Cal Poly Names 2004 Honored Alumni, Distinguished Service Award Recipient

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly will recognize eight outstanding alumni at the annual Honored Alumni Awards Banquet set for Friday, Oct. 15, as part of Homecoming 2004.

Each year, Cal Poly honors seven Honored Alumni, one from each of the university’s academic colleges: Agriculture, Architecture and Environmental Design, Orfalea College of Business, Education, Engineering, Liberal Arts, and Science and Mathematics. The Honored Alumni Award, established more than 30 years ago, is the highest honor bestowed upon Cal Poly alumni by the university’s Alumni Association.

In addition, one graduate is selected to receive the Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes exceptional service to Cal Poly and the Alumni Association. This year marks the sixth presentation of the Distinguished Service Award. Wes Witten, a 1949 aerospace engineering alumnus and resident of Reno, Nev., is this year’s recipient.

The 2004 Honored Alumni are:

College of Agriculture -
Following graduation, Starkey earned a Ph.D. and spent several years teaching in the Midwest. In 1978 he returned to Cal Poly to serve as department head of Dairy Science, a position he held until he retired in 1991. During his tenure at Cal Poly, he oversaw the creation of the Dairy Products Technology Center (DPTC) and the construction of two facilities -- one for the DPTC and one for the Dairy Cattle Instruction Center. He has served numerous organizations in a variety of capacities, including advisor for Alpha Gamma Rho; member of the American Dairy Science Association for 40 years and president of the Production Section; secretary of the California Creamery Operators Association; volunteer on the College of Agriculture’s Harmon Toone Memorial Campaign Committee; Advisory Committee member for the Cal Poly Retired Faculty and Staff Association; past president of the Retired Faculty and Staff Club; member Cal Poly Centennial Scholarship Committee; and secretary-treasurer of the California Creamery Operators Association. He is author of “Rich Heritage,” a history of the Dairy Science Department at Cal Poly. He lives in San Luis Obispo.

College of Architecture and Environmental Design -
Montoya is vice president, residential division manager of Morley Builders in Santa Monica. After graduating from Cal Poly, he completed the executive program studies at the UCLA Anderson School of Management. Immediately after graduation from Cal Poly, he joined Morley Builders as its first full-time project engineer hired right out of college. He progressed up through the ranks, from project manager to project executive,
then to his current position as vice president. He is responsible for all residential projects under the Morley Builders umbrella of general contracting work. Montoya said his most fulfilling projects have been those he oversaw to create several thousand housing units for the elderly and low-income families. His projects include Casa Heiwa, a 100-unit senior and low-income housing community in Los Angeles’s Little Tokyo neighborhood; the 705-unit Playa Vista Fountain Park Apartments, Westchester; the Jewish Community Center Campus, Long Beach; the Loyola Marymount University Jesuit House and Leavey Student Apartments, Westchester; and the Leslie and Susan Gonda Diabetes and Genetic Research Center, Duarte. Montoya serves as the chair of the CAED Advisory Council and is a member of the Construction Management Industry Advisory Committee. He is also a frequent guest lecturer at Cal Poly and arranges student tours of Morley sites, including the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels and the Getty Villa Museum in Malibu. He is an advocate for the Los Angeles Conservancy historical group and is a California state licensed contractor. He lives in San Marino.

tom deregt photoOrfalea College of Business -
Thomas deRegt, B.S., Business Administration, 1980.
He started his career in banking at Security Pacific National Bank’s real estate group. After 10 years in the mortgage industry, he became involved with real estate development and investment. In 1989 he formed a development partnership, deRegt Development, Inc., based in Monterey. He serves as president/principal of various entities, including deRegt Development Inc., New Cities Development Group, BayRock Residential LLC, Valley Community Homes, Inc., and Pasadera Country Club, LLC. He is involved in all aspects of land development, multi-family housing, single family housing and commercial development. Notable projects include the Almaden Winery neighborhood in San Jose, featured in the June 1994 issue of Professional Builder, which consisted of 151 lots of detached single family homes, and the Pasadera Country Club in Monterey, a 565-acre development with 252 residential units and an 18-hole private golf club. He is past president of the Bay Area Mortgage Association, a member of the Urban Land Institute, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Chartwell School, and a member of the Business Advisory Council for Cal Poly’s Orfalea College of Business. He is a resident of Carmel.

