

University of San Diego

**Digital USD**

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USD Magazine

USD News

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Summer 2021

## USD Magazine Summer 2021

University of San Diego

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UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

# USD MAG

*Summer 2021*

## MEETING OF MINDS

*San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria '00  
and USD President James T. Harris  
sit down for a wide-ranging  
conversation.*

# DEAR TOREROS



The best thing that ever happened to me — besides meeting my wife and becoming a father — was the core curriculum in my undergraduate days at John Carroll University. I had decided to attend JCU, a small Catholic college in Cleveland, Ohio, mostly because the soccer coach called and told me I could play on the team. That, and the red brick buildings, grassy quad and large oak trees made the place look, to my 17-year-old self, like college was supposed to look. Besides soccer, I went to college because

I assumed it was the path to a good job and a prosperous life.

During my first semester of my first year, I was enrolled in Introduction to Religious Studies. The professor was a wise, compassionate, inspirational Jesuit priest who challenged us to consider what the purpose of our lives was and encouraged us to explore how religious traditions could inform the process of finding our answer to that question. Beyond what we studied, there was something about the professor, an unmistakable, extraordinary goodness, that

fascinated me. That class, and that professor, changed my life. It was the first time I sensed that what I most deeply wanted was more than a good job and a prosperous life.

The second-best thing that ever happened to me was the co-curriculum at John Carroll. During my sophomore year, while studying late one night in the student center, I saw a flyer advertising resident assistant applications. They must have been desperate for male applicants, because I got the job. The RA position led to involvement

in student government, campus ministry, community service and more — all of which allowed me to meet other wise, compassionate, inspiring individuals. Slowly, through their mentorship, I came to understand that the purpose of JCU was not to field a winning soccer team or to offer the credentials necessary to get a good job. Instead, I realized, the mission of Catholic higher education is to help students discover their most authentic selves while inspiring them to offer their gifts and talents to make the world a better place.

My career in Catholic higher education — including the past 14 years at USD — have confirmed that my story isn't unique. I've had a front row seat to the ways so many USD students have been transformed by their experience as I was by mine. The vision of our founders, of the life-altering potential of an encounter with beauty, goodness and truth, is alive and well.

Now more than ever, I'm convinced that the mission of this university is precisely what our world most needs. The holistic education we offer continues to help students discover who God has created them to be and to inspire them to dedicate their gifts and talents to address humanity's urgent challenges. I can't think of an endeavor more meaningful or important. I am, therefore, honored and excited by the opportunity to serve the USD community in the role of Vice President for Mission Integration.

*Michael Lovette-Colyer '13 (PhD)  
Vice President for Mission  
Integration*



# STAFF BOX

**[president]**

James T. Harris III, DEd

**[vice president, university advancement]**

Richard Virgin

**[associate vice president, university marketing and communications]**

Peter Marlow

petermarlow@sandiego.edu

**[editor/senior director]**

Julene Snyder

julene@sandiego.edu

**[senior creative director]**

Barbara Ferguson

barbara@sandiego.edu

**[editorial advisory board]**

Sandra Ciallella '87 (JD)

Lynn Hajar Hoffman '98 (BBA), '06 (MSGL)

Minh-Ha Hoang '96 (BBA), '01 (MA)

Michael Lovette-Colyer '13 (PhD)

Kristin Scialabba (PhD candidate)

Rich Yousko '87 (BBA)

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**[mailing address]**

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University of San Diego  
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**[website]**

[www.sandiego.edu/usdmag](http://www.sandiego.edu/usdmag)

**[be blue go green]**

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## #TOREROSTOGETHER

Throughout all the challenges of the past year, alumni, parents, employees and friends provided the support to make this another successful year for our students.

Thank you for proving once again that we are #TorerosTogether.

To make a gift, visit: [sandiego.edu/give-now](http://sandiego.edu/give-now)



University of San Diego

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Image of San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria '00 (BA) is provided courtesy of the City of San Diego.

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# TORERO NEWS



*[looking sharp]*

## DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

**Torero Closet provides students with professional attire**

by *Julene Snyder*

A spacious meeting room on campus was transformed this spring into a well-organized clothing boutique, all due to the generosity of donors. Temporarily set up for students to visit by appointment in order to select appropriate attire for interviews and jobs, the

Torero Closet “shop” was staffed by members of the Parent Advisory Board, who helped advise students on clothing selection for a professional look and arranged for complimentary alterations if needed.

“This effort truly speaks to the desire to lift up every student to

set them up for success,” says Director of Parent and Family Relations Renda Quinn. “Our USD Parent Advisory Board recognizes the importance of first impressions and feeling confident in an interview.”

The shop was inviting and well-organized, with full-length

mirrors, clothing racks, shelves and tables offering up an array of handbags, shoes, dresses, women and men’s suits and separates.

The Torero Closet was originally the brainchild of Assistant Vice President for Student Life Cynthia Avery, EdD, who led the effort to build a USD Food Pantry for students in need. Over the past five years, the pantry morphed from a space tucked away in a hallway of the Student Life Pavilion to a large private office space that grants access to registered students with a key code.

“The passion and determination

of current Parent Advisory Board President Marco Alessio '84 (BBA), who is the parent of Alexandra '21 (BBA), helped us to secure this private space," explains Quinn. "Within the pantry was a rack of clothing for students for job interviews, but it just wasn't enough."

USD Parent Corps Chair Stephanie Kourie — mother of Nathalie '19 (BBA) and Pascale '22 — took the lead for the next effort, which was to conduct a clothing drive to collect enough new and gently used clothing and accessories to create a complete "shop."

"We did a clothing drive last year for these fabulous kids, so we've been waiting for an opportunity to get them kitted out," Kourie explains. "I really enjoyed setting up the 'boutique,' it looked like somewhere I would enjoy shopping"

"It was great to have no restrictions and know I could walk out with something I liked that fit. My favorite outfit I selected was a red dress," says Vicenta Martinez Govea '21 (pictured). "I also picked out a blazer, dress pants and a few blouses."

"I loved how a couple of the girls were very concerned for the students who were coming after them and didn't want to take as many outfits as we were giving them. They were so considerate," says Kourie. "My favorite experience was helping a visually impaired student to choose several suits, shirts, ties, belts and shoes, as well as some business casual outfits for his new job after graduation. I only wish he could really see how handsome he looked."

After helping 35 students at the event, the Parent Advisory Board has decided to continue this effort each semester in order to continue helping students in need to dress for success. 🌐

*Want to learn more and see how you can help? Email [parents@sandiego.edu](mailto:parents@sandiego.edu).*

[perseverance]

# OPENING DOORS

## MacDonald Community Scholars on giving back

by Elena Gomez

Each year, a new cohort of four first-year students become MacDonald Community Scholars. The scholarship's founder, Scott MacDonald, launched this scholarship at USD in 2017, leading to recipients contributing hundreds of hours of community service.

His recently published book, *Education without Debt: Giving Back and Paying It Forward*, examines the student debt crisis and what can be done to fix it.

Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering first-year student Brittaney Espinosa-Arevalo (pictured) moved to the U.S. from Mexico City at the age of 11. The move required her to learn a new language while finding a way to excel at her studies. That life experience is now helping her to serve others.

As a MacDonald scholar, she receives \$5,000 every year while she attends USD; in turn, she volunteers 10 hours each week to mentor students and help staff at the Barrio Logan College Institute (BLCI) — the same institute she attended in high school that prepared her for college.

"It's really nice that I can be here for BLCI students, since I've been there before," she says. "I tell them, 'It's going to be OK, you're going to get the hang of it. It's just a matter of time and a matter of consistency.'"

Melissa Arana '21 (BS/BA) was part of the first cohort of USD MacDonald Scholars. "As a freshman, I didn't really know anybody," she recalls. "The Mulvaney Center opened doors for me to

connect with people from different backgrounds, different majors, different ages — everything. It gave me a safe space in which I felt represented and welcomed," she says.

Over the past four years, she's taught soccer to students through YALLA San Diego, tutored students in Linda Vista and, most recently, helped two local restaurants during the pandemic through the Logan Heights Community Development Corporation.

"Every Friday, I walked around the community, introduced myself, asked them how they were doing and if they had received any help, then made sure there was follow-up. I was able to connect with two restaurants and we

made the switch from having a physical menu to having QR codes printed and put on their tables for free," says Arana.

This effort boosted their businesses and made employees feel safer while at work, she says. She's hoping to bring her university experience back home to Panama.

"As engineers, we always try to make things better. Our education system back in Panama is lacking a lot of tools I've been exposed to here in the United States," she says.

Espinosa-Arevalo also believes in paving the way for others to pursue a higher education. "If I can do that for others then, I'm all for it." 🌐



DANIEL TELLES





COURTESY OF DEE KAYALAR

[intentionality]

# HELP JUST A CLICK AWAY

**TEAM networking platform keeps Toreros connected**

by Elena Gomez

**T**he University of San Diego's Torero Employer and Alumni Mentors (TEAM) program is USD's version of a LinkedIn-meets-Facebook platform.

TEAM provides a space for new connections through networking and mentorship, exclusive to the Torero community. One major difference from bigger social sites is that all TEAM users volunteer to be a part of it and are open to providing support and career advice to current and past USD students.

"This platform makes every

Torero just a click away from reaching out to one another and seeking support," says the Career Development Center's Assistant Director of Alumni Career Engagement, Dee Kayalar.

The platform has five different functions to help users make connections within the USD community: Flash mentoring connections allow alumni and students to connect and share career advice; the group function lets users join communities based on shared interests/industries; the alumni job board is where open positions

are shared with the community and users can connect directly with job posters; the peer-to-peer function is a place for students to connect with one another and share experiences; and the discussion forum provides a space to post events, campus updates and more.

"What essentially makes a difference in the job search is not only working on your personal branding or applying for jobs, but coupling that with very intentional networking," explains Kayalar.

"TEAM gives students the access to connect with net-

working prospects and alumni contacts within their preferred industries and companies. When they go to the flash mentoring connections functionality of the platform, they can actually use advanced search functions to filter down alumni by where they work, where they live, what they've majored in and what industry's they're working in, so they can identify those networking prospects and connect with them directly," adds Kayalar.

The platform makes those connections easy to develop. Users are able to reach out openly to other users by connecting in the way that they're most comfortable — via text, video conference or messaging. Users can also join and use their LinkedIn or Facebook profiles to connect.

There are currently more than

4,000 Toreros on the platform, an increase of more than 600% since the platform was created in 2017. Out of this group, more than 2,000 are alumni and more than 1,300 are students.

The platform has become an essential part of networking for the Torero community. Since its creation in 2017, TEAM has become an essential networking tool. The numbers are impressive: There are currently 685 users — USD students, alumni, faculty and staff — engaging back and forth via more than 3,500 messages. To add to that momentum, more than 40 job opportunities were posted or referred by alumni from January through March 2021.

“People are considering transitioning industries or transferring skills to other areas because they may have been furloughed or laid off as a result of the pandemic,” explains Kayalar. “Also, our more established alumni — who might be in career transition due to the current circumstances — can look to see what else they might do with their talent and skills,” says Kayalar.

USD’s Admissions and Student Affairs divisions are now also using the same hub, under a different name, to connect with future Toreros through the Torero Ambassador Network. That network was launched as a direct response to the pandemic as a way to welcome prospective students and transition them to the TEAM platform once they become students, supporting them from day one of their academic journey.

Moving forward, the Career Development Center team is looking to create specialized communities within the platform for different regions, such as in the cities where Torero Clubs are located. 🌐

[big-hearted]

# THE FUTURE IS COMING

## Major gift to School of Business for finance

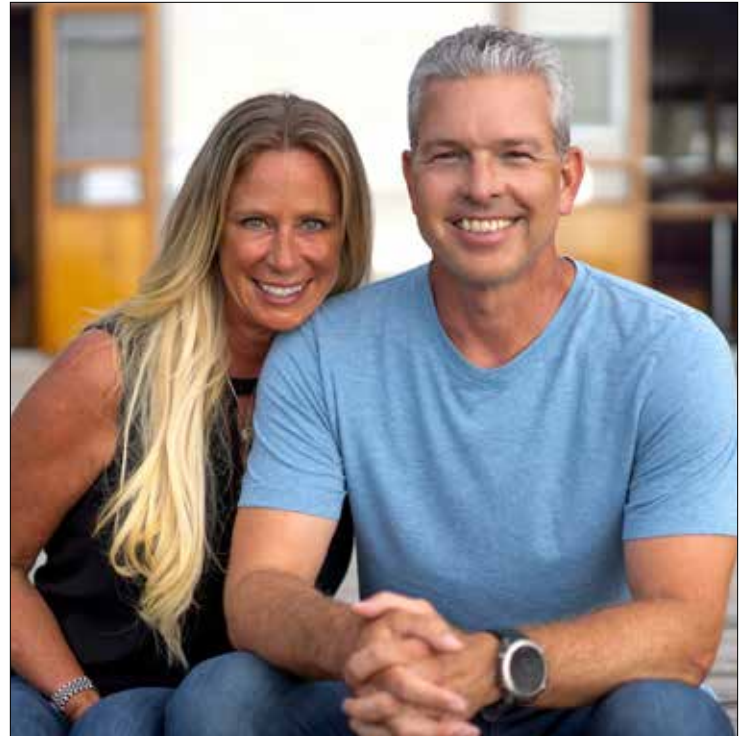
by Julene Snyder

This spring, the School of Business received a major gift toward the creation of a finance lab as part of the new Knauss Center for Business Education. The gift was made through the generosity of Board of Trustees Treasurer Robert R. Dean ’94 (BBA) and his wife, Trina (the couple is pictured at right).

“We made this gift for many reasons, but primarily as a way to show appreciation to, and belief in, the future of USD,” says Dean, whose daughters, Mackenzie ’20 and Madison ’21, are both Toreros. “I received so many benefits from my USD business degree, and the fact that my college tuition was almost [entirely] covered by financial aid. It was important to pay it forward. We also wanted to build positive momentum in the hope other alumni would join the effort.”

