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California Polytechnic State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Construction Engineer in Charge of Rebuilding Pentagon To Speak at Cal Poly Jan. 13

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Allyn Kilsheimer, the world-renowned construction engineer who orchestrated the rebuilding of the Pentagon following the Sept. 11 terrorist attack, will give a firsthand account of that experience in a free public talk at Cal Poly Jan. 13.

Kilsheimer will deliver his talk, "The Phoenix Project: Rebuilding the Pentagon," at 11 a.m. in Chumash Auditorium in the University Union. According to Kilsheimer, it was the most personal job he's done in a career spanning more than four decades. And, to the disbelief of almost everyone involved, his team completed the \$700 million project within a self-imposed goal of one year.

"This building is an historic building," he said. "We promised we would replicate it exactly." He and a team of about 3,000 people, averaging 16- to 20-hour workdays, seven days a week, did just that in slightly less than 12 months.

According to an article in the Sacramento Bee, Pentagon officials contacted the veteran engineer because of his reputation for analyzing structural failures worldwide, including those caused by the bombings of the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995 and at the World Trade Center in 1993. The morning of the Sept. 11 attack, he was at the Pentagon, surveying the damage.

"The hardest part for me was standing there with two skeletons on my left and two dead bodies on my right, and realizing what people can do to other people," Kilsheimer said.

According to a Washington Times article, "He stayed and worked the next

eight days straight, not stopping to sleep, and eating and drinking only when urged by Salvation Army workers."

A colorful character by all accounts, Kilsheimer is known as a fearless, brusque, plain-speaking, hard-working professional who loves a challenge. He has been described as a "burly man with a bushy beard and a ponytail." And a sense of humor.

To stop complaints that he wasn't wearing a hard hat at the Pentagon job site, he had a pale pink hard hat made and adorned it with a Mary Kay cosmetics logo and a picture of a Barbie doll and teddy bear, "just to let them know what I thought," he said.

His sense of humor is balanced with a sense of honor. He is the son of Jewish immigrants who escaped from internment camps during World War II.

As reported in the Sacramento Bee, Kilsheimer said, "I want to be able to say to them, 'I got to pay back the United States for what they did for you.' I can't think of a bigger honor."

Kilsheimer is founder and president of KCE Inc., a structural engineering firm based in Washington, D.C. He was hired for the Pentagon job by PenRen, the government arm in charge of the rebuilding effort.

The Cal Poly presentation is co-sponsored by The Clark Construction Group Inc. of Maryland. Kilsheimer is a consultant to the firm. Clark, which has been working in California for more than 20 years, is committed to maintaining its presence in the state in the years to come, according to William H. Dean, vice president of the company and a 1986 Cal Poly construction management graduate.

"It's a well-known fact that Cal Poly's construction management program consistently produces the type of well-rounded graduates critical to the future of a company like Clark," Dean said. "As part of our continuing effort to partner with the Construction Management Department and do whatever we can to enhance the educational process, Clark is sponsoring Mr. Kilsheimer's visit to Cal Poly."

Kilsheimer's presentation is also sponsored by Cal Poly's College of Architecture and Environmental Design and the Construction Management Department. Members of local engineering and construction firms are invited to attend, along with the general public.

"We are extremely fortunate to have Allyn Kilsheimer on campus to address our students and faculty and other interested professionals," said Construction Management Department Head Allan Hauck. "As an internationally renowned construction engineer with his vast knowledge and expertise, Allyn will no doubt bring a new dimension to the educational and professional development of those who attend his

presentation."

For more information, call the Construction Management Department at 756-1323 or the college office at 756-1311.

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(NOTE TO EDITORS: Allyn Kilsheimer will be available for interviews on Sunday, Jan. 12, or Monday morning, Jan. 13. Please contact Ray Ladd at 756-7432, rladd@calpoly.edu to make arrangements. Please also note that this talk is part of a related theme, "Learning From Structural Failures," to be explored in a presentation by the Cal Poly student chapter of the Structural Engineers Association of California at its annual forum at Cal Poly on Feb. 1.)

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