



The Cornerstone of the **CAL POLY** **EDUCATION**

*Honored Alumni Say Learn by Doing
Was a Key to Success in Their Careers*

BY SARAH THIEN

Learn by Doing is the cornerstone of the Cal Poly experience and, according to our 2013 class of Honored Alumni, the element of their education that set them apart in their careers. During Homecoming weekend in November, Cal Poly Magazine asked all of the honorees about their most vivid Learn by Doing memories and how the philosophy of Learn by Doing helped them advance in their profession.

Charles L. Harrington

College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences

Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and President of Parsons Corporation, a global engineering, construction, technical and management services.

The Learn by Doing philosophy introduced me to the process by which physical things are actually made, which gave me a huge leg up on other recent college grads when I entered the workforce. While others were learning the challenges of building in the field, between my background growing up on the farm and my Learn

Cal Poly's 2013 Honored Alumni Award recipients, from left to right, Paul H. Hamalian, Brian J. Hackney, Charles L. Harrington, Philip S. Bailey Jr., Beth F. Anderson, Alfred W. Amaral Jr., Rik Floyd, and Thomas J. Gallo.

By Doing education from Cal Poly, I was quickly offered the opportunity to move from a learning role to a doing role in the workplace.

Paul H. Hamalian

College of Architecture & Environmental Design

Senior Director of Strategic Planning for Habitat for Humanity

I am a kinetic learner, which means I learn best by physically doing the things I am learning. In high school and early college, I struggled with the traditional academic learning methodology, which is often geared toward audio learners. The process of learning through action at Cal Poly enabled me to successfully transition to college. More importantly, it enabled me to develop love of learning that has empowered me to be successful in my career.

Rik Floyd

Orfalea College of Business

Co-founder, cp2 project consultants, LLC

Learn by Doing gave me a “can do” attitude. I saw this fleshed out in my first job out of school, in a small business run by three Cal Poly grads. We each brought to the table that “oh, I know how to do this,” or “let’s figure this out” attitude that we learned in labs, on projects and in the small classroom settings at Cal Poly.

Beth F. Anderson

College of Engineering

Vice President of Supply Chain Rate Capability for Commercial Airplanes Supplier Management at Boeing Commercial Airplanes

Learn by Doing instilled curiosity and a commitment to lifelong learning — for me and for those around me. It reinforced the importance of communication skills and provided many opportunities to practice. It also gave me confidence. I didn’t just learn the engineering concepts; I was able to put them into practice. I wasn’t hesitant or afraid when I moved into industry. I was able to jump right in and tackle any assignment I was given.

Thomas J. Gallo

College of Liberal Arts

Vice President of Strategic Development for G3Enterprises

Agriculture was a world that I grew up in, and I understood everything about it. When I transferred to Graphic Communications, it opened a whole new world for me. I had to learn a whole new language, technology and business. Learning about this industry in class was intriguing, challenging, and inspiring. However, it was during my first lab when I had to learn how to run a press that it all started to click. Having a hands-on experience of what I was learning in the books was just what I needed to be successful.

Brian J. Hackney

College of Science and Mathematics

News and Weather Anchor, CBS San Francisco

The Learn by Doing philosophy made me entirely unafraid to try things and, if necessary (and it is), to fail and try again — something I did quite often in the Compton Scattering Lab. Experiment is all, the confidence to go on is all, and Cal Poly was all I needed to learn that.

Philip S. Bailey Jr.

Sandra Gardebring Ogren Leadership Award

Dean, College of Science and Mathematics

When I first arrived at Cal Poly as an assistant professor in 1969, Learn by Doing was fully evident. It inspired me to write a grant to acquire our first nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer to be used by sophomore students. It was unusual then and still is today — that experience is rarely found at the sophomore level.

Alfred W. Amaral, Jr.

CPAA Distinguished Service Award

Executive Director of the Cal Poly Corporation for 29 years

Learn by Doing taught me the importance of planning well and in sufficient detail, and of following through on those plans and following up to be certain things got done. This has been helpful throughout my career.

Visit Cal Poly Magazine online at www.magazine.calpoly.edu to read complete interviews with these honorees.