The new 84,000-square-foot Knauss Center for Business Education will unify all School of Business functions, tripling the size of the school’s space. Among the offerings will be the finance lab, active learning classrooms, seminar rooms, a graduate lounge and team collaboration space.

As a first-year student, Dean knew from the get-go that he would be majoring in business with an emphasis on finance. “Two of my favorite classes, finance and investments, and two of my favorite professors — Daniel Rivetti and Dennis Zocco — helped me find my career path. Funding and putting their names on the finance lab is a small token of appreciation and way to honor



ANDERS CARLSON

them,” Dean says of what will be known as the Daniel Rivetti and Dennis Zocco Finance Lab.

He says when looking back at his time on campus, what still stands out are the people he bonded with. Above all, he treasures “the friends and amazing relationships built during that extremely meaningful time.”

Dean is effusive about the benefits the finance lab will have for School of Business students. “A modern business school will better prepare USD graduates for the workplace environment,” he explains.

“Office buildings and working environments have changed so much over the years; the new Knauss Center for Business Education will help more business

majors gain better skills with the latest technology and resources. This will not only make USD business graduates more attractive to hire, but will attract the brightest and best students to pursue a USD business degree.” Ground-breaking for the center took place in April of this year; it’s scheduled to open in August of 2022.

Dean, who is the vice chairman of the San Francisco Giants, is heartened that the university will provide business students with the tools they need to succeed.

“A Bloomberg terminal would have been an amazing tool to have in a finance classroom when I attended,” he notes. “I can’t imagine how much more learning could be accomplished with a finance lab today.” 🌐



BARBARA FERGUSON

[fortitude]

# SUPERHERO, ACTIVATE!

**Cailyn Ann Teague is in a league of her own**

by Allyson Meyer '16 (BA), '21 (MBA)

Sometimes there isn't a roadmap forward. For Cailyn Ann Teague '21 (BA), that's not a barrier, but rather, an opportunity to chart her own path.

Pursuing a political science major with minors in psychology and economics from the University of San Diego, Teague's educational achievement is admirable if one were to stop there. However, this native San Diegan raised the bar with the determination she's exhibited in achieving this success.

Since she was 9 years old, Teague has known she wanted to become a prosecutor, motivated by her interest in law and her desire to help others. Access to faculty members in the USD School of Law — as well as the chance to observe a law class — made USD the right school for her.

In fall 2019, Teague officially became a Torero. Much to the amazement of faculty and fellow students, Teague is set to graduate this May, earning her undergraduate degree in only two years.

This is made even more remarkable by the fact that the 19-year-old Teague is one of only two USD non-transfer students, ever, to have earned an undergraduate degree in just two years.

What does she credit for this success?

"My superpower is my Autism Spectrum Disorder," says Teague, who was diagnosed with the disorder during her senior year of high school. "I have this superpower and it's really cool."

Teague credits the support she received early on from her

older honorary sister Camille and her friends Zoe and Stephanie for getting her to the point where she's embraced the disorder.

"It was scary at first," she admits. "I didn't know anything about it. They taught me it's really awesome. They recognized me for me."

Focusing on the positive is what drives Teague to claim autism as her superpower; especially because she sees it as something that's played a prominent role in her educational path.

"I'm really academically focused. It helps me a lot with my memory, with concentration," she says. "I can be in a zone for a very long time and basically tune out everything around me. I can stay studying for hours at a time on the same subject without getting bored. It's what helps me a lot in school."



Teague, who's completing her bachelor's degree with a jaw-dropping seven classes this spring, is already setting her sights on a new educational journey: law school. She sees it as a natural next step in her desire to protect people. Having experienced bullying when she was younger, she's motivated to help others.

"I don't want other people to feel this way," she says. "I want to make sure people follow the rules and no one gets hurt."

This mission is spurred on by her desire to share her own journey with others, hoping to inspire people through her accomplishments, and more important, the challenges she saw as opportunities and chances to grow, change and further explore who she is and what she can do. "Try as hard as you can," she says. "All you can do is your best."

Sharing her story is one way Teague feels she can increase awareness for neurodiversity, ultimately helping the community understand the beauty in her experience. That starts with representation.

"A lot of people with autism don't see others with autism. You don't hear very many neuro-diverse stories," she says. "If you don't have role models, if you don't have representation, it gets really hard."

That's what pushes Teague forward. In her 19 years, she's blazed her own trail, guided by her biological maternal grandmother who told her that every time someone told her no, she should take that as a challenge.

As Teague prepares for law school, she's already looking ahead and setting her sights on the next goal.

"I want to be the first Supreme Court justice with neurodiversity. People need to see that," she says. "If we don't challenge what can be done, we'll get nowhere." 🧠

[cutting-edge]

# PRACTICALLY REAL LIFE

## Virtual reality tools for nursing students

by Julene Snyder

A unique challenge has arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic: How to find a way to give nursing students training in hospitals and clinics in order to complete clinical requirements at a time when such facilities are closed to them?

A 2020 Song-Brown grant of nearly \$100,000 from the California Healthcare Workforce Commission has allowed the Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science to purchase equipment and software that does the next best thing.

Clinical Associate Professor Deanna Johnston, PhD, says that virtual reality tools enhance student learning. "This program makes it more real for the students, as if they were standing

inside the exam room," she says.

These virtual reality learning tools augment the use of "standardized patients" — people recruited and trained to take on the characteristics of real patients, giving students the opportunity to learn and to be evaluated on learned skills in a simulated clinical environment.

Students like Elizabeth Growdon '21 (MEPN) are enthusiastic about using virtual reality scenarios to provide a robust, interactive learning experience.

"This is more interactive," she says. "It puts you on the spot and feels more like real life than other options that aren't in the hospital. Training in the hospital is the gold standard, but since we can't do that, this feels like the next

best thing."

Growdon liked the experience of using the new tool in one of her on-campus labs. "There was a little bit of pressure, which I liked. I also liked that I had my classmates here to give me help when I needed it."

Learning in this type of 3D environment allows students to learn and make mistakes, and re-do procedures in various scenarios, something that's not possible in the real world. The school intends to purchase more of these units — each comprised of goggles, a controller and a laptop station — that will help students in areas that cannot be simulated in labs, such as working with pediatric patients or mass casualty events. 🏥



CAROL SCIMONE



COURTESY OF JAMES D. POWER IV

[dedication]

# GENERATIONS OF GENEROSITY

## The legacy of the J.D. Power name at USD

by Krystn Shrieve

**J**ames David Power III revolutionized the auto industry when founding J.D. Power and Associates. He was third in a line of five generations of sons to carry the name that's synonymous with quality and integrity. At the University of San Diego, his dedication to excellence, the importance he placed on education and the role he played in helping students achieve invaluable hands-

on work experience will endure.

Known to family, friends and many around campus simply as "Dave," the legendary entrepreneur (pictured) died on Jan. 23, 2021, at the age of 89. His legacy at USD, however, lives on through his son, James D. "Jamey" Power IV.

"It's a challenge to walk in the footsteps of such a remarkable man. He had an impact on society, he was an entrepreneur,

he was a great husband, father and friend to many," says Jamey of his father. "It's tough to think of yourself as being able to fill those shoes."

The way Jamey does that is by passing on to others the values his grandfather passed on to his father and his father passed on to him — values such as serving the community, the idea that knowledge, truth and beauty are inextricably linked,

and the belief that we're put on this earth to make an impact.

"He did everything with integrity," Jamey says. "He had a modest approach to philanthropy."

Like father, like son.

The younger Power carries many titles at USD — an alumnus from the class of 1985, a 2006 recipient of the Author E. Hughes Career Achievement Award, former vice chair of the Alumni Association Board of Directors, former chair of USD's most recent fundraising campaign, *Leading Change: The Campaign for USD*, a past USD parent to two second-generation Toreros and

a former USD trustee.

And while Jamey and his wife, Julie, have supported USD in many ways over the years, including annual support for the endowment of scholarships in general and a specific scholarship fund for middle-class families, what Jamey found most gratifying was giving \$50,000 in December 2013 to create the Career Development Center's high-impact Summer Internship Award Program. Awarded annually, it honors the professional achievements and personal values of his father.

The gift is funded through the Kenrose Kitchen Table Foundation, named to honor the origins of J.D. Power and Associates — the street where the family grew up and the kitchen table Jamey and his siblings sat around while helping their parents stuff and address envelopes and tape quarters to questionnaires — always with George Washington's profile facing up.

Robin Darmon, director of USD's Career Development Center, says that in summer 2020, 86 students received awards due to the generosity of seven donors. Since its inception, additional donors — and groups such as USD's Parents Association Board — have joined in to help grow the internship fund.

"Supporting students so they can experiment with career opportunities changes the trajectory of their lives," Darmon says. "They leave the experience with a better sense of what they enjoy professionally and what they want to pursue. They finish with newfound confidence and have added value to an organization or community."

This gift honors the family's dedication to education, while strengthening USD's endowment

and giving students invaluable work experience.

"One of the things we're proud of is that we were able to help students who are caught in the middle," Jamey says. "Families with means and wealth are OK. And families who come from lower economic areas, or are faced with other challenges, have scholarships and other resources available to them."

The Power family started out squarely in the middle class. Dave worked his way through school at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. To save money, he lived at home. Years later, when Jamey was a student at USD, the success of his father's company wasn't certain. Jamey relied on merit scholarships, work-study jobs and student loans — working in the registrar's office, at a photocopy shop and delivering children's furniture for a local business.

The values that Dave Power instilled in Jamey, he has, in turn, instilled in his own children.

His eldest son, James D. Power V, who goes by J.D., graduated from College of the Holy Cross like his grandfather. Like family members before him, he's now a teacher at an inner-city charter school in Sacramento, California. Second son Michael, who graduated from USD's Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering in 2018, works on a continuous glucose monitoring device for Dexcom. Jamey's daughter, Laura, who graduated from USD in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in psychology, is dedicating a year of service through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps working with the homeless community in New Orleans.

So, at USD, the legacy of the J.D. Power name is truly generational. 📖

## [AROUND THE PARK]

### Top Public Service Ranking

USD was recently ranked first in the nation by *Washington Monthly* for its commitment to public service. The score was calculated by five performance measures: the number of students who serve in the military, the institution's dedication to community service, the voting engagement of students, the number of alumni who are active in the Peace Corps and the number of students who complete a term of service with AmeriCorps.



### Kroc School Redesigns Website

USD's Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies unveiled a redesigned website this spring. The new site "creates an engaging experience that informs and inspires prospective students with the right content at the right time," explains Assistant Dean of Marketing and Advancement Krista Kokjohn-Poehler. Faculty research, video, imagery and stories from students and alumni are prominently featured.



### Knauss Center for Business Education

Construction for the new Knauss Center for Business Education has begun. Dean Tim Keane describes the center as "a hub for innovation and collaboration." Combined with a fully renovated Olin Hall, the complex will include 120,000 square feet of active learning spaces to support a holistic student experience. The Knauss Center was enabled through the generous support of USD Board of Trustees Chair Don Knauss and his wife Ellie.



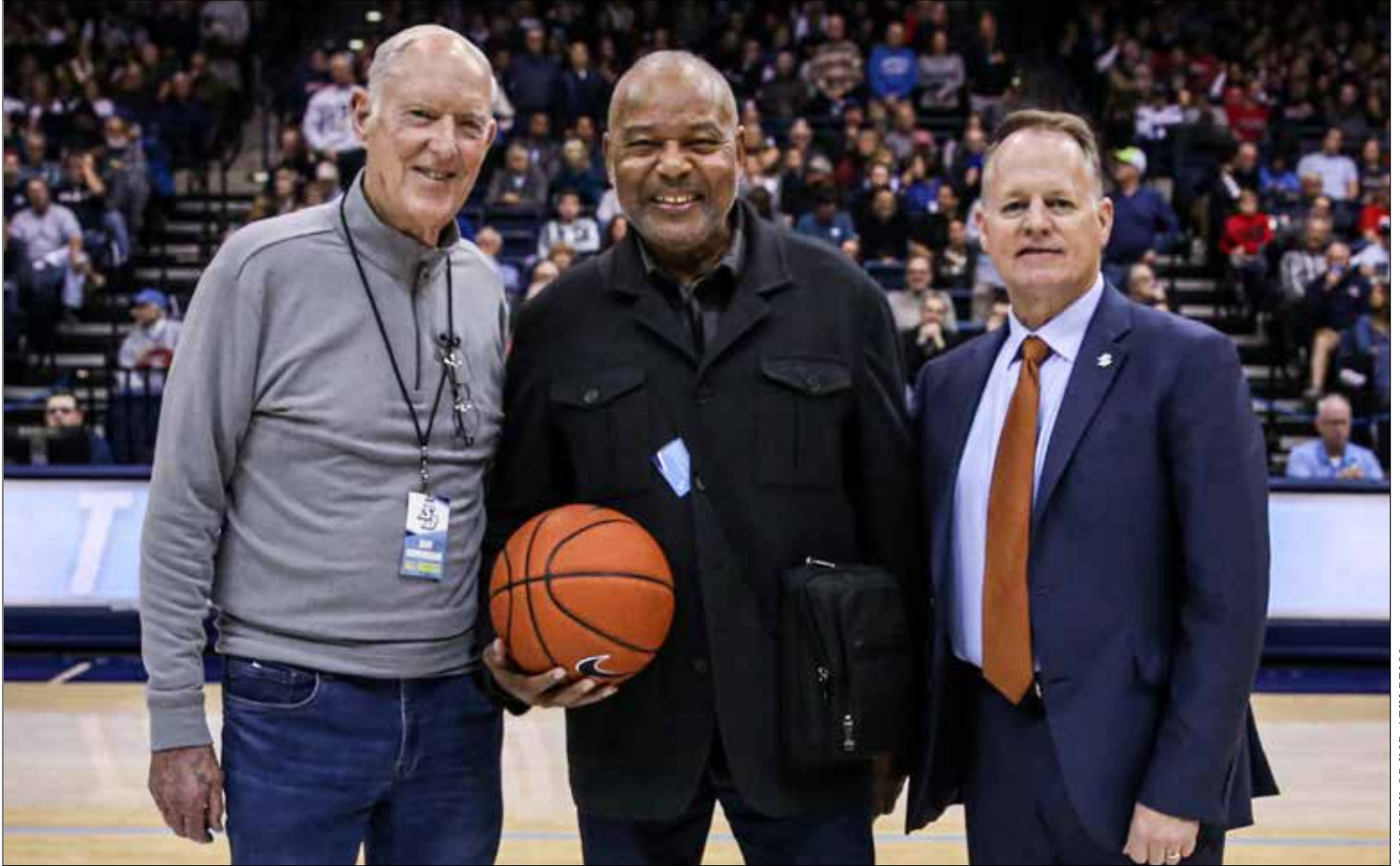
### Provost Gail Baker Takes on New Role

The Association of Chief Academic Officers (ACAO) has named USD Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost Gail F. Baker, PhD, as the new president of the organization. Her term will span 2021-22 and is effective immediately. "I am honored to lead this organization at a time when the role of the provost is growing in complexity," says Baker, who has more than 30 years of experience in higher education. She has held the role of provost at USD since 2017.





