

THE MUSIC MAN

The late Harold P. Davidson, who served as Music Department head, leader of the Mustang Marching Band, and conductor of the university's choral groups and dance band, touched many lives during his years at Cal Poly. His wife, Rosalie, also a familiar face around campus, was an accompanist who arranged music for some of the university's choral groups.

Below, a former student, who knew "Hal" early in his career, and a former faculty member, who was acquainted with him at the end of it, reminisce about the Davidsons.



Harold Davidson (Photo courtesy of University Archives, California Polytechnic State University)

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San Francisco 49ers, the first team to win five Super Bowls. Not a bad a team to lose to.

With all that he has accomplished, Alex Spanos has never lost sight of his humble beginnings. Along with his belief in the importance of family is his belief in philanthropy.

"Since my childhood, I've believed that giving is not just a one-time act of random largesse; it's a daily way of life," Spanos says. Both he and Faye Spanos are passionate about giving. They have donated millions of dollars to educational institutions, hospitals, churches, civic, art and athletic organizations.

"I've always helped any way that I can," Spanos says. "I feel fortunate I'm able to do the things I do. Giving just does my heart good."

He has received many awards for his humanitarian and charitable work. Among them are the Horatio Alger Award from the Horatio Alger Foundation, Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Gloria Swanson Humanitarian Award from the American Cinema Awards Foundation, and Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith National Distinguished Community Service Award.

He was also awarded honorary Doctor of Laws degrees from the University of the Pacific and Eureka College, and in 1974 he was named a Cal Poly Distinguished Alumnus.

Alex and Faye Spanos have been married since 1948. They have four children and 15 grandchildren. ■

"Hal Davidson and his wonderful wife, Rosalie, made such a difference in my life," recalls Alex Spanos (AERO), who, together with his wife, Faye, donated \$100,000 in 2003 to establish the Harold P. and Rosalie Davidson scholarship endowment in memory of the former music professor and his wife.

"My brother Danny and I were drum majors in the marching band in 1941," Spanos says. "Rosalie Davidson was as much a part of the band as Hal was. They were both uncommon people, each exceptional in their own way and yet so much alike.

"When I think of Cal Poly, I think of Hal and Rosalie Davidson and their dedication to their students and the way they nurtured them. That affection, those warm feelings, prompted Faye and I to give a second donation to Cal Poly."

That \$1.5-million gift is helping fund the renovation of the H.P. Davidson Music Center and the Cal Poly Theatre, named the Alex and Faye Spanos Theatre at a special dedication ceremony last spring. At the event, Clifton Swanson, longtime Music Department head, now retired, also recalled the Davidsons with affection.

"Alex and I had the good fortune to know Davy and Rosalie Davidson, and if I might reminisce for a moment, I think I can identify why Alex Spanos remembers his time at Cal Poly and his relationship with Harold Davidson so fondly," Swanson said.

"Davy was a unique man: the right man, in the right place, at the right time. He built a program and established a legacy that continues to this day. He was able to bring students together to make music. Cal Poly was for men only when he came, and you can imagine the challenge of getting a bunch of guys together to make music.

"It was remarkable that Davy got large numbers of men up on stage to sing in a choir. He had the admiration of all of his students, and they were proud of what they were able to accomplish in the course of a year.

"I can say with utmost confidence that Davy would be very pleased to see the Cal Poly Music Department and all that it does. Davy's determination to involve as many students as possible from throughout the campus is as true today as it was then. We have honored Davy's wishes, and while music majors comprise the nucleus of each of our groups, the majority of the members are from throughout the campus." ■