Before there was such a thing as women’s athletics programs or Title IX, Evelyn Pellaton championed women in sports, first as a PE teacher at Cal Poly and ultimately as the director of women’s athletics. Now retired, Pellaton continues to support student athletics programs. After a recent change to her will, that support will continue into perpetuity.

When she started here in the 1960s, women’s teams didn’t have official games or league competition; they just had “play dates.” She had virtually no budget for her programs and little support, but she never let that interfere with the chance to participate. When the ladies needed uniforms to play in a national tournament, Pellaton repurposed men’s track suits from the prior year and took her team to Oregon.

Women’s sports enjoy much greater support at Cal Poly these days, which only serves to fuel Pellaton’s enthusiasm. Recently, she turned to Cal Poly alum and estate planning attorney John Ronca (B.S. Business Administration, 1975) to update her will, pledging part of her estate to an endowment that will benefit the field that defined her career.

Ronca said being an estate planning attorney is satisfying because he can help his clients in obvious ways: avoiding court, minimizing taxes and helping people take care of their families. But there are more subtle ways, as well, he said. “Many of my clients are the history of Cal Poly,” he said. “They’ve done so much, but they’re so modest and they’re not going to be around forever. If you don’t ask them about their story, you’ll miss it.

“I’ve also seen the process create relationships that help donors renew their involvement with the campus,” Ronca added. When considering her options, Pellaton kept asking herself, “What can I do?” Ultimately, she worked with Cal Poly’s Planned Giving office to develop an agreement that stipulated her bequest would be used to support student scholars.

While Pellaton is quite cheerful about the obstacles she overcame, and the personal and professional experiences that ensued, she hopes her gift will mean that others don’t have to face the same hurdles. With this provision in her will, she’s giving something back and paying it forward.

If you are considering a charitable bequest like Pellaton’s, here are a few things to consider:
• Working with the Planned Giving office helps the university develop guidelines for how your gift will be used.
• It can also help you incorporate provisions that allow for changes in university programs. For instance, after the Home Economics major was absorbed by another department, it took the courts several years to determine an acceptable substitute for bequests made to that major.
• Some people leave a percentage of their estate to charity, rather than a fixed dollar amount. “That provides an element of protection if the estate increases or decreases in value,” Ronca said. After that, he said, “You can basically forget about it.”
• An endowment may be established in which the principal must remain intact in perpetuity or for a defined period of time.
• If your situation or interests change, you can change your will at any time during your lifetime.

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For sample bequest language you can share with your estate planning advisor, visit www.plannedgiving.calpoly.edu or contact Cal Poly’s Planned Giving Office. Phone: 805-756-7125 | Toll-Free: 800-549-2666 | Email: plannedgiving@calpoly.edu

For more than 30 years, physics professor Art Rosen practically lived in the lab, transforming the lives of thousands of students through education. Thanks to a bequest made with a simple direction in his will, his generous and supportive spirit lives on in those same classrooms and labs. Remembering Cal Poly in your estate planning is an effective way to support Learn by Doing, the cornerstone of a Cal Poly education. Our planned giving experts can help friends and alumni like you leave a lasting legacy that will support the next generation of innovative leaders and resourceful professionals.
California Polytechnic State University
Advancement Services
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0448

Change Service Requested

Parents, please note: If your son or daughter is no longer at this address, please send his or her current address to alumni-info@calpoly.edu.

Cal Poly’s 2011 Rose Float became yet another in a long list of award winners, capturing two trophies at the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif. on Jan. 1.

The float — "Galactic Expedition," created by students at Cal Poly and the university’s sister campus in Pomona — captured the “Fantasy Trophy” during pre-parade judging as well as taking the “Viewer’s Choice” award for the third straight year. The honor was created in 2009, and Cal Poly has won it all three years it has been awarded.

"Galactic Expedition" depicted seven childhood friends building the rocket ship of their dreams and taking their imagination to soaring heights. An operative crane, a spinning planet, moving child workers and a full complement of tools and toys were all situated on an airy cloud high above the earth’s surface. The float was decorated with more than 12,000 roses, 8,500 mums and approximately 9,500 carnations. (Photo courtesy Cal Poly Pomona)