# TORERO ATHLETICS



COURTESY OF USD ATHLETICS

[veracity]

## UNFAILINGLY GENEROUS

**Fund named for legendary basketball coach Bernie Bickerstaff**

by Karen Gross

At USD, as it did across the country and around the globe, George Floyd's tragic death sparked a critical conversation, prompting a key question: How could USD — and the athletics department in particular — do better?

"We recognized there was a

need to enhance the experience of our Black scholar-athletes, in large part, because they shared their perspective with us immediately," says Associate Vice President and Executive Director of Athletics Bill McGillis.

And so emerged the Bernie Bickerstaff Diversity and Inclu-

sion Fund, whose monies will be used to enhance and expand diversity and inclusion education and training for staff, administrators and students, and to seed initiatives and programs developed to support USD scholar-athletes.

The fund has raised more than \$60,000 to date through a

private fundraising effort that has been supported by approximately 70 donors. And fittingly, it's named for the university's first Black head coach — a man so revered in the USD community he "belongs on the Mt. Rushmore of USD greats," McGillis says.

If that sounds hyperbolic, consider Bickerstaff's biography. Born and raised in tiny Benham in southeastern Kentucky, his father and grandfather were both coal miners who spent years toiling underground. Bickerstaff's high school basketball team was forced to travel 44 miles round

trip to practice at the “colored” school, while the white school was in walking distance.

After moving to Cleveland and briefly playing at a community college there, he worked at a steel mill and almost quit the game for good before driving out to San Diego at the invitation of Cal Western’s head coach Bob Kloppenburg. But a few open games at USD changed his plans and, as it turns out, his fate.

“Well I think the alarm finally went off,” says Bickerstaff ‘68 (BA). “I had a maturity problem. But USD’s professors, coaches and administrators were all very patient. It was always about character, integrity and fairness. And that’s basically the way I’ve tried to live my life.”

At 25, Bickerstaff was hired as the team’s head coach and from there went on to a storied career in the NBA that’s stretched across decades, teams and roles. He currently works for the Cleveland Cavaliers as a senior advisor. Despite his professional success, Bickerstaff is endlessly humble and helpful. His extensive connections and generosity drew so many fellow USD alumni into the NBA that they formed a unique fraternity among coaches.

“People look at me now and just shake their heads,” he laughs. “They’re trying to figure out how this small school could turn out all these coaches and administrators.”

Much of the credit goes to Bickerstaff himself, who keeps in touch with most everyone he has ever played with or coached. “The message I tell them is we all need to help bring one along,” he says. “Let’s spread out. That way if something happens, we can put out a hand and help out.” 🏀

**Bernie Bickerstaff ‘68, flanked by John (“JC”) Cunningham on the left, alongside Associate Vice President for Athletics Administration Bill McGillis.**



COURTESY OF USD ATHLETICS

## SKIP AND CINDY HOGAN TENNIS CENTER

### Lester T. Vessell Championship Courts

**ADVANTAGE, USD:** A new \$6.5 million facility for USD women’s and men’s tennis teams was recently opened on the west side of campus on the site of the former tennis courts. It was made possible entirely by private gifts. **THE CLUBHOUSE:** “The new space features eight brand-new resurfaced tennis courts, named the Lester T. Vessell Championship Courts, and our first-ever tennis clubhouse,” explains Senior Associate Director of Athletics Marcy Lanoue. The clubhouse provides a base for scholar-athletes and coaches, and houses a formal locker room, a team lounge and study commons. “The facility also features an athletic training room to service scholar-athletes’ medical needs as well as those of opposing teams when we welcome them for competition.” **STATE-OF-THE-ART:** Located across from the new Learning Commons building, the center is adorned with USD’s distinctive Spanish architecture. The facility features a scoreboard and grandstands with chairback seating. After a full year of silence on the sidelines, Lanoue notes, “We can’t wait to have fans back in the stands again.” **GAME, SET, MATCH:** Given that San Diego is located in one of the most sought-after climates in the world, university athletes can train, rain or shine. “This will be one of the most premier tennis facilities in the country,” says Lanoue. “USD is going to be the top destination for tennis programs to compete against our men’s and women’s programs.” And not only will the new facilities add to scholar-athlete experience, but will be an alluring recruitment tool at the highest level. — *Chloe Zakhour ‘20*







# MEETING OF MINDS

## A CONVERSATION WITH SAN DIEGO MAYOR TODD GLORIA '00 AND USD PRESIDENT JAMES T. HARRIS

*by Julene Snyder*

There's no denying that San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria '00 (BA) is breaking new ground as the city's first person of color and first openly gay person to hold the office.

An honor student who graduated summa cum laude with a dual degree in history and political science, Gloria's career has been devoted to public service. He was first elected to the San Diego City Council in 2008, ran for re-election unopposed in 2012, and was unanimously elected to serve as council president that same year.

In 2013, Gloria became the interim mayor upon the resignation of Mayor Bob Filner, and held the office until 2014. In 2016 he was elected to California State Assembly and was re-elected in 2018. During those years he served as both assistant majority whip and majority whip. He announced his candidacy for mayor in early 2019 and was elected mayor in November 2020.

Recently, he met with University of San Diego President James T. Harris for a wide-ranging conversation.



Todd,  
 It was a pleasure  
 meeting you. While our  
 visit was brief, it is  
 clear to me that you are  
 a bright, personable young  
 man with a great future  
 ahead of you.  
 Best wishes.  
 George Deukmejian  
 6/27/89

**Tell me about your childhood and growing up in San Diego. What was that like?**

It was a good childhood. I come from a working-class family, so it was a childhood with limitations in terms of economic resources. I was blessed with incredible parents with great morals and values that have served me well throughout my whole life. I have to say that I won the geographic lottery by being born in San Diego. It's hard to move here now, financially, right? Being born here gave me a running start. There were certainly challenges for a variety of reasons, but, on the whole, I was born at the right place to the right people. I'm lucky.

**What did your mom and dad do for a living?**

I like to refer to them as a maid and a gardener, since that's what their professions were when I was born. They married young and they had both struggled. I think in many ways they served as life rafts for one another.

They provided a great foundation for my brother and me. Over time, my dad found his way to the defense industry, which had good paying jobs for people who didn't have high educational attainment. Both my parents went to high school, but they didn't go to college. And my mom did a very long series of jobs until she literally just worked herself into disability. She's the hardest working person you'd ever meet. It's a blessing that we still have her.

**I understand that you were engaged in political activities at the age of 10. How did that get started?**

I'm sure you've talked to students at USD who are undecided majors,

*San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria '00 (BA) as a child alongside then-Governor George Deukmejian in 1989.*





who may be in their second or third year and are unsure what major they want to declare. I was never that guy. We may not have had a lot of resources, but my parents always took the newspaper. I read the paper every day as far back as I can think of. And I'd watch the news from 5:00 until 7:00 each night, both national and local. That was of interest to me, in the way that other kids were excited to go play sports or read comic books. And there were different outlets for me to express that, one was as a finalist in the May-

or for the Day contest in 1988. That was the first time I ever came to City Hall.

That was an opportunity to express what I'd learned by reading the paper and watching the news. I took what I'd learned and put it into an essay. And the thing about politics is that if you're willing to work for free, they'll put you to work.

So as soon as I had a bus pass and my parents were willing to let me ride by myself, I just started volunteering on campaigns. And they put me to work. I certainly wasn't old enough to vote, but I

was old enough to register people to vote. And it went from there.

**That's fantastic. Tell me, how did you make the decision to come to USD?**

Three reasons. Number one is that my grandmother's home — the home my father was raised in — is literally in USD's backyard. While no one in our family had ever gone to college, I played at her house, and she was a good Catholic grandmother who was always saying, 'That's where I want you to go to school.' I give her credit for planting the seed and making it real. I remember her saying, 'It's

***President Joe Biden alongside San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria.***

right there. It's not abstract. You could come have lunch with me and then go to class.'

Second, when I was in high school, I was chosen for the Enterprise Fellows Program, which was where I first met Congresswoman Susan Davis. And one of the facilitators was a woman named Rosario Iannacone '92 (BA), who was a student at USD. She was basically a mentor in the group. And I joined her on campus, which was



my first time there. Again, see it, be it, touch it, feel it, make it real.

And third, USD — to be very direct — made it financially possible. My parents didn't save for college and I was rapidly coming up against reality. I wrote the applications, I did the essays, I took the SAT, I found the money to pay for the applications. But then I had to start figuring out how I was going to pay for this. I got into a number of schools. I was very fortunate, but USD was the only one that was going to make it financially possible.

I was happy to assume the financial burden for myself, but I didn't want to put that burden on my parents, knowing how much they had worked to put the possibility for me to go to college in me. And I also had a notion that I wanted to do public service and I understood that you don't go into public service to get rich. You sure as heck can't do it with heavy student loans, plus your rent. Growing up the way I did, I understood quickly what it costs to live.

When I got the letter about getting a provost scholarship to attend USD, I know it was a massive relief to my parents who would have done anything to make it possible for me to attend. But to be able to do it without having to burden them tremendously financially ... it was an iterative process, going from a little boy in my grandmother's backyard to that letter in the mail that brought me to USD.

### **Do any faculty members from your time at USD stand out for you?**

What's interesting is that some of the ones I was closest to — or am still closest to today — were not people whose class I took. The relatively small size of the university and the ability to connect with folks in a very personal, direct way meant that I was close

to those whose classes I took as well as those I didn't take.

I think of Dr. Evelyn Kirkley, who was lifesaving. And Del Dickson ended up being my political-science adviser, although I never took his class. In truth, I think I was too scared to take it. But we were both political nerds and just connected. How would you have a chance to talk to them or build a relationship with them and continue talking to them 20 years later at another university? That's possible at USD; that's one of the things that make it special.

### **How was your experience on campus? Were you openly gay at that time? Or is that something that came later in your life? Was it at all difficult?**

Yeah, it was. I don't want to offend you, but it wasn't great. At least not then. As a gay man of color in the mid-'90s at USD, it wasn't ideal. Maybe the sadness that you hear in my voice is in part because I went there intending to have the full experience, and having come from a public high school, where people knew who and what I was, and they weren't particularly accommodating. I thought that college presented an opportunity for a fresh start, and it wasn't that.

At the time, USD PRIDE had a different name. They met in secret with security and it wasn't seen as being a safe place. But as much as I sort of mourn not necessarily having the carefree undergraduate experience that I thought I was going to have, well, it's kind of like my parents when I was a little boy. I confess that I often was frustrated by our lack of resources or their lack of education and their inability to help me with some of my tough homework, and seeing some of my classmates who had a better hand. But in retrospect, I look at my upbringing and think, 'I didn't get the parents I wanted.

I got the ones I needed.' And there's something similar about that with USD.

USD caused me to have to get out of my comfort zone and become an activist on campus and work with the administration, my fellow students and faculty members to try and drive some measure of change. And I think we were successful in doing that. And the skill sets that I learned in doing that — things that were outside of my comfort zone — are the skills I draw upon today for the work I do as an elected official.

### **You once said in an interview that your experience at USD helped shape your passion for civil service. Is that because of how the activist part of yourself emerged and that you found your voice here?**

I was one of two students that petitioned to change the name of what it was then into USD PRIDE, and that involved me having to stand before the student body senate and file that application, and put my name to it, and then argue for it. My suspicion is that usually these sorts of things are rubber stamped: 'You want to start a group? Fine. Here you go.' That was not our situation. We had to argue for it. I had to be fast on my feet. And we got the vote; it was approved. It wasn't unanimous but it was approved.

I spent eight years on the city council, four years in the state legislature and I'm now the mayor. I'm constantly having to articulate and argue on behalf of others, to try and pull a vote, to put together a majority to get something done. So, that time gave me those skill sets. It was something that I frankly didn't think was possible. I don't know that I left USD thinking I could be an elected official myself. In fact, I thought exactly the opposite. But I felt as though I had skills

that were relevant and useful to a public sector environment. And that's exactly what I got. I earned my diploma, walked off the stage and then went to work.

### **I didn't realize that you are the first Latino mayor of San Diego as well as the first openly-gay mayor. The New York Times ran a piece that said you may be the most powerful mayor that San Diego has ever had. Do you agree with that assessment?**

Well, no. The law hasn't changed to give me any additional powers that the last group of several mayors have had. It is true that that there's a different political alignment, but that doesn't necessarily mean unanimity or that folks are on the same page. It's very much part of my job to endeavor to bring us to the same page.

But I think what the *New York Times* may have been referring to is an attitude or a set of priorities that I bring into this job: I want to pursue a big and bold agenda. I recognize this is a temp job; at best, I get eight years, so I've got to make the most of it. Coming from my background, I recognize what it is to use the tools and the resources that are available, and I can use them to improve the lives of many, many other people.

Every day, I've got to come in and give it my best, because that might be the day that I can change the life of this person or that person. Think about Mayor O'Connor, all those years ago, deciding to host a mayor for a day contest. Then this kid from Clairemont, this nerdy kid who's reading the newspaper, gets invited and I'm sitting in the council chambers.

