

Alumni Give a Vote of Confidence

“The world is a better place when a variety of people work together,” say Ernie (GrC ’86) and Lorie (Sousa) Chapa (SPC ’89).

“We have a wide range of friends – teachers, policemen, accountants, and corporate executives,” says Ernie. “It’s important to treat everyone fairly, and Cal Poly set a good example when we were students, exposing us to a variety of people, each with different challenges and advantages.”

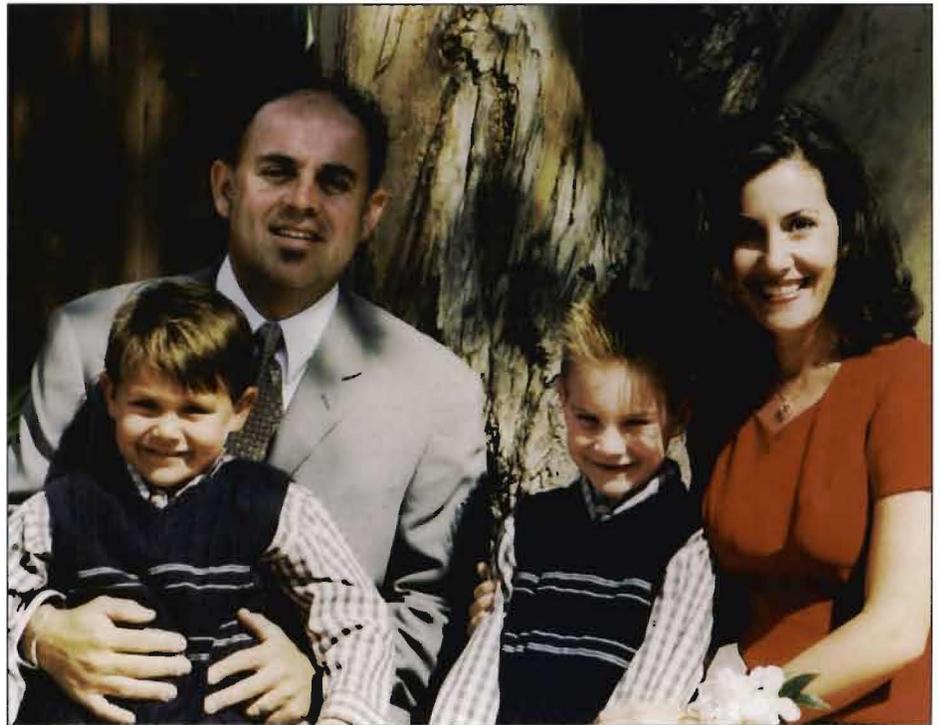
Owners and operators of Pacific Partner, their full-service graphic and communication business founded in 1999, the couple has generously created the Chapa Endowment, a scholarship to help Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) students attend Cal Poly and succeed there.

The endowment is the Chapas’ way of supporting diversity at the university and giving back to Cal Poly for the educational benefits and financial assistance they received.

The Chapas believe that their Cal Poly education was instrumental in preparing them for the challenges of setting up their business and making it a success.

“Cal Poly provided me with the hands-on technology to support what we had learned in our textbooks,” says Ernie Chapa. “It was the best education I could have received. I worked with a variety of computers, cameras, and printing presses, and spent many hours in design labs.”

Lorie Chapa, too, was well prepared by Cal Poly. She took pride in her role as a Poly Rep, recruiting high school students, and as the last Poly Royal queen in 1988, and continues to represent Cal Poly at college night fairs held by local high schools. Her focus in



The Chapa family

Photo courtesy Ernie and Lorie Chapa

Pacific Partner is presenting leadership training seminars, which directly uses her degree in speech communication.

“EOP and Student Academic Services (SAS) say to their students, ‘We believe in you. We have faith in what you can do at Cal Poly. We’ll help you with

the first step and lead you to the next step in your college education,’” says Ernie Chapa.

“Cal Poly is one of the most difficult universities to get into,” he points out. “That sense of fierce competition can be intimidating. But SAS counselors and tutors encourage students to stick with it. Student Academic Services is like a family, where students are able to build relationships with Cal Poly staff who are ready to assist them.” The Chapas encourage other alumni to check into EOP/SAS programs and consider starting their own endowment as a way to give back to Cal Poly.

In the future the Chapas hope that their two young sons will attend Cal Poly.

“We love Cal Poly,” they say, “and we’re planning to retire in San Luis Obispo and be close to the campus again.”

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