



News & Events

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Cal Poly Alumnus Donates \$1.5 Million To Renovate Music Building

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly alumnus, entrepreneur and San Diego Chargers owner Alex Spanos, and his wife, Faye, have donated \$1.5 million to help fund the renovation of the university's H.P. Davidson Music Center and the Cal Poly Theatre.

The gift, made in 2003, was the couple's second major gift to the Music Department last year. They also gave \$100,000 to establish the Harold P. and Rosalie Davidson scholarship endowment in memory of the former music professor and his wife. During his long tenure at Cal Poly, Davidson served as department head and leader of the Mustang Marching Band, conductor of the university's choral groups and dance band. His wife was an accompanist who arranged music for some of the campus choral groups.

While a student in aeronautical engineering in the early 1940s, Spanos was the drum major for the marching band led by Davidson.

Spanos made the gift to commemorate 'Davy' and Rosalie.

"When I read about other alumni's reminiscences about the bands and the singing groups, a flood of memories came back," Spanos said. "Those were great times. Everyone who knew Harold Davidson loved him."

Cal Poly College of Liberal Arts Dean Harry Hellenbrand said that the \$1.5 million gift will be used to begin a \$15 million project that will both renovate and enlarge the Cal Poly Theatre and the building that houses the departments of Music and Theatre and Dance.

"I never thought I'd see the day when we'd get this close to re-doing the building," said Clifton Swanson, chair of the Music Department. "Music and Theatre and Dance were not even majors when it was built. "We've grown out of it. We have only six practice rooms and even those are used as teaching studios during the day."

"The gift is a great testimony to the spirit and history of a wonderful department," Hellenbrand said.

Spanos has led a colorful and productive life. He is owner of A.G. Spanos Companies, one of the nation's

leading builders of apartment communities and one of the few family-owned Fortune 400 companies. In 1968 he met Bob Hope while playing golf in Palm Springs. "From then on, not a week went by in 35 years when Bob and I weren't together," Spanos said. "We traveled the world together, golfing and singing and tap dancing."

His dream to own a National Football League team was realized in 1984, when he assumed ownership of the San Diego Chargers.

"From the time I was eight years old, all through high school, we worked. We weren't allowed to play sports. I always loved sports and wanted to play football. When I had the opportunity to buy the Chargers, I didn't hesitate," Spanos said.

The Spanos' gift to Cal Poly typifies the couples' commitment to philanthropy. His company provided a major gift in 1998 to support the Cal Poly Athletic Capital Campaign. He received the Statue of Liberty Award in 1986, "for good things I had done, gifts that I had made to deserving causes," Spanos said. "I've always helped any way that I can. I feel fortunate I'm able to do the things I do."

Spanos and his wife live in Stockton.

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