And here I am, 20-something years later, as an elected official.

### **What's your advice to students or those just out of college who are trying to rise to reach their dreams and pursue the kind of career that you've had, or in their own fields?**

***San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria  
being sworn into office in  
December of 2020.***

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I have two things in terms of the secret to my success: One is mentoring. I wouldn't be here without great mentors, the faculty members I mentioned before, Congresswoman Davis, who I met long before she was in the state legislature and Congress. There's nothing new under the sun, so you can seek out models that you can emulate or modify to match your times, your circumstances and your skills and strengths. And I've tried to do that in my career.

One of the things Susan Davis taught me is to listen more than you speak; when you listen, you gain and learn a lot. And you adapt to your circumstances and learn from someone else's success and failures. Learn from other people. The other thing is to really be passionate about what you do. I was the first to go to college in my family. And then, when I decided to be a history and political-science major, I'm sure my parents realized that it didn't seem like the most marketable degree to pursue.

If you can see in yourself what you're passionate about and then work toward that, I believe you can make a living. You can make a life from following your passion because you get rewards from it, and then others are attracted to it. And it will work. You may not get rich, but you'll be able to take care of yourself.

***Is there anything you'd like to add?***

USD has done incredible things for me. I'm extremely grateful. I appreciate the chance to maybe pay it forward a little bit. I enjoyed having this conversation and look forward to doing that in the years to come. 🙌









# Society's

## SUSTAINING FORCE

### CELEBRATING EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN

**E**ach year, the University of San Diego community celebrates women across campus who are creating positive change, dubbing a select group “women of impact.” The tradition continued in 2021, when a number of extraordinary women’s contributions during 2020 were celebrated.

*We are sharing stories of several of these women, along with select others, who use their knowledge, expertise and humanity to truly make the world a better place.*

*USD’s Women’s Commons defines a women of impact as one who lives the principals of social justice. “Through her work, activities and relationships, she supports others in finding voice, developing skills for transformation and understanding who they are called to be. Her community is not merely a place in which she exists; it is a place she actively improves.”*

*Join us in celebrating these remarkable women.*

#### What Matters Most

A lot has changed at the University of San Diego since Carmen Vazquez (pictured at left) began her tenure at the helm of USD’s student affairs division in 2005.

The west end of campus — once a quaint collection of one- and two-story Spanish Renaissance-inspired buildings dating back to the school’s founding — is now home to the gloriously modern Shiley Center for Science and Technology, USD Learning Commons and the soon-to-be constructed Knauss Center for Business Education.

Alcalá Park mainstays like the Hahn University Center and Colachis Plaza have also undergone major facelifts to accommodate the ever-evolving needs of 21st century Toreros. Relatively recent campus improvements include the Student Life Pavilion, Bosley Cafe and Fitness Center and the Camino-Founders Resident Hall renovation. While Vazquez has played a significant role in those critical campus upgrades, she takes her greatest satisfaction from achievements that aren’t formed from steel, concrete or glass.

“Building relationships with students is one of the main reasons

I got into education, and it remains my top priority,” she says.

“I think it’s the human condition that ultimately matters; how we live, how we are, what we know, what we do, how we treat one another. Forming those critical connections with students not only informs my work but the work of our whole team.”

For the better part of 16 years, Vazquez — who resigned from her position as vice president of student affairs at the end of the 2020-21 academic year — has maintained that clarity of purpose in her work. “Being an educator challenges us to think critically and encourage the free exchange of ideas, and that’s something that really attracted me to USD,” she says. “In fact, being at USD represents to me the integration of everything that I hold greatest value of. And that is faith, family and hope.”

A native New Yorker, Vazquez spent the first 25 years of her professional life in the State of New York college system, specifically at Stony Brook University. There, she worked to transform the residential life student experience, and carried many of those formative experiences forward with her as she journeyed across the country to San Diego, where she had accepted an offer to become UCSD’s assistant vice chancellor of student life.

While Vazquez enjoyed her experience in the UC system, the chance to integrate her core religious beliefs and values into her work at a Catholic institution was an opportunity she couldn’t pass up.

“When I was contemplating accepting the position at USD, I came to campus after the process, and, before I made a decision, I sat in The Immaculata,” she recalls. “Then I walked around into all of the chaplets, and the number of saints in the chaplets. At the end of making the rounds, and praying in each one, I said to myself, ‘All my friends when I feel troubled are here. How could I go wrong?’”

Now that a new chapter in life awaits, Vazquez is reflective about which experiences stand out most during her time at USD. “There’s almost too many to even count!” she says. Being able to meet His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in 2012 was an unforgettable moment. “Just to be in his presence, the feeling you get, is something I can’t really even begin to describe.”

Perhaps appropriately given her pending departure, Vazquez also loves the beginning — and ending — of the academic seasons. At the start of the fall semester, “there’s so much positive energy on campus, it’s just contagious!” She also treasures the joyous celebrations as students prepare for graduation. “To see our students so happy, so connected to themselves and each other, to their families and their faith ... it’s an experience I’ll always treasure.” — *Mike Sauer*

## A Life’s Work

Odesma Dalrymple, PhD, sees engineering as a catalyst for change. The associate professor of industrial and systems engineering at USD’s Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering uses her passion for her field to create learning opportunities, community partnerships and hands-on experiences that foster awareness about important social justice issues. In late March 2021, Dalrymple was named a Woman of Influence in Engineering by the *San Diego Business Journal*.

As a woman of color in a male-dominated field, Dalrymple sees the award as an opportunity to legitimize the impact that different perspectives can have on engineering, as well as the ways in which those shifting perspectives can change how socio-conscious innovations become reality.

“I think it is important to demonstrate that someone who has my identities, someone who defines their engineering in the ways I define my engineering, that they are legitimate. I think that’s what these awards and recognitions do,” says Dalrymple. “It helps legitimize the things that are not seen as the dominant ways of doing things.”

It’s the recognition of these nondominant perspectives that drives her in her work as an educator and a community member. Instrumental in developing connections between the engineering field and the community, Dalrymple has created partnerships with external organizations like the San Diego Blind Community Center while fostering on-campus initiatives such as the Engineering Exchange for Social Justice. She’s motivated to ensure engineering is a diverse and inclusive field that represents all the communities it serves. For Dalrymple, this starts with bringing new voices to the profession.

“To the many whose identities are not well represented at the table in the engineering profession, you are needed. Your perspectives, your experiences, your assets are needed in order for us to truly be able to create just, eco-friendly, socio-friendly, sustainable solutions that really address the needs of all,” she says. “You need to be at the table. You need to be here taking up space. You need to be here bringing your brilliance, bringing your potential, bringing your passion.”

With a career focused on inspiring the next generation of engineering leaders, Dalrymple has found her life’s mission: a dedication to ensuring that everyone has access to a field that can change the world. — *Allyson Meyer ’16 (BA), ’21 (MBA)*

 [sandiego.edu/odesma2021](https://sandiego.edu/odesma2021)

## A Fearless Accomplish

Elisa Lurkis is an extraordinary woman. In her role as director of development and alumni relations for USD’s Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering (SMSE), she is well-connected, reaching beyond the USD campus into the San Diego community and

across the globe — casting her sphere of influence far and wide.

“Elisa is a unique employee — especially in her role as development director,” says SMSE Dean Chell Roberts. “She came to us from Peace Studies with a genuine commitment to making the world a better place. Her passion extends far beyond the university and spills over into her weekends and evenings. She goes on marches. She brings in alumni who care about the Engineering Exchange for Social Justice.”

Lurkis works with students and partners with a passion steeped in social equity and justice. She embodies empowerment and serves as a role model to remind women, people of color and underrepresented communities that no dream is too big. No good deed too small.

“Elisa understands the value of supporting students in attending professional conferences where people within their field look like them — she knows how important it is for their development as engineers,” explains Rhonda Harley, who is the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) adviser and assistant director of career development for the School of Engineering.

When the NSBE USD chapter needed funding to send 20 students to their national conference, Lurkis stepped in and worked diligently on a partnership with her connections at SDG&E so that the firm would match the funds raised by the NSBE students.

“She spent countless hours coaching the NSBE president on how to write effective emails to solicit funding. She reached out to SMSE board members as well to assist with funding so we could raise as much as we could to be matched,” says Harley.

In all, the USD NSBE chapter raised \$27,000.

This spring, Lurkis was named as one of USD’s 2020 Women of Impact award recipients. “This recognition speaks to Elisa’s roots, her inner strength, her passion to make things better and to change the world,” says Roberts. “This desire for social justice is what makes her so unique and genuine, and it’s not limited to engineering or to her job, it’s a holistic dedication to everything in her life.”

Harley, who nominated Lurkis for the award, reflects back on a conference she recently attended. “I learned about the importance of moving from an ally to an accomplice; where you stand on the front line of injustice and fight as hard as those who are directly impacted. Elisa centers fairness and equity unlike any other colleague I have worked with. She is an accomplice in every sense of the word.”

— *Michelle Sztupkay*

## A Determined Trailblazer

As a resolute problem solver, Maddie Orcutt ’21 (JD candidate) sees her career in the law profession as a way to build relationships. As the 2020 Women of Impact graduate student award recipient, Orcutt was honored to be nominated by colleagues in the USD School of Law. She’s quick to share the credit, noting her work is a team effort with contributions from many campus and community partners.

A third-year law student, Orcutt has held numerous leadership positions, including her role as the 2020 president of Pride Law and her involvement on the University Senate and Associated Students Government Joint Taskforce on Campus Climate: Hate Crimes, Acts of Intolerance, Bullying and Harassment.

Orcutt currently serves as the co-chair of the Name and Gender-

Marker Change Clinic. The clinic, which was founded in 2018 by Robert Gleason '98 (JD) and Ashley Fasano '18 (JD), was developed to assist transgender and nonbinary individuals with name and gender-marker changes through the San Diego County court system. Orcutt credits the "strong legacy of leadership at the clinic" for establishing it as the supportive community it has become.

"I inherited this beautiful project," says Orcutt. "It means so much to me. It is my journey in making change at USD."

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the clinic operated through in-person events. With the transition to a remote environment, Orcutt was tasked with moving a primarily pen and paper operation online.

The clinic suspended operations for the spring 2020 semester due to the pandemic, but Orcutt worked diligently with her team to ensure it was up and running by the next school year. "The clinic was going to continue even in the face of the pandemic," says Orcutt.

Adapting training materials and growing her team to assist with the ever-changing environment, Orcutt worked to ensure a virtual clinic still provided clinic participants with a relational experience, one reflective of its mission.

For Orcutt, this experience has reinforced her commitment to a career in the law profession. "Law is a very relational practice, and sometimes we forget that," she says. "I'm lucky to have learned the practice of law as the practice of human relationships. It's life-giving."

As this woman of impact looks ahead to new opportunities, it's clear a commitment to social justice and community relationships will continue to drive her work.

"I'm using my career to make a difference, one way or another."  
— Allyson Meyer '16 (BA), '21 (MBA)

## Heart on Her Sleeve

A proud alumna, current student and staff member, Gabriella Rangrej '18 (BA), '21 (MA) is a committed Torero. Rangrej, who serves as the learning communities coordinator, was honored this spring as the USD 2020 Women of Impact staff award recipient.

Surprised and humbled by the award, Rangrej was touched by the nomination, describing it as a "life-giving" experience. "For me, it is a moment of cheerleading and celebrating that keeps me going. To be in community with such great women really felt special," she says.

At the start of the pandemic, Rangrej was part of the team that transitioned the Scholastic Assistant Program to a completely virtual format. The program, which connects Scholastic Assistant student leaders with first-year students, is an essential part of a student's academic and social transition to USD. However, with no roadmap for what a virtual program should look like, Rangrej praises her colleagues for their collaborative efforts to ensure the program continued. She sees this transition as an opportunity to incorporate innovative ideas that help the program better serve student constituents.

One opportunity in particular has been Rangrej's work to develop antiracism training for the students. "Beyond how much Gaby has accomplished, what stands out to me is the care and integrity with which she's done it," wrote her colleague in the award nomination. "Gaby is a passionate voice for change and seeks to integrate social justice into what we do and how we do it as a division of student affairs."

With a go-to attitude and a lot of energy, Rangrej sees her in-

volvement as a way to give back to USD. "I love being able to give back to the community that shaped me into the person and woman I am today."

Coming to the university as a first-generation college student and staying on as a staff member after graduation, Rangrej has found her home. In addition to her role as a staff member, she is also a part-time student in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences Higher Education Leadership program. Through this program she will receive a certificate in restorative justice facilitation and leadership and is currently pursuing her Action Research project, focused on understanding whiteness and anti-racist attitudes in student leaders.

In all she does, Rangrej is motivated by a desire to learn, grow and ultimately create change in her community.

"I wear my heart on my sleeve," she says. "I put my all into everything I do." — Allyson Meyer '16 (BA), '21 (MBA)

## An Affection for Connection

The journey is what excites Jillian Tullis, PhD. An associate professor of communication studies at USD, Tullis was honored in February as the 2020 Women of Impact faculty award recipient. While she's thankful for the recognition, she says it's the intrinsic rewards, rather than the extrinsic ones that motivate her.


Born and raised in California, Tullis has been a USD faculty member since 2015, teaching topics on health communication, and, more specifically, fostering class conversations about communication in end of life and health care settings.

She sees connecting with students in these courses as a highlight of her career. "They have a willingness to go along for the journey," says Tullis, who uses hands-on and experiential opportunities to engage students in meaningful discussions and active learning. In this work, Tullis has established herself as an educator who expands traditional teaching into realms of new thinking and understanding. Last fall, Tullis along with May Fu, PhD, chair and associate professor of ethnic studies, launched the course Black Lives Matter: Interdisciplinary Perspectives.

The course, which brought together faculty thought leaders from numerous disciplines, sought to explore issues of systemic racism and the historical practices and policies that have perpetuated inequities today.

