

A Sense of COMMUNITY

Cal Poly's 2012 Honored Alumni Serve Beyond Themselves

BY MATT LAZIER PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS LESCHINSKY

As they were lauded at Homecoming, Cal Poly's newest group of Honored Alumni struck a repeated chord in their remarks, praising the role the university played in preparing them to succeed not only on a professional level but also as servants to their communities.

"Everyone I know who has graduated from Cal Poly has had life success," said Joanne Dowty Smith, 2012 honored alum for the Orfalea College of Business. "And I don't just mean success in their careers. These people are truly happy with who they are. I really attribute that to Cal Poly for creating that sense of community among its graduates."

Smith and eight other alums and Cal Poly friends were honored at a reception during Cal Poly's 2012 Homecoming weekend. The awards they received are the highest honor bestowed upon Cal Poly alumni by the university's Alumni Association.

"This is a very special night where we get to hear and share wonderful stories about lives well lived, about professions well served, and about accomplishments that were realized through creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and determination," Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong told the gathering. "And we'll hear about service beyond one's self. That's what we're about at Cal Poly – creating that sense of service. We help pre-

pare people to become not only resourceful and innovative leaders but also generous citizens who give back to their communities."

Nanette M. Van Antwerp, honoree for the College of Engineering, spoke (in a pre-taped message) of the enduring power of the Learn by Doing education and said Cal Poly taught her the value of teamwork.

"I always felt a strong sense of camaraderie with my fellow students as we all worked together to reach our goals," she said. "The Learn by Doing approach was more than just a slogan; it allowed us to get our hands dirty and work on solving real-world problems similar to what we would face in our careers. I believe that this emphasis on developing practical skills was instrumental in forming a strong foundation for a successful career."

And College of Science and Mathematics honoree James T. Woolaway shared his experience as a business owner who has had the opportunity to hire many Cal Poly grads on his staff.

After a while, he said, he began to realize he could tell, without asking, which employees were Cal Poly alumni. It wasn't just their competence, their knowledge or their productivity that set them apart.

"It's something they carry in their heart: a willingness to work hard with others, a drive to help others and see others succeed, and a genuine compassion for their fellow employees," Woolaway said. "That's something that doesn't come from a textbook or a lecture."

"It's something that echoes from the kindness and compassion of the teachers at this university. That's where the magic is, and it's why I'm so proud to be from Cal Poly."

The 2012 Honored Alumni Award Winners:

College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences

Mike Hall earned his bachelor's degree in animal science from Cal Poly in 1973 and his master's in animal science at Kansas State University. He is the senior beef cattle specialist for Cal Poly's Animal Science Department. Wendy Hall graduated from Cal Poly in 1975 with a degree in animal science and earned her master's in agriculture and teaching credential from Cal Poly in 1978. She taught Cal Poly's Beef Cattle Fitting and Showing class and became the advisor for the university's Western Bonanza Junior Livestock Show. She also owns Cowfoto, a nationally recognized livestock photography business.

College of Architecture & Environmental Design

Jack A. Berridge earned a bachelor's degree in architecture in 1959. He is the founder and owner of Berridge Manufacturing Co., a San Antonio-based company that manufactures architectural sheet metal products.

Orfalea College of Business

Joanne Dowty Smith earned her bachelor's degree in business administration in 1982. She is senior vice president of InFlight Service for Delta Air Lines, leading more than 20,000 flight attendants, supervisory and administrative personnel worldwide.

College of Engineering

Nannette M. Van Antwerp earned her bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1989, then worked as an engineer designing medical devices at Pacesetter. She holds more than a dozen patents for glucose sensor package systems. She is an avid scuba diver and award-winning amateur underwater filmmaker.

College of Liberal Arts

Michela C. O'Connor Abrams studied journalism at Cal Poly and is president of Dwell Media, an award-winning design and lifestyle media company based in San Francisco. She has also held executive positions at IDG, Ziff-Davis and McGraw-Hill.



Back row l-to-r: Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong, Wendy H. Hall, Warren A. Sinsheimer, Jack A. Berridge, Cal Poly Alumni Association President Tom Lebens
Front row l-to-r: Michela C. O'Connor Abrams, Michael H. Hall, Joanne Dowty Smith, James T. Woolaway, George H. Soares (Nannette M. Van Antwerp not pictured)

College of Science & Mathematics

James T. Woolaway earned a bachelor's degree in physics in 1981. Most recently retiring from FLIR Systems as vice president for IP and Technology, he spent his career in the field of infrared technology and was involved in the design, manufacture and testing of infrared sensors for terrestrial and space-based environments. He is responsible for many circuit-related inventions and numerous patents in the infrared field.

Sandra Gardebring Ogren Leadership Award

Warren A. Sinsheimer is a co-founder and attorney at the San Luis Obispo law firm of Sinsheimer Juhnke McIvor & Stroh, LLP. He is a longtime supporter of Cal Poly, having played an instrumental role in the development of the Performing Arts Center on campus.

CPAA Distinguished Service Award

(Presented to an alumnus or alumna who has demonstrated exceptional service to Cal Poly and the Alumni Association.)

George H. Soares earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural business from Cal Poly in 1966. He is an attorney and founding partner in the Sacramento law firm of Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP, a governmental advocacy firm with particular focus in agriculture. In addition, Soares owns and operates a dairy and farming business in Hanford, Calif. □

For more on the awards, visit: www.homecoming.calpoly.edu/content/honored-alumni.