Entrepreneur to Speak on Business Ethics Nov. 29 at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Successful entrepreneur and author Gary Erickson will give a presentation on business and ethics Monday, Nov. 29, in Philips Hall in the Performing Arts Center at Cal Poly. The presentation will begin at 7:15 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

Erickson is the founder of Clif Bar Inc., which has been named to Inc. magazine's annual list of fastest-growing companies in the United States four times. The company started as a small bakery. Today, it is one of the nation's leading makers of all-natural energy and nutrition foods.

Founder and Chief Culinary Officer Erickson is heralded nationally as a visionary entrepreneur. "He believes there is more to business than the bottom line - and his bottom line is doing very well in part because of that strong belief," according to Orfalea College of Business Dean David Christy.

Clif Bar Inc. has won numerous awards honoring the company for its treatment of employees, commitment to the environment and support for important causes such as the fight against breast cancer. In 2003, Health Magazine named Clif Bar Inc. the "Healthiest Company for Women to Work For" in the United States. Fortune Small Business has named Erickson to its list of "Best Bosses in America."

Erickson has said he is committed to running a private company that "values ethics instead of shareholder return." He is in demand as a speaker at leading food industry, "green" business and college campus events. He is the author of "Raising the Bar: Integrity and Passion in Life and Business -- The Story of Clif Bar Inc.," published in September.

He earned a business degree in 1980 from the Orfalea College of Business at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. He began his professional baking career in 1986 when he co-founded Kali's Bakery of Emeryville, which made and distributed calzones and gourmet cookies. In 1992, Kali's introduced the first Clif Bars to the public.

The company, based in Berkeley, was renamed Clif Bar Inc. in 1997 in honor of Erickson's father, Clifford. The two spent many years on father-and-son hiking and skiing adventures in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Prior to establishing Kali's and Clif Bar Inc., Erickson spent a decade overseeing the design and production of
bicycle saddles. His work earned high praise and an exhibit in New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Erickson calls running Clif Bar Inc. his dream job. In founding the company, he said he wanted to combine his love of "the outdoors, cycling, business, good food and social responsibility."

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