"This speaks to the spirit of why I came to USD. Classes like this are different from the traditional ones," she says. "We can take the time to sit and explore these issues. What does it mean to say 'Black lives matter'? How does it look in our world?"

Tullis' work to create change extends to her relationships with colleagues, who see her as a mentor and leader. "She is the embodiment of social justice at the University of San Diego, within the college and beyond," wrote her colleagues in the award nomination. "This year, Jillian co-organized and developed the Black Lives Matter course while serving as the most senior Black faculty member coordinating Black faculty concerns and transformation work. She constantly, endlessly gives. She doesn't make it about her, she always wants to make the space a little more breathable for the rest of us."

For Tullis, mentorship and leadership positions have arisen organically and have created rewarding opportunities to advance the work being done on campus. "If people are looking for advice, [I'm] happy to step into that role," she says. — Allyson Meyer '16 (BA), '21 (MBA) 



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black judge's robe over a red top and a red beaded necklace with a red flower, is seated at a desk in a courtroom. She is holding a blue pen and looking towards the camera. The background features wood-paneled walls, a circular seal, and an American flag.

# THE SISTERS ALONE

A TALE OF TWO WOMEN WHO IMAGINED ONE FUTURE,  
BUT LIFE HAD OTHER PLANS

by Julene Snyder

Childhood dreams are by turns predictable, fantastic and – on occasion – prophetic. As we imagine ourselves in the faraway world of being a grown-up, with all the delicious freedom that goes along with it, we may not know exactly how life will unfold but think if we just follow the path, it will get us where we want to be.

Unless, of course, it doesn't. "As an undergraduate, I wanted to be a TV journalist," says Lorna Alksne '92 (JD). "And my sister, Cynthia, wanted to be a trial attorney. But she ended up being the TV talking head, and I ended up in the courts."

These days, legal analyst Cynthia Alksne '85 (JD) appears frequently on MSNBC weighing in on the issues of the day, while little sister Lorna is the presiding judge of the San Diego Superior Court. Those one-time imagined life paths? The old switcheroo.

From her home in Florida, Cynthia recalls an idyllic, if nomadic, childhood. "We grew up in different places. At first, my dad bounced around as a professor. We were in Virginia, we were in Norway, we were in Los Angeles, we were in Seattle, until he settled at UCSD and became the chair of neurosurgery there. I think of myself as a bit of a gypsy until we moved to San Diego when I was in seventh grade."

The sisters are close now, but their age gap meant it took a while to be on equal footing. "We had a wonderful childhood," says Lorna. "My sister is five or six years older than I am, so by the time I got into junior high, she was already gone. We always did family trips and things like that, but we really became close after I graduated from college."

Lorna earned her undergraduate degree from Mills College in the San Francisco Bay Area. Since leaving home, she's never lived in the same city as Cynthia.

***The Honorable Lorna Alksne '93 (JD) is the presiding judge of the San Diego Superior Court.***

"When she was at USD law, I was in college, but we talk every day, often more than once a day," she says with a laugh. "When there's not a pandemic, we go back and forth; I see her at least twice a year. And our kids, all of the cousins, are incredibly close."

### ANYTHING BUT TYPICAL

Cynthia studied for two years at UCLA before serving with the 1980 Ted Kennedy campaign and subsequently finishing her undergraduate studies at Georgetown. "Then I came home to USD for law school," she says.

She looks back fondly at her time on campus. "My favorite class was Allen Snyder's clinic by far. There's no comparison; my favorite thing to do was go to clinic. I think that's what got me interested in trying cases in the courtroom. The clinic program was outstanding and it was certainly my favorite."

All these years later, Snyder remembers her as a student. "Cynthia was a student in my early years at USD. I remember her enthusiasm and how she called everyone Sparky — better than trying to remember all those names," he says. "After she graduated, I also worked with her at programs held by the National Institute for Trial Advocacy. She's a person who always found some way to do meaningful work and enjoy it."

Her subsequent legal career post-graduation has certainly been impressive. A career federal prosecutor and expert on criminal law, grand jury and police investigations and confrontational interviewing techniques, Cynthia has tried more than 50 cases to verdict and analyzed thousands more.

When asked whether knowing confrontational interviewing techniques has come in handy in her career, she laughs. "Let me tell you, it was very helpful with teenagers," says this mother of four girls. "Interrogation techniques and waitressing turned out to be the two things that were my most valuable skills during those years."

Lorna, who was a School of Law Distinguished Alumni Award recipient in 2013, was described in a video celebrating that accomplishment as having an "anything but typical" time as a law student. She was married during her first year, became a mom at the end of her second year and was mother of two by graduation.

"USD gave her the flexibility and education to still succeed," said Supervising Judge, Family Law of San Diego Superior Court Maureen Hallahan in that video. She went on to note that the education Lorna received at the School of Law "gave her the confidence to accomplish everything that's she's been able to accomplish today."

"USD was the only law school I applied to," Lorna says, matter-of-fact. Like her sister, she also speaks highly of School of Law Professor of Clinical Law Allen Snyder. "He was one of my favorite professors and I stayed in contact with him."

Snyder says he remembers her most from a negotiations class. "She was always self-assured and sharp at finding angles others did not — and challenging the teacher," he recalls. "I also worked with Lorna years later when she was the presiding judge of the family law courts in the city. I was leased and impressed with her willingness to modify practices for the





benefit of the litigants who appeared without counsel. She had great ideas.”

While Lorna has many professional accomplishments, she says her involvement with implementing a case management system for San Diego’s family court system is a career highlight. “San Diego had such good success that there was a task force created by the State of California by the judicial branch in San Francisco,” she explains. “They put me on that task force and we ended up writing the rules and getting them adopted. I am very proud to have been a part of that. Case management is now mandatory in family law, and I helped write the rules of court and got it passed.”

Lorna is pragmatic when asked what advice she’d give to those considering a legal career.

“I had a very busy home life when I was a law student. I was really more focused on getting the degree and passing the bar. I’ve talked quite openly that it wasn’t my goal to be on law review or to be number one in the class. My goal was to get through it, and I’ve talked to students about it. I tell them, ‘If you can’t be number one it’s okay. You can still be the presiding judge. What you need is the reputation and the work ethic when you get out of law school.’”

Cynthia too, has some advice for those considering law school. “I can be pretty conservative on crime, but I’m a liberal on social issues. And when I went into being a prosecutor, there weren’t a lot of liberals who did that. Basically, liberals gave up that space and were all defense attorneys clawing to try to get something done. We gave away all that power, which was ridiculous.”

She tells those who want to change the world for the better through the legal system to con-

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*Cynthia Alksne ’85 (JD) is a frequent MSNBC legal analyst.*



sider becoming a prosecutor. “I say to kids, ‘If you’re liberal on constitutional issues, if you think the police need to be reined in, if you think a no-knock warrant means no-knock or dismiss, you should be a prosecutor.’”

As a prosecutor, Cynthia says that she was the best defense attorney in the courtroom: “Because if I determined that the person didn’t do it, I dismissed it. If the search was bad, I got rid of it. If the police officer was a problem, I didn’t use him on any of my cases,” she explains. “If there was insufficient evidence, we went out and tried to find more. So you’re in a position to actually do the right thing as a prosecutor. We gave up that space. We need to reclaim it.”

## THE OLD SWITCHEROO

As we all know, the best laid plans of any of us don’t always come true. That was the case with the sisters Alksne.

“When I was in high school, I looked at where Jessica Savitch went to college, since I thought I wanted to be a TV talking head,” recalls Lorna, referring to the then-weekend anchor of the *NBC Nightly News*. “I volunteered to go from La Jolla High School to San Diego High School through reverse busing,” she recalls. “That was so that I could be on the San Diego Unified TV network news. I did that for a semester.”

It wasn’t a fleeting idea. “When I was in college, I majored in international communication at Mills College,” a path that the school let her develop in her quest to be marketable as a hard news reporter.

“But as luck would have it, things intervened. When I graduated from school, I thought about going to graduate school in journalism, but after one trip to Europe, I decided to travel instead.” She did that for a few years before returning to San Diego.

“I took the LSAT and only applied to USD. I said, ‘That’s

where my sister went so that’s good enough for me.’ I took three or four years in between graduation and law school. At that point, my priorities changed.”

Meanwhile, Cynthia was building her own legal career. After earning her law degree, she “went right to the New York District Attorney’s office, then to the Brooklyn DA’s office.”

Never one to shy away from tough topics, she’s stepped up time after time. “When I was a prosecutor, I tried very hard to take victim cases. I was not a drug crime prosecutor; that wasn’t what I was interested in. I did elder abuse, sex crimes, domestic violence, civil rights, I did cases with victims.”

But then her family life intervened. “I tried two cases after my first daughter was born,” she recalls. “And it was a lot.” So she stepped away from the courtroom for a time, in large part to care for her four daughters when they were young.

“I started at MSNBC during the Clinton impeachment, right when I first quit trying cases,” she recalls. “I did that on and off for a few years, and then I didn’t for some time. But right before [Supreme Court Justice] Brett Kavanaugh was nominated, the girls had gone off to college, and the producers were the same people who had been there when I was at MSNBC before. They called me, and pretty soon I had a contract again,” Cynthia says with a laugh. “And before long, I had a studio installed in my basement.”

That’s where, for the most part, she does her on-camera work for the network, which has been supremely convenient during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, Lorna’s long-ago desire to become a TV talking head still pops up from time to time. “We did a San Diego Superior Court bench event with the media right before the pandemic

hit,” she recalls. “And I started off by saying I have a very soft spot for the media because my sister is on TV, even though I’m the one that’s supposed to be on TV. She’s the one that’s supposed to be in the courtroom.”

## EXACTLY WHERE I WANT TO BE

Of course, Lorna has much to be proud of, even though she doesn’t opine about legal issues on national television for an audience of millions. She was sworn in as court commissioner just days after giving birth to her third child. After a time, life intervened and the expert in family law spent a number of years at home taking care of her three children.

“Then I ran into a former presiding judge of the San Diego Superior Court, James Milliken, who asked me, ‘What are you doing?’ And I said, ‘Well, I’ve retired. I’m staying home with my kids.’ He said, ‘How’s that working for you?’ I said, ‘I’m going crazy. They go to school and I’m dying to do something.’

He said, “Well, why don’t you come pro tem for me in juvenile court?” I said, “But I don’t know anything about being a judge.” He said, “I know your reputation, you’re a quick study, you worked at a great law firm, you went to USD. You can do it.” So, I went to the courthouse and I watched and I read and I learned, and I listened and I watched all the different judges. And he said, “OK you’re ready.”

She served as pro tem judge for the juvenile court of independence, dealing with cases in which the state or county has removed children from their homes.

“We had to figure out whether to get them reunified or to put them in foster care or have them adopted. At first, I would do it once a week. Then twice a week and after a year, I was doing it almost every day, filling in for a judge that was on vacation or a

judge that called in sick,” she says.

“I got the bug. This was exactly where I felt like I wanted to be. I wanted to be back on the bench. I love the interaction with the lawyers from that perspective compared to arguing the case. I much preferred the judge side, and so I did everything I could to find a career in it.”

Elected by fellow judges to be presiding judge of the San Diego Superior Court in 2020, Lorna is just the third woman to hold the two-year position in San Diego County’s history. In the position, she oversees more than 150 judicial officers, a nearly \$200 million budget and hears cases as much as possible.

“I’ve sat in all the divisions in my career,” she says. “I have a civil settlement conference tomorrow. I’ve sat in criminal court when we first reopened after the pandemic. I did the first remote hearing so that I could test the technology. I’m comfortable in all the case types. I like to be a working judge so that I know what’s happening.”

Meanwhile, across the country, Cynthia continues to be called on to add her expert opinions on issues of the day on national television. That’s all fine and well, but what’s got her most excited on this day is receiving a coveted 10/10 score on Room Rater, a Twitter account that’s exploded in popularity in this time of ubiquitous remote video setups.

“How exciting was that?” she exclaims with glee. “You never know what catches their eye. The funny thing is, that room is from our house up north. I took a picture of it and put it on the monitor. So it’s not even the actual room, which is the basement studio.”

As for the future? Lorna says with a bit of a twinkle: “We’ve talked about having our own TV show. We’ll call it *Sister-to-Sister, Coast-to-Coast*.” 📺

# CLASS NOTES



[unfathomable]

## STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY

### Turning pain and trauma into action

by *Julene Snyder*

When Marcus Friedman '21 (JD) was invited to meet up with a group of friends from his undergraduate years in Las Vegas, he thought it sounded like great fun.

"We all used to meet regularly at a country bar in Boston," he recalls. "And even though I'm not a

fan of country music, I really liked that community; it was so diverse and dynamic, with people from all different backgrounds."

So when he got a call in San Diego — where he'd since relocated — to join a few of his old pals who were planning to go to the Route 91 Harvest Music

Festival in the fall of 2017, he saw it as an opportunity to spend some quality time together.

"It was a three-day festival, and we were going for the full weekend," he says. But on the third night, the unimaginable occurred. "All of a sudden, we started hearing this rapid noise;

it sounded like a busted speaker." Then he saw the panic of the people on stage. "I knew something was wrong when the noises didn't stop. Security told us to move away and I knew that wherever we were at that moment wasn't safe."

It was chaos.

"We all got separated, which was scary. I remember trying to stay low. I remember tapping my friends around me and saying, 'We need to move, we need to get out of here.' Once I made it out of the tent, I turned around

to look for them, and I didn't see them." He pauses, remembering. "There wasn't much time or choice to look for them. I knew that they were making their way out. I don't fully remember each stage of getting out of there. But we were lucky. We all made it to different places. And we all made it out OK."

Many more did not. The horrific event was the deadliest mass shooting committed by an individual in modern U.S. history; 60 were killed, hundreds were wounded.

Just a few months later, on Valentine's Day, Friedman noticed something odd on his Twitter feed. "I saw tweets that showed that Parkland, Florida was trending. 'Why would my hometown be trending?' he wondered. 'I told my mom, 'I think we need to turn on the news.'"