bell photoCollege of Education -
After graduating from Cal Poly, Bell accepted a position in a research project at San Miguel Elementary School which, she says, changed the direction of her life. It was there that she met her current business partner, Pat Lindamood. They opened an office together, and Bell became the primary learning therapist, working with students of all ages with weaknesses in language and literacy. In 1986, the partners formed Lindamood Bell Learning Processes, an organization with more than 40 learning centers worldwide. While working in a private clinical setting with children and adults diagnosed with dyslexia, hyperlexia or autism, Bell’s interest in sensory mechanisms for cognition peaked, and she returned to Cal Poly to earn a master’s degree in education, with a specialization in reading. She is recognized internationally for pioneering research on the relationship between mental imagery and the acquisition of language and literacy skills. She has been featured in Newsweek, The Economist and The Wall Street Journal and on television on CNN and Oprah. She is also founder and owner of Gander Publishing, which produces all of her learning materials. Bell lives in San Luis Obispo.

martin photoCollege of Engineering -
After graduating from Cal Poly, Martin earned a master’s degree from UCLA. He is senior vice president of Government and Advanced Development Programs for Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., where he oversees military production and advanced development for projects such as the Black Hawk, Naval Hawk and Presidential Marine One, as well as several classified programs. Prior to joining Sikorsky, Martin worked for Lockheed Martin, leading the design of the YF-22 advanced tactical fighter prototype
aircraft. He served in the U.S. Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration, directing or participating in the experimental flight testing of several fighter, transport and rotary-wing aircraft. He spent two years at FAA headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he was responsible for developing airworthiness standards for the Concord Super Sonic Transport. He is active in a number of professional organizations and is a charter member and past director of the Society of Flight Test Engineers. Martin serves on the Dean’s Advisory Council for Cal Poly’s College of Engineering and is chairman of the Board of the American Helicopter Society. He is a graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the U.S. Air Force Pilot School, Flight Test Engineers Curriculum. He hails from Redding, Conn.

bataille photo

College of Liberal Arts -

Bataille continued her education, earning a doctorate in English from Drake University. She serves as senior vice president for academic affairs for the 16-campus University of North Carolina system. She is responsible for academic program planning, research and international programs. The system has 182,000 students and includes five research campuses, two land-grant universities, two medical schools, five Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and the UNC-Pembroke, a traditionally Native American institution. Before joining UNC, Bataille served as provost and academic vice president at Washington State University, provost of the College of Letters and Science at the UC Santa Barbara, associate dean for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University, and chair of the Department of English at ASU. She has taught classes nearly every year she has been in higher education and has secured grants totaling nearly $2 million. She is a noted scholar in the field of Native American literature and the author of 11 books and numerous publications. Her professional career has involved issues of diversity, civil rights and ethnic studies. She is a full professor with tenure in the Department of English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She resides in Chapel Hill, N.C.

wilson-graham photo

College of Science and Mathematics -
Dianne Wilson-Graham, B.S., Physical Education, 1979

Wilson-Graham is a physical education consultant for the California Department of Education. Prior to her current position, she served as the Physical Education Department chair for Sequoia Middle School. She was also a physical education teacher at Sequoia Middle School and an adjunct faculty member at Pepperdine University. Wilson-Graham has received numerous awards of distinction, including being named the National Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year, the Southwest District Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year, the California Middle School Physical Education Teach of the Year, and the Southern California Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year. She was presented with an Honorary Service Award from the California PTA and an Honor Award for significant contributions to the field of physical education by the California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD). She has served as the California State team chair for Action for Healthy Kids; a federated council member for the California Interscholastic Federation; an executive committee member, Healthy Schools, Healthy People; founder, California Physical Education Summit; and special advisor to the Ventura/Santa Barbara Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. She is also an author whose titles include, “Let’s Talk, A Guide to Implementing the Physical Education Framework” and “Building Success with Biomechanics.” She lives in Newbury Park.

witten photo

Distinguished Service Award -

Recipient Witten is retired from ARCO, where he served as vice president of operations in Anchorage, Alaska. Witten arrived at Cal Poly in September 1945 as a 17-year-old freshman. He was assigned to Jesperson Dorm and lived there for four years. At that time, Cal Poly had 175 civilian students and 500 Navy
Preflight students on campus. That number grew to about 3,000 World War II Veterans who enrolled at Cal Poly courtesy of the G.I. Bill. Following graduation, he worked as an engineer with PG&E before embarking on a 30-year career with ARCO. During a 20-year time span, he worked to develop, construct and operate the Trans Alaska Pipeline. He is an avid Cal Poly volunteer and supporter. He is a charter member of the President’s Cabinet and the Baker Forum. He has been a member of the Cal Poly Alumni Association board of directors since 1979, serving in many capacities including president. He has chaired the task force for the Professional Development Center and served as a member of the University Governance Steering Committee. Witten is involved with Rotary; SCORE, Counselors to America's Small Business; the Red Cross; National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

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