contact Diane K. Sheeley at 805/781-7174; e-mail: dsheelley@slonet.org. 

Note to Alumni re Shared Information

Please note that your name, address, phone number, school or college, and year of graduation may be used by Cal Poly for the development of university-affiliated marketing programs. If you do *not* wish to have this information used, please notify Advancement Services, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407 in writing. 

The Cal Poly Alumni Association sponsors a variety of educational trips and travel throughout the year.

For details, contact the Alumni Relations office at 805/756-2586; fax 805/756-5413; e-mail alumni@oboe.calpoly.edu.



New director selected for Alumni Relations

Ben Beesley (SOCS '86) is the new director of the Alumni Relations office. Previously he served as the interim director for nine months, associate director for two years,

and assistant director for two and a half years. From 1989 to 1993 he was a volunteer on the Alumni Association's board of directors.

Goals for Beesley and his staff include hiring an associate

director and a student program coordinator, increasing volunteers and association memberships, and securing long-term affinity partners. **CP**



ATTENTION PILOTS

Cal Poly alumni and friends' First Annual Fly-In is scheduled for Castle Airport (formerly Castle Air Force Base) in Merced, on Saturday, June 27.

Come enjoy a barbecue lunch, the company of fellow alumni,

and special guest speaker former NASA Astronaut **Robert L. "Hoot" Gibson (AERO '69)**. Experience flight simulators, a tour of the air museum, and much more.

For more details, contact Ben Beesley, Alumni Relations director, at 805/756-2586. **CP**

"Joyride" rolls to win in Rose Parade

Cal Poly's 50th Rose Parade entry, "Countryside Joyride," was a big winner in Pasadena on New Year's Day. The float, built by students from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and Cal Poly Pomona, received the Founders' Trophy, the award given to the most beautiful entry built by volunteers. This is the second consecutive year Cal Poly has captured the trophy, and the seventh time overall. **CP**

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