He was still grappling with the hurt and pain in the aftermath of Las Vegas; to realize that another mass shooting was occurring so soon was unfathomable.

"I was still dealing with all the emotions that came after Vegas," he recalls. "We watched all the news coverage of our hometown, of places we recognized, and realized that what happened to me just a couple months earlier was now happening in the place that I spent my high school years," he says. Although Friedman didn't attend Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, he lived just a few miles away; a lot of his neighbors had been students there.

Having two such terrible events happen in such close proximity to one another spurred him to action. "Seeing my old neighbors organize and become activists and create the national March for Our Lives movement showed me that I could be doing something as well. I think most people who experience tragedy — especially ones that bring up such emotion and pain — turn

to activism. They want to make sure that what they felt is not felt by anyone else."

Given these experiences, it's not surprising that Friedman is passionate about gun violence prevention. As a third-year law student, he applied for, and was ultimately awarded, the 2021 Julianne D. Fellmeth Public Interest Law Scholarship.

"I wasn't sure if my wanting to focus on gun violence prevention rights was something the Public Interest Law Clinic would be interested in," he recalls.

"I met with Bridget Gramme [the center's administrative director and supervising attorney], and asked her if this was something that the scholarship would cover. And she said, 'Absolutely. Just send in your application, describing what area of gun violence prevention you'd like to work in, and we'll consider it.'"

The bill he's working on, AB1057, will close a loophole for emergency Gun Violence Retraining Orders (GVROs) by including ghost guns — homemade guns made from readily available, unregulated parts — in the definition of items that can be seized items if a person is a threat to themselves or others. It's being sponsored by California State Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris of the 74th District.

"I really enjoy this work, focusing on and writing legislation," says Friedman. Early in his time working on the project, he was connected to a senior attorney at the Brady Campaign, a national organization to prevent gun violence, through the Center for Public Interest Law (CPIL).

"I've been analyzing bills not just in California, but in Nevada and New York to see which ones might need a little change in language to help them draft completely new bills regarding ghost guns or any other type of regulation to help make communities

safer," he says. "I can see myself doing something along this avenue after graduating and becoming a licensed attorney. I find it extremely rewarding." In late April 2021, Friedman was a witness presenting to the Assembly Public Safety Committee in support of the bill that he wrote, which passed on consent through the committee, a good sign that it will ultimately prevail.

Julianne D'Angelo Fellmeth '76 (BA), '83 (JD) retired in 2019 after serving as the CPIL administrative director for 30 years. As the scholarship's namesake, she's excited that students are applying the skills they've learned to issues they care deeply about.

"Marcus' project is the perfect example of using the law to create systemic change," she says. "And the fact that he's actually drafted a bill that is now pending before the California Legislature is a testament not only to his hard work and dedication, but to the real-world training that the School of Law is able to provide to its students."

Virginia Nelson '79 (JD), who funded the scholarship, is thrilled to help students carry the legacy of Julie Fellmeth forward as they pursue their devotion to policy change to help the public.

"Truly, I am the lucky one to participate in this process," Nelson says. "To witness firsthand the determination, drive and inspiration these extraordinary law students devote to their areas of focus, where they already make a difference, cements in my mind that our future is in the right hands."

Friedman credits many others, including Fellmeth and Nelson, for their support.

"This is something that I really wouldn't be able to do on my own," he says. "I'm so thankful that I have their support and guidance in helping me through this process." 🌐

## 1960s

[1965]

**MARY DUGAN (BA)** reports that her Harlequin novels are still in world-wide publication even after 18 years. "Most recently, Sweden has reissued all of my books and Japan has published them in Manga graphic novel format," she writes. "It is interesting to see how the Japanese have visualized my characters. I like it!"

## 1970s

[1970]

**KEVIN TOOHEY (BA)** recently retired after 52 years in the transportation industry, including airlines and railroads.

[1975]

**GOLDIE SINEGAL (BA)** is a real estate agent focusing on La Jolla and central San Diego. "I'm also privileged and excited to help clients with their real estate needs throughout San Diego County," she writes.

[1979]

**ADAM SARANCIK (JD)** was certified as the first impact trainer in the nation for the Positive Coaching Alliance, a national organization to create a character-building sports culture. He also published second editions of his books, *Coaching Champions for Life — The Process of Mentoring People, Athletes and Players* and *Takeaway Quotes for Coaching Champions for Life*.

## 1980s

[1980]

**THOMAS LOFFARELLI (MBA)** earned his JD in Law in 1989 and practiced law until 2004. "I worked to help small businesses get started, put together investments in real estate to create passive income for clients and operated a property management business," he says. "I try to get clients interested in investment real estate at a young age." He married in 2017 and is living in La Mesa, California. "I enjoy racquet sports, hiking, body surfing, jogging on the beach, climbing Cowles Mountain, wine tasting, dancing, live concerts and theater performances. I'm an avid



sports fan who played senior softball three times a week, until this pandemic closed us down. Stay safe and be well!”

**MARTIN MATES (BBA)** writes, “Back in 1982, the USD career placement office helped me land a job with Reliance Electric. After 39 years working for Reliance Electric and ABB, I will start a new career with Weir Minerals, based in Salt Lake City, Utah.”

**[1982]**  
**ED McPHERSON (JD)** was recently honored in *Billboard Magazine* as one of *Billboard’s* Top Music Lawyers for 2020. He was also on the *Los Angeles Daily Journal* list of California’s Top (50) Entertainment Lawyers. He recently received a considerable amount of press for cases that he is handling for Kelly Clarkson and Dr. Dre.

**BOB O’CONNELL (BA)** published a book, *The Art of Spies*, in late 2020. It is available on amazon.com.

**[1983]**  
**JAMES HITCHCOCK (BBA)** writes, “I passed certification as an accredited investment fiduciary in April 2018, achieved my 10-year anniversary with my broker-dealer, Raymond James, a year later in April of 2019, along with now my 37th year overall in the financial services industry since graduating from USD’s School of Business.”

**[1984]**  
**NELLY ENGLUND (BA)** reports that she retired in July 2019 after 34 years with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

**SIOBHAN RHEA SURRACO (BA)** earned a master’s in gerontology and works as a director of resident services for a continuing care retirement community. “I volunteer at an RCSJ retirement community where several former USD professors live,” she writes. “Blessed to be married for 30+ years and have three amazing kids.”

**VICTOR TORRES (BA), ’88 (JD)** was named a Superior Court Judge by California Governor Gavin Newsom on Sept. 8, 2020.

**[1985]**  
**MOST REV. JOHN P. DOLAN (BA)**, auxiliary bishop of San Diego, is co-editor of *When a Loved One Dies* by Suicide and *Responding to*

*Suicide*, books that offer comfort, hope and healing.

**LINDA MARAMBA (JD)** recently completed her term as chair of the American Bar Association Section of Public Contract Law — a national association of attorneys and professionals in private practice, industry and government service — which is focused on federal, state and local public procurement.

**[1987]**  
**NANCY CRONIN (BA)** was appointed president of the New Mexico Trial Lawyers Association, an organization she has been a member of since 1995.

**[1989]**  
**KAREN CADIERO-KAPLAN (BA)** recently relocated after 40 years in San Diego. I am now living in New England and started the Wisdom Collective for Arts, Literacy, Healing and Movement. I’m also working with school districts and communities facilitating workshops on community health and self-care.”

## 1990s

**[1990]**  
**BARBARA LEEPER (BA)** just started her sixth year of working remotely as a writer for a medical communications agency. She and her husband, Jim, live in the Boston area with their daughter, who is a fifth-grader.

**[1991]** 📖  
**JUDGE CHARLES PORTER (LLM)** writes: “Transferred the University of San Luis Obispo School of Law — an unaccredited law school of 20 years approval, of which I was the founder and executive officer — to the Monterey School of Law, a California accredited part-time school, the former becoming the accredited San Luis Obispo branch of the latter.”

**ERIK SWAIN (BBA)** is “alive and well in Boulder, Colorado, with a wife, teenage boys and a company that removes hate and racism from social media ... wishing I could surf Black’s Beach tomorrow morning.”

**[1992]**  
**LAWRENCE INDIVIGLIA (MBA)** has released his best-selling non-fiction book, *126 Days, 11 Minutes: Our Love Story*.

**STACEY (ANDREWS) McCA-RTY (BA)** says she and her husband, Chris, have called Nashville, Tennessee, home for 13 years. “Our oldest, Chase, is attending Marquette University and we have a senior, junior and sophomore in high school. I recently transitioned from running the Vanderbilt Leadership Academy for nine years to managing the office of the Faculty Senate for Vanderbilt University, and enjoy the new work.”

**[1993]**  
**TIFFANY FOO (BA)** is the author of a middle-grade children’s book series whose protagonist is a teenage version of her grandmother, Ruby Foo, a well-known restaurateur in Boston during prohibition. In the first book, *Finding the Foo Identity*, teen Ruby discovers a vibrant family history, discovering a photograph that led to her father’s overseas adoption. The second book, *Ruby Goes to Spain*, was released in February 2021.

**ANGIE GOSSETT (BBA)** has joined the Commander Navy Region Southwest as the regional non-appropriated human resources manager supporting 10 installations in California and Nevada. “I’m based in San Diego and support approximately 4,500 employees across the region in the Navy’s Fleet and Family Readiness programs,” she says.

**KRISTIN (BUNKER) TILLEY (BACC)** resides in Poway, California, with her two children, Brinnon, 12, and Raelynne, 7. A CPA with Coastal Tax Advisors, she recently completed her 28th tax season. “Very good career return on my degree from USD,” she says. “Go, Toreros!”

**[1994]**  
**JOHN LAMBERT (BBA)** reports, “After returning from RVing through 18 states during 2020 and working remotely along the way, we decided it was a prime time to close our latest Colorado chapter of the past 8+ years and launch into discovering the next exceptional place to call home. We sold our house in November and have chosen to rent for a few months in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, as the first stop on our scouting trip. We don’t know exactly where the next stop on the tour will be in the spring, but we’re embracing that unknown and trusting we’ll have further guiding lights to illuminate our next paths. Sometimes we’ve found you have to

purposely close some doors to have new doors open. Onward!”

**KATHERINE “KAT” (WOOD) NORRIS (BA)** writes, “I have been busy raising four teenagers, age 14 to 19! I work as an independent bookkeeper for small businesses that may only need help with setting budgets, re-orienting or organizing their profit and loss and reconciling their books. I am also certified as a professional in human resources, so I can help with HR questions such as employee benefits. I love being back in Kansas City, close to family and friends, but I miss Southern California all the time!”

**DANIEL WILLIAM SULLIVAN (BBA)** invites Toreros who find themselves in San Francisco to come by his winery facility, Treasure Island Wines, for a complimentary tasting and tour. He is teaching his 20th ski season at Lake Tahoe.

**JONAH WEINBERG (BA)** has returned to San Diego. He writes, “I was recently appointed executive director for a new nonprofit organization, the San Diego Kindness Initiative, which was established to assist members of the San Diego Jewish community who have been affected by financial insecurity and poverty.”

**[1995]**  
**VINCENT MOISO (BA)** writes that “As an entrepreneur I am constantly growing and scaling. I am running multiple businesses. Right now, I am also a shareholder and president of a glass company manufacturing product across the border in Baja California selling internationally. Check it out at [glasstile.com](http://glasstile.com). I am also currently in development of an alter ego brand, called Surthrival Gear, which will launch in January 2021. You can see it soon at [surthrive.us](http://surthrive.us).”

**WILLIAM (MATT) MORGAN (BA)** is “recovering from November 2020 surgery and undergoing treatment for skin cancer, resulting in a 50% hearing loss. Since earning a master’s degree in Library and Information Science from San Jose State University in 2004, I have specialized in information management, data protection and computer forensics investigations, preserving intellectual property for Fortune 500 companies.”

**ANDREW SERWIN (JD)**, the U.S. chair and global co-chair of DLA Piper’s Cybersecurity and Data Pro-

tection, Privacy and Security practices, received a *San Diego Business Journal's* 2020 Leaders in Law award.

[1996] 🎓

**CATHERINE NORTHCUTT (BBA), '19 (MA)** writes, "Happy to share that I graduated with a master's degree in higher education leadership, as well as a leadership coaching certificate from USD's School of Leadership and Education Sciences, earned my ACC-ICF coaching designation and started a new position as community outreach and master's in real estate recruitment manager for USD's School of Business — all in 2019. I now serve as a coach for USD's Center for Educational Excellence Race Talk Coaching Circles. I also lead and facilitate a diversity, equity and inclusion initiative for USD's School of Business."

**DAVID PHILIP MULLINS (BA)** has released his second book, *The Brightest Place in the World*.

**LAURA (TAYLOR) NAMEY (BA)** shares that her young adult novel, *A Cuban Girl's Guide to Tea and Tomorrow*, was selected for actress Reese Witherspoon's book club last November. Set in the charming English countryside, the book follows a Cuban-American girl who goes to visit family far from her Miami home.

**LARRY PEREZ (MA)** is now the assistant dean of students at Florida Memorial University in Miami.

[1997]

**TAMALA CHOMA (JD)** was recently appointed as vice president and general counsel at Valley Presbyterian Hospital in Van Nuys, California.

**SANDRA HANNA (BA)** has owned and operate a wellness center in Laguna Niguel, California, for nearly 20 years. The center specializes in chiropractic, acupuncture and plant based medicine.

**MICHAEL VIOLA (BACC)** and Jennifer Ross-Viola '97 (BA) live in San Juan Capistrano, California, with their children, William and Benjamin. Michael runs PURE Restaurant Solutions, an accounting firm, and Jennifer is a high school biology teacher. "Go Toreros!" Michael says.

[1998]

**ROHANE ZAPANTA (BA), '01 (JD)** was appointed to the San Diego Superior Court by then-Gov. Jerry

# HOME COMING & FAMILY WEEK

OCTOBER 12-17, 2021

We may not know what the future holds, but we are planning to get Toreros together as is tradition every fall! Join alumni, students, family and friends for a week of celebrating Torero pride, gathering with old and new friends, and reconnecting with the USD community. Learn more at [sandiego.edu/hfw21](https://sandiego.edu/hfw21).



