

BERT AND CANDACE FORBES: *Embracing community, supporting excellence*

For more than two decades, Bert and Candace Forbes' history in San Luis Obispo has defined the term 'community.'

In 1979 they chose San Luis Obispo for their company, Ziatech (an applied computing solutions supplier and manufacturer), and established a working team with graduates recruited from the Cal Poly community. (Bert Forbes is an electrical engineer educated at M.I.T. and Stanford who spent 10 years with Hewlett-Packard, and Candace Forbes holds a bachelor's in philosophy from Stanford and an MBA from Santa Clara University.)

The Forbeses have now continued their community support by giving \$3 million to the College of Engineering, one of the largest cash gifts Cal Poly has ever received. Bert Forbes also currently serves as the president of the board of directors of the Foundation for the Performing Arts Center.

The College of Engineering gift will provide two endowed professorships and an endowment for computer engineering, computer science, and electrical engineering equipment and laboratory upgrades. "Our business was high tech," Bert Forbes says. "We chose San Luis because we knew that Cal Poly would provide a pool of high-quality employees. And if it's worth doing, it's worth doing right."

Over the years, the Forbeses have obviously done a great deal right. Ziatech grew to more than 200 employees and secured its reputation as an industry pacesetter. In 1994 the Small Business Administration named Ziatech "Central California Small Business of the Year," and in 2000 it was acquired by Intel.

Throughout Ziatech's growth, the Forbeses always thought of their business as a family-oriented and civic-minded enterprise. "People want to stay in San Luis Obispo because of the vibrant quality of life here," says Candace, "and that allowed us to develop a working team and community within the larger community."

Some of the company's first employees are reaching retirement age now. "One person gave us the ultimate compliment," says Bert Forbes. "He said Ziatech was a positive place to work because of its family atmosphere and ethical standards."

And those are surely the highest standards in any community.

For more information on creating an endowment that could benefit Cal Poly, please contact the Office of Planned Giving and Endowments toll free at 800/549-2666 or via e-mail at taxwise-gifts@calpoly.edu. Or visit our Web site at www.giving.calpoly.edu.

