



Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong.

“In many ways, life began for me at Cal Poly. The world opened up for me.”

*—George H. Soares,
(B.S., Agricultural Business, 1966)*

No one speaks about the value of a Cal Poly education more eloquently than our alumni, as evidenced by the above quotation at left from George Soares, one of the 2012 Honored Alumni we celebrate in this issue of Cal Poly Magazine (Page 18).

As they graduate and enter their professions, Cal Poly alumni take the power of Learn by Doing and make an impact that transcends traditional boundaries of family, community, nation and even planet.

Witness the contributions of this year’s honoree from the College of Engineering, Nanette M. Van Antwerp. A medical device designer, she holds more than a dozen patents for glucose sensor packaging systems. Then there is a career’s worth of innovation by the College of Science and Mathematics honoree James T. Woolaway in the field of infrared technology. He’s an inventor and patent holder of infrared sensors for terrestrial and space-based environments.

In these challenging times, the world needs Cal Poly grads. Woolaway, who had the opportunity to hire dozens of alumni over many years, observes that our students bring unique and invaluable qualities to their fields. “I came to recognize a Cal Poly grad without asking where they went to school,” he said. “But it took me awhile to realize what I was sensing. They certainly brought with them a big-picture view, cross-disciplinary thinking and a can-do spirit, but there was more to it than that. I came to realize that they carried something in their hearts – a willingness to work as team players, a drive to help others succeed, a genuine compassion for their fellow employees. I concluded that they were echoing the compassion and kindness from their Cal Poly teachers. That is where the true magic is, and why I am so proud to be from Cal Poly.”

However, our efforts to continue producing these thoughtful, driven leaders faces serious threats in today’s bleak budgetary climate. We have experienced a 44 percent cut in state funding to the university in just four years.

In light of this, Cal Poly depends increasingly on support from alumni to provide the cushion of excellence that we bring to our mission to educate tomorrow’s resourceful leaders. Simply put, we need your financial support now more than ever.

George Soares, who was singled out by the Alumni Association for exceptional service, also shared with us that he feels whatever he has done for Cal Poly “shrinks in comparison to what Cal Poly has done for me.” This is why he characterizes his commitment to Cal Poly today as “absolute.”

To George and to all our alumni who treasure their Cal Poly experience, we offer our heartfelt thanks. We are proud that you have used your Learn by Doing education at Cal Poly to make a difference in the world.

We are also grateful for the many ways you give back. And we look to you to help us ensure that future generations of Cal Poly grads continue to change the world, just as you have. □

Jeffrey D. Armstrong

— Jeffrey D. Armstrong, President