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COURTESY OF ANN LAWANI '18 (MSN)

[ buoyancy ]

# ON THE FRONT LINE

COVID nurse Ann Lawani fights for her patients

by Carol Scimone

**A**nn Lawani '18 (MSN) is the kind of nurse you want caring for you when you're sick. She's compassionate, she's knowledgeable and she understands the pain of personal loss.

"My undergrad was in health-care administration," Lawani says. "Right after graduation, my brother passed away. And in

my mother's grief, she remembered the nurses who took care of him. I wanted to be that person for others. That's what motivated me to go into nursing."

Lawani graduated from USD's Master's Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN) and worked for Sharp Memorial Hospital in cardio-pulmonary nursing until the pandemic hit. Then she piv-

oted to become a COVID nurse. Because of her skills and compassion, she was recently promoted to lead clinical nurse on the COVID unit at Sharp Coronado. She's also currently working toward her PhD. Her doctoral research focuses on palliative care and helping patients plan for a dignified end-of-life.

Of course, Lawani never expected to face a global pandemic so early in her nursing career. In doing so, she has learned there are only so many hours in a day. "My professors have been really supportive and encouraging, because they know the situation I'm in now."

She also finds it helpful to meditate, journal and pray.

"Sometimes it's about coming home and just crying in the shower, and that's what I need that day," she says. Unfortunately, for Lawani and her health-care colleagues, those days have become more frequent.

"I think the energy we had as nurses when the pandemic started, we don't have quite as much of that energy anymore. It's been rough. We're emotionally exhausted." And like all hospitals, those in the Sharp HealthCare system face a serious shortage, and not just of dwindling ICU beds.

"It's one thing not to have ICU beds," she points out. "It's another not to have enough staff. We're severely short-staffed now because we can't get travel nurses. They go to hotspots, but now, the hotspot is everywhere, so there is a shortage of nurses."

Unfortunately, Lawani does not see an end to that problem in the near future.

"I foresee that a lot of nurses are going to change professions. We're already exhausted, we're burned out and we're starting to take it personally when we're trying to put a patient on BIPAP (Bilevel Positive Airway Pressure) and they die — even on BIPAP, even on that much oxygen, the patient passes away."

Lawani knows that patient death is a part of being a nurse, but not at the levels she's seen since March 2020. She recently had a patient who was near death and wanted to speak to



his granddaughter. The patient only spoke Japanese and his granddaughter was in Japan. Lawani enlisted help from others so her patient could say goodbye, warning the granddaughter that the conversation would be very brief.

"She said, 'OK, I just want to tell him I love him, and I want to hear him say it back.' So we did that. I took [his] mask off and tilted it to the side where he could still get some oxygen." Lawani's patient was able to say a few words, then she put the oxygen mask back on. He passed away a few moments later.

"It becomes personal," she said. "When I leave work and I see people without masks and I see people packed together at parties, it breaks my heart."

She worries about all of her patients. She's seen perfectly healthy people contract COVID-19 and end up in the ICU on a ventilator. Some will not survive. Some will. And those who do often suffer from the effects of the virus long after discharge.

"I've seen what COVID can do to a body," she says. "It slowly destroys your lungs. It feels like you can't breathe. A patient said to me, 'I feel like I'm drowning. I feel like I'm in the water and I can't breathe. It feels like I'm underwater.' That's what it feels like."

Despite all the sadness and exhaustion, Lawani says her patients inspire her.

"They've given me the spirit of resilience. I always knew that I was resilient, but it's a new version of me that I didn't know was in there. I'm sure it's the same for most nurses. Even though I'm physically and emotionally exhausted. I want to go back to work. I want to give my best. There's a joy in me when a patient goes from ICU to being discharged." 🌟

Brown. She is co-chair of the California Judge's Association Law School Wellness Committee that brought an Ethics and Wellness Webinar to the USD School of Law last fall. She also is a member of the Diversity Committee of the USD Law Alumni Board and enjoys speaking to community and student organizations about her experience as a Filipina in the legal profession.

[1999]

**SARA COOK (BA)** writes, "After attending culinary school in Portland, I have moved back to Denver. My husband and I are opening an amazing restaurant named 'Wing-Wok.' We hope to shake up the organic quick-food market. Keep a look out as we hope to expand quickly."

## 2000s

[2000]

**SAMUEL KEVIN BARGER (JD)** recently retired as a senior assistant district attorney after 17 years as a criminal prosecutor in the communities north of Atlanta. He and his wife reside in northern Georgia.

**SCOTT BERGEN (BA), '20 (MED)** has started as the communications and marketing director at Louisville High School in Woodland Hills, California. Wife Nicole '02 (BBA) owns her own market research and strategy firm. "We live in Calabasas, California, with two future Toreros," he says.

**DAVID BYE (MBA)** joined Universal Electronics Inc. in the spring of 2020, loves working from home during COVID-19 and moved to Indiana to be and closer to his son.

**DAVID FELL (BBA)** writes, "After living in the Philippines for two years, my wife, daughter and I moved to Omaha, Nebraska, and bought a 34-year-old business called The Cookie Company. We ship cookies nationwide! We miss San Diego and USD very much, and hope to visit as soon as COVID ends!"

**KATHLEEN HUGHART (MA)** reports that after earning her master's degree in history from USD, she worked twice as a writer for the Joan B. Kroc Center's Women Peacemakers program. She adds, "I am currently a gallery guide at the History Center in Balboa Park."

[2001] 🎓

**TORI HUMPHREY (BA)** writes, "After teaching for 10 years and spending seven years at home raising my two daughters, I launched Dreams33 in 2020. Dreams 33, a 501(c)3 in 2020, which provides financial resources and support for current or former foster youth attending college. We believe that every student has a right to an education, and we work to give these students a normal and fulfilling college experience. We offer educational grants (up to a full-ride grant) and micro-grants, which allow students to apply for money to cover a specific educational need." Learn more at [dreams33.org](https://dreams33.org).

[2002]

**ADRIANA ARISMENDI (BA)** has begun her teaching career as a business instructor at Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming.

**CHRISTOPHER CALACCI (BA)** writes, "It's been a while USD, and I miss you. After graduating in 2002, I moved back up to Orange County and started a career in construction/home building/real estate. I married my best friend, Amy, in 2011 and we have two children, Emmy (2016) and Reese (2018). Emmy was born with an extra chromosome, also known as Down Syndrome. Emmy is my favorite human and I am forever grateful for the gift that the good Lord gave me. We are advocates for respecting all life, inclusion for all, and sharing the beauty and love that is Down Syndrome."

**ANNA SALUSKY (JD)** is excited to share that she started a law firm in 2021. Salusky Law Group specializes in plaintiff's side employment law, wage and hour class action, PAGA litigation and personal injury claims. The firm is located in Long Beach, California, and services clients throughout Southern California.

**JAN WENDLER (LLM)** was elevated to partner at WilmerHale in January 2021. He is based in Frankfurt, Germany.

[2003]

**COLLEEN CLEARY (BA)** was promoted in April 2020 from supervisor to casualty manager and is celebrating 18 years with her company. "I've been heavily involved in the diversity and inclusion space there, acting as a board member for one of our ERGs and

am also a member of California's inclusion committee."

**CHRISTOPHER HEIM (BBA)** was promoted to senior corporate counsel at H+K Strategies.

**COURTNEY RICHARDSON**

**(BA), '04 (MA)** joined the same-day delivery marketplace, Shipt, in late January as chief people and community officer; the position has a core focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. The team also leads Shipt's charitable giving and community impact efforts.

**JENN UHEN (BA)** founded The Pledgettes, a community for women to talk about money, on Women's Equality Day 2019. Now in its second year, she is leading chapters in Denver, Portland and Chicago with plans to expand nationally. Learn more at [www.ThePledgettes.com](https://www.ThePledgettes.com).

[2004]

**JULIE BITTNER (BA)** was promoted to equity partner for MWH Law Group in January. She specializes in employment litigation and general civil litigation. She was named a Great Plains Rising Star and Super Lawyer from 2015 to 2018, and Great Plains Super Lawyer for Employment Litigation in 2019 and 2020. She holds a Juris Doctor degree from Saint Louis University School of Law.

**JOHN CANDITO (MS)** reports he is the area director for supply chain management at Banner Health. "Having a master's degree in supply chain management from USD has helped my career growth exponentially," he says. "Great staff, faculty, location and state-of-the-art education. Dr. Simon Croom was one of my professors and is a wonderful leader."

**ERIK GREUPNER (JD)** was promoted to Chief Executive Officer of the San Diego Padres in February 2021 and has signed a contract extension through the 2026 season. He originally joined the Padres in December 2010. He oversees the Padres' business operations and leads the growth and development of the Padres' business and culture.

[2005]

**GREGORY BONZER (JD)** says he owns "a rare and antique, first- and rare-edition book business online with brick and mortar to follow at [DreamChasersJewels.com](https://DreamChasersJewels.com). I also



COURTESY OF AMANDA GATES '16 (BS/BA)

An excitement for the unknown and a desire to learn continued to define Gates' focus as she contemplated the next phase of her life. In the winter of her junior/senior year, Gates began working in Colorado so she could pursue another passion — skiing. It was there that a random conversation opened up an unexpected opportunity.

"One day, a guy came in and asked what I was doing. I said, 'I'm applying for all these internships.' He asked me what my major was and I said 'mechanical engineering.' His dad used to work at INL and he told me they have a lot of internship opportunities, so I said, 'OK, I'll look into it.'"

It was that chance encounter with a stranger that prompted Gates to apply for an internship with the laboratory, a position she ultimately received due to her machining education.

"What really got me in the door at INL was having machining experience, because a lot of engineers don't have that opportunity within their undergraduate education," she says.

For Gates, it's clear "the stars aligned," but little did she know that the internship would eventually lead her to post-graduate employment and the surface of Mars.

After graduating from USD in 2016, Gates joined the INL team. For the past five years, she's been part of the group responsible for assembling, testing and delivering the rover generator.

"Specifically on Perseverance, it's a multi-mission radioisotope thermoelectric generator," says Gates. "It's the generator that fuels the rover. The rover has lithium ion batteries to power it, and those are all charged by our nuclear power generator."

Gates sees each day at work as a unique experience in the field she loves. "This might be the coolest job I'll ever have," she admits. "One of the reasons I really

[alignment]

# DARE MIGHTY THINGS

Planets align for mechanical engineer Amanda Gates

by Allyson Meyer '16 (BA), '21 (MBA)

From sunny San Diego to the windswept Martian landscape, Amanda Gates '16 (BS/BA) is charting her own path. A nuclear research engineer with the United States Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory (INL), Gates has literally seen her career soar. As the world watched the launch and landing of the Perseverance rover on Mars in the summer of 2020, Gates held her breath as the rover

generator she helped build touched down on the planet.

A native of North Bend, Washington, Gates' quest for warmer weather and beaches led her to San Diego for college, where she immediately discovered a home away from home at the University of San Diego's Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering.

As a work-study undergraduate student for the engineering school, Gates quickly immersed

herself in the program, taking advantage of the access to professors, the small class sizes and the ability to pursue hands-on learning opportunities in the school's machine shop.

"Just having hands-on experience on how things are machined really makes us better engineers," says Gates. "Knowing how the process works — since I've done it first-hand — helps me design something that is practical."

love this job is that no day is the same. We have to go through and make sure everything is going to work as planned because we don't have a back-up generator. This is all or nothing, so the margin of error needs to be zero because the planets literally aligned for us to make the launch window."

For Gates, being a part of space exploration is an awe-inspiring and worthwhile mission, one made even more essential by her role as a female engineer in a male-dominated field. In her work at INL, Gates has been actively involved in outreach to young girls, showing them they too can pursue a path in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"I think the biggest reason there aren't very many women in engineering is that not many women are seen in it. It's a very male-dominated field," says Gates. "I've taken that on as my own responsibility to try to do outreach to younger girls."

As one of two women engineers who worked on the generator, Gates is proud of the opportunity, but sees areas for growth in the field. "This is just a step for people to know if they see it, they can do it. You can do whatever you put your mind to."

So, as Gates watched the rover land on the red planet, the importance of the moment was not lost on her. "I was taking pictures of the video I was watching, circling the rover, and sending it to my friends saying, 'I did that. I've touched something that's in that, that's on another planet.'"

And while Gates may be earth-bound, it's clear her work is paving the way for current and future generations to see themselves in her shoes, exploring frontiers that might just be beyond our sight.

"Dare mighty things," she says. "You're only limited by what you think you can do." 📺

▶ [sandiego.edu/amanda](http://sandiego.edu/amanda)

privately tutor distance-learning kids from grades 6 to 12 and do private test prep for the LSAT, GED and GMAT. I've recently earned a master's certificate in in neuro-linguistic programming. In addition, I am engaged and recently purchased a home in Arcata, California."

**VICTORIA KAMMERZELL (BBA)** reports she is engaged to be married in June "to the love of her life." She recently graduated from MANA de San Diego's Latina Success Leadership program and is looking forward to pursuing her career goals.

**PAMELA (TAHIM) THAKUR (JD/LLM)** is the founder and managing attorney of the Thakur Law Firm, APC. She was recognized in early 2021 as a Southern California Super Lawyer for the second year in a row, and was listed among Super Lawyer's top attorneys for litigation in both 2021 and 2020. She also appeared consistently on the group's "Rising Star" list between 2016 and 2020.

**[2006] 📺 FRANK N. LIEGGI (MA)** resides in Irvine, California, and recently became CEO of GoldMerchant.com, a leading dealer of pure gold bullion. He is also a director at DomaniInvestments.com.

**[2007] GINGER BLACKMON (EdD)** is assistant professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

**JAMIE (BUFKIN) HOVERSEN (BA)** reports she was recently transferred from Budapest to Vienna after the university she works for was forced out of Hungary. "I consider Hungary my home and it is hard to see what the government is doing to this beautiful country."

**IROQUOIS (ANDERSON) JOHN-SON (BA)** had her first child, a girl named Peyton, on July 28, 2018. She received her Master of Science degree in Regulatory Affairs and Services on Dec. 20, 2019, from Saint Cloud University. She married Denis Johnson in Kauai, Hawaii, on Feb. 2, 2020, and had her second child, a boy named Kai, on April 22, 2020.

**[2008] GABRIEL DeANDA (BA)** reports that he and Courtney (Holtz) DeAnda '11 (BA) welcomed baby Soliel

DeAnda on March 25, 2020.

**MARY STURGEON (BA)** writes that after eight years working in Chicago for two of the top-10 architecture firms in the world, she has taken on a new role as project manager of design at CRB Consulting Engineers in St. Louis, Missouri. CRB provides design-build solutions for the life science and technology industries. She continues her involvement the American Institute of Architects, National Organization of Minority Architects and mentoring young professionals.

**[2009] BRANDYE COMBS (BA)** started the two-year master of social work program at California Baptist University last fall.

**BETH KNUDSON (BA)** reports that she completed her MBA at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, in May 2019. She and her husband, Bryce '08 (BS/BA), welcomed baby boy number two in November 2019.

**CHRIS ROBERTS (BA)** writes, "Excited to be sharing my passion for environmental science with the world through the lens of my new touring company, the Ride Guide."

**JENSEN SHIRLEY (EdD)** is an associate licensed professional therapist conducting couples and individual counseling. "More importantly, I counsel veterans and their families," he says. "I provide therapy to incarcerated veterans at the Vista jail. To this end, as a veteran myself, I provide service to those who have served."

**LOUIS VARGAS (BA)** reports that he and Stephanie (Kishbaugh) Vargas '09 (BA) welcomed a baby boy, Edgar Vargas, on July 20, 2020.

**LIZ ZITO (BA)** was recently accepted to nursing school and will earn a Bachelor of Science degree at Linfield University in a four-semester program. "I started in February 2021 and I am eager to begin this new career path with the support of my family: Josh (husband), Lucie (age 5) and Joe (age 2)," she says.

2010s

**[2010] MICHAEL BENCH (BBA)** reports that he was recruited by Voit Real

Estate as a vice president and that he and Brittany Bromagen '11 (BA) were married in Nashville on Oct. 18, 2019. They recently bought a home in La Jolla, California.

**RUTH SOBERANES (BA)** recently joined the U.S. Department of Commerce as an international trade specialist in Phoenix.

**[2011] 📺 DEREK ABBEY (MA), '19 (PhD)** is the president and CEO of Project Recover, which he describes as "a worldwide effort to search for, locate and repatriate Americans missing in action from our nation's previous conflicts."

**ANNETTE CALLIS (PhD)** writes, "I have a recent publication: Callis (Browning), A. (2020). Application of the Roy Adaptation Theory to a care program for nurses. *Applied Nursing Research*, 56."

**PATRICK C. JUSTMAN (JD)** was promoted to counsel at Latham & Watkins LLP. He is a member of the firm's litigation and trial department and has experience with trademark and breach of contract disputes.

**MELANIE LUCAS-CONWELL (BA)** has completed her MBA at the Presidio Graduate School and moved to Anchorage, Alaska, where she started as portfolio manager for the 49th State Angel Fund, the state's entrepreneurship fund. She's thrilled to return to the last frontier, after living there in 2019 when she worked on an impact investing strategy for the Alaska Conservation Foundation.

**ANED MUÑIZ GRACIA (EdD)** reports, "The era of coronavirus led to expanded work opportunities. I became involved in curriculum design and review with a private Catholic university in Puerto Rico (similar in size and mission to USD) while maintaining my work at a Los Angeles community college and starting new work with a private upper school in Las Vegas — all simultaneously!"

**KATHERINE ANNUSCHAT McCAIG (JD)** has been promoted to partner at law firm Snell & Wilmer. She is part of the corporate securities group and is based out of Orange County. Her promotion went into effect on March 1, 2021. Her





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practice is concentrated in corporate and securities, including mergers and acquisitions, private placements and venture capital financing, securities offerings and securities law compliance, entity formations and corporate governance, owner relations, buyouts and disputes, and general contract negotiations. She is an author and presenter of several publications and has received the Wiley W. Manuel Certificate for Pro Bono Legal Services from the State Bar of California. McCaig is currently on the firm's ethics committee.

**SCOTT ZIPSE (BBA), '13 (MS)** reports that he and Kelsie Bishop '14 (BBA) were married at an intimate family ceremony at Light Church in Encinitas, California.

[2012]

**JOSE FELIX (BBA)** opened a co-working space with a few friends in Oceanside, California, in 2020. "We saw the need and because of the current circumstances, we also see the long-term potential," he says. "Not to mention how much fun we've had talking to people about it around the community." He invites Toreros to learn more at [coworkat-tower7.com](https://coworkat-tower7.com).

**KORTLYN (McPEEK) HOYT (BA)** was hired at her K-8 alma mater to teach grammar to seventh- and eighth-graders in 2019. She reports she was married to Michael Hoyt on Dec. 28, 2018, and that their twins — daughter Kyrie Eve and son Kato Lee — are now home after arriving nine weeks early.

**CHEYENNE McCARTHY (BA)** says she has "relocated to chilly Des Moines, Iowa, for chiropractic clinical rotation at the VA hospital." She expected to be a doctor of chiropractic in March 2021.

**TYLER WILSON (BA)** is an associate attorney at the Daspit Law Firm in San Antonio, Texas. He and his wife welcomed their son, Bennett, into the world on May 6, 2019. They also have become homeowners for the first time.

[2013]

**JESSICA CHANG (BBA)** reports that she has exciting news to share: "I'm humbled to share that I have stepped into the new role of diversity officer for student engagement at San Diego State University. I am honored

to serve the SDSU community as we strive toward a pillar in our strategic plan that includes equity and inclusion in everything we do — especially in a time of social, racial unrest. My time working at the United Front Multicultural Center as a student intern consistently comes to mind as I serve my students at SDSU. My experiences of being able to create third spaces and counternarratives at the UPMC and having agency, leadership and support from the leaders there, have centered me in my passion and inspiration for social justice and compassion to give back. Thank you UPMC and USD, please let me know if there's any way I can continue to support as an alumna, potentially bridging our students together in community!"

**CARLOS DUARTE (BA)** writes, "In 2020, I became a licensed clinical social worker and started my own business, a private practice, where I provide psychotherapy to adults experiencing anxiety, relationship issues and life transitions. I also started a separate business, Sporting Club Verdugos, a nonprofit organization that operates a player development program for adult soccer players, in addition to a men's professional development club and a women's professional development club. Both businesses are based in Glendale, California, where I reside with my 6 year-old son, Luca."

**YESENIA MORENO (BA), '19 (MA)** has started working as an academic counselor at a Catholic all-boys high school in the Los Angeles area.

**[2014]**  
**NICOLAS DIXON (BA)** reports that he is founder of the ARAKNIDO Corp. whose projects include a space time capsule for the AI ShowBiz Summit 4.0 Forever in the Space 2020 Hall of Fame. He also has been accepted into the Nuclio Digital School master's program in Digital Product Management in Barcelona, Spain.

**AMELIA GENTILE-MATHEW (BA/BBA)** reports that she is "working in the field of higher education as an instructional designer at the University of Denver's Office of Teaching and Learning, with a passionate focus on equity, accessibility and trauma-informed pedagogy."

**HARMONIE (EDELSON) JACOBSON (BS/BA)** graduated in

May 2020 from the full-time MBA program at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Kenan-Flagler Business School). She started a new role in July 2020 as program manager of business transformation and innovation at Google.

**EMILY (KIRSCHBAUM) MALY-UK (BA)** reports that she returned to school in 2018 for a BSN and became a registered nurse in 2019. She married in 2019. "I started traveling as a crisis response nurse in April 2020 when New York City was the U.S. epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic," she says. "My home base is in Rochester, Minnesota, with my husband and our two golden retrievers."

**[2015]**  
**SARAH (BAKER) MARTINI (BA)** reports that she graduated from The Rockefeller University with a PhD in biological sciences in June 2020 and started working at a medical communications agency; she has since been promoted to senior associate director.

**[2016]** 🎓  
**MEGAN KRONE (PhD)** says "I recently started my own freelance editing business where I help writers craft their writing so that their content, expertise and passion shines through a well-organized document."

**EVAN WAHL (MS)** says he was onboarded by Catalent Pharma Solutions, a Fortune 500 company. He is the new director of Project Management and Site Strategy for the firm's San Diego location.

**[2017]**  
**NAOMI HARDING (BA)** shares that she is in her first year of graduate school at Johns Hopkins University and is teaching "the most amazing third graders."

**LIXIN MALU (MBA)** says her experience at USD "was the most beautiful memory in my life" and that she has an e-commerce business. "I take action each and every day to teach individuals and families how to take control of their finances with the things they are already purchasing."

**[2018]**  
**DARIO CAMINITE (BS/BA)** has completed jet pilot training in the Air Force and earned the AETC Commander's Trophy for best flight and leadership skills. He was designated an F-35 pilot, only the fourth

such designation of anyone while still in training. He has been promoted to first lieutenant and is receiving additional training at Luke Air Force Base in Glendale, Arizona.

**IAN LITUCHY (BS/BA)** writes, "In 2017, I opened my first food truck in Los Angeles, which developed into a large scale food truck booking business, City Flavor. We were recently featured in Yahoo News and have spent a lot of time helping businesses survive throughout the pandemic. We continue to serve the mobile food community and those looking to support and assist local small businesses. I also serve full time as a the lead front-end software engineer at Apostrophe, an online skincare and dermatology platform."

**ANDREW VAN ARSDALE (JD)** started his own law firm in January 2019. "I have a prominent role representing abuse survivors in the Boy Scouts of America bankruptcy case in Wilmington, Delaware," he writes.

**[2019]**  
**RYAN HAWKINS (JD)** has joined the firm of Foran Glennon Palandech Ponzi & Rudloff as an associate in its Phoenix office. He will focus on insurance coverage and defense.

## 2020s

**[2020]**  
**MENZA BOLAMBA (BA)** is pursuing a master's in education and teaching credential at USD's School of Leadership and Educational Sciences.

**CURTIS CHAN (BBA)** reports he is "working remotely in sunny Sabre Springs!"

**JOHN GERGES (BA)** says, "I started my first year of medical school at St. George's University!"

**ERIC NOBLE (MS)** was promoted to police brigadier general of the Philippine National Police.

**MELISSA RUIZ (MEd)** says she recently began a new teaching position as a middle school teacher. "I am so excited for this new opportunity and I know my MEd from USD will be very beneficial to me with this new experience."

**LUREE SCOTT (BA)** was accepted into UC Riverside Palm Desert's low-residency MFA program for creative writing and writing for the performing arts.

**SEBASTIAN WALLAT (MS)** says the business analytics program "with my fellow classmates was an amazing year and I wish I could go back and live it all again!"

**YARISSA VALDEZ (BA)** writes, "I recently got hired as a fifth-grade elementary school teacher!"

**[2021]**  
**DANIEL COBOS (MS)** reports, "It's never too late! At age 58, I'm completing my master's degree. The USD learning experience has provided an outstanding avenue to meet other life learners and create friends for life!"

## In Memoriam

**KRISTEN BONILLA-SOSA '63 (BA)** passed away Oct. 5, 2020 from congestive heart failure at age 78. After obtaining her economics degree, she was a reporter for the San Diego Union-Tribune before moving to New York City and becoming a reporter and researcher for Time-Life, covering major events like the funeral of Winston Churchill. She was an NGO representative from 1975 to 1982 to the United Nation's Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. She leaves behind a daughter, Alexandra Sofia, and brothers Victor J. Bonilla and Salvador Bonilla-Mathe. Donations in her name can be made to the U.N. Refugee Agency or charity of your choice.

**MELISSA HALTER**, who was USD's Assistant Vice President for Student Wellness as well as an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Counseling and Marital and Family Therapy, passed on Jan. 19, 2021. She was a loving, dedicated and compassionate leader on the front lines supporting USD students as well as the campus community. She first came to USD in 2003 as a psychology intern and then returned to USD in 2007 as the Director for the Center for Health and Wellness Promotion. A licensed psychologist, Melissa provided direct clinical care to USD students and worked to build services and programming that sup-





[extraordinary]

# NOT SELF, BUT COUNTRY

The man in charge of the U.S. Navy's supply chain

by Karen Gross

With his understated demeanor and down-to-earth manner, it's a bit hard to believe Rear Adm. Peter Stamatopoulos '88 (BBA) is in charge of the U.S. Navy's entire supply chain. But as commander of the Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP), Stamatopoulos runs a \$35 billion business. He oversees more than 22,000 personnel, both military and civilian, and commands 11 subordinate organizations around the globe. In addition,

he serves as the Navy's 49th Chief of the Supply Corps, responsible for the leadership development and career path of more than 2,000 Navy supply corps officers and some 20,000 enlisted sailors.

"In simple terms, NAVSUP is responsible for ensuring that the sailors on board our aircraft, ships, submarines and expeditionary forces, whether they're at home or at sea, get what they need," he says. "They need parts, they need food, fuel

equipment and services to meet Navy missions and to assure their units are ready to respond when needed."

But that's not all. Stamatopoulos also oversees the Navy Exchange system, which provides lodging and retail operations for all active duty, reserve forces and retirees and their family members. "Shopping, dining, hotels, barber-shops, hair salons and other retail services," he adds. "So it's quite a large organization, fo-

cused specifically on sailor and family care."

A third generation San Diegan, he didn't come from a career military family, though his father served in the Navy Supply Corps during the Korean War and his uncles served in World War II. "I always knew I wanted to be a naval officer," he says. "I wanted to be of service to the country. But I was only thinking of doing it for maybe three or four years. I never contemplated making it a lifelong career."

More than three decades later, Stamatopoulos is USD's highest-ranking military alumnus. During his long and illustrious career, he has deployed around the globe aboard submarines, amphibious assault ships and aircraft carriers. Just prior to his appointment as NAVSