SECRET SERVICE AGENT, professor and city manager – Steve Harrison has done it all over the years while hanging his hat in Washington, D.C., and Texas. But the California native has come home, accepting a new position as director of government and community relations for Cal Poly.

Harrison lived a career that many only dream about, serving in the Secret Service for 22 years and becoming the first agent to serve on the permanent protective detail of five U.S. presidents. He has conducted investigations into violations of federal law, arrested violators, testified before Congress, and coordinated the security for the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

He also protected then-President Ronald Reagan from himself at his Santa Barbara ranch, “holding on to his belt from behind as he used a chainsaw to chop wood on a steep incline,” recalls Harrison with a smile.

After earning his master’s and doctorate in public administration from USC, Harrison taught at St. Edward’s University, St. Mary’s University, Texas State University and the Center for American and International Law in Texas. He has authored several articles on law enforcement, organizational culture and total quality management.

Prior to Cal Poly, Harrison served as city administrator for Wimberley, Texas, and city manager for Kyle, Texas.

As director of governmental affairs, Harrison facilitates relationships with members of Congress, the California legislature and local elected officials. He coordinates government relations activities and develops printed and electronic material to keep key leaders informed of university activities.

Harrison is thrilled to begin his position at Cal Poly. “There are a number of opportunities for Cal Poly to capitalize on,” said Harrison. “I can help keep our legislators aware of the unique expertise that Cal Poly brings to the table on many issues of broad societal impact.”

Harrison has two daughters. Megan is a junior at Cal Poly, majors in animal science and plays for the woman’s basketball team. Marissa just started high school at Mission College Prep in San Luis Obispo. His wife, Nina, is still in Texas and will join the family “as soon as we can find the right place to move with our horses,” Harrison said.

DR. HARRISON COMES FROM WASHINGTON

BY SCOTT ROARK