



Cal Poly Custodian Wills \$100,000 to Performing Arts Center

The gift came as a surprise even to those close to Cal Poly custodian **Delores Estrada** (BUS '75), but there it was: a \$100,000 bequest to the Performing Arts Center San Luis Obispo.

The \$100,000 gift from the Delores T. Estrada Living Trust came to Cal Poly near the end of 2003 as attorneys and friends settled the estate of the 20-year Cal Poly employee.

Estrada willed her entire estate to three Central Coast charities: one-third to the Performing Arts Center, a partnership between Cal Poly, the City of San Luis Obispo, and the Foundation for the Performing Arts Center; one-third to the Prado Day Center for the homeless in San Luis Obispo; and one-third to the San Luis Obispo chapter of the American Red Cross. Each received a gift of \$100,000 in the closing months of 2003.

"It's quite an extraordinary gift, embodying the whole spirit of philanthropy," says William G. Boldt, Cal Poly's vice president for university advancement.

Estrada was 51 when she died in 2002 after a battle with cancer. Beloved by students, faculty and staff, she had been named one of three Outstanding Staff Members in 1999.

"Delores Estrada, campus celebri-

ty," the *Mustang Daily* wrote that year in a profile of Estrada and her award. "Everywhere she goes, Estrada is greeted by smiling faces."

During her years as a custodian, she was assigned to the Performing Arts Center and then the top floors of the

the work she did," remembers Ron Regier, managing director of the Performing Arts Center. "She was always bringing ideas to me or to our committees for improvements for our patrons, for their safety and convenience. She was always trying to make things better."

But while she was well-known, she was quiet about her personal life. The fact that she graduated from Cal Poly in 1975 with a degree in business administration was not widely known.

"She was a very humble person, and she didn't share her personal life with very many people," says Nancy Cochran, theater operations manager at the Performing Arts Center.

Estrada was single and spent much of her time caring for her aging and increasingly ill father. "She was a very

devoted daughter, scheduling her day around taking care of him," Cochran remembers.

Currently, the Performing Arts Center is determining how to use the \$100,000 bequest from Estrada, Regier says. As the news about her bequest spreads around campus, those who knew her say it's typical of Delores Estrada, campus celebrity.

"She was," Cochran says, "just a selfless, generous person."



administration building – including President Warren J. Baker's office.

She was also an energetic participant and fund-raiser for the university's Service Awards Committee, the PAC's Youth Outreach for the Performing Arts Center program, the campus Emergency Response Training program, and the now-defunct Cal Poly Staff Council.

"She was a great person, in terms of an employee. She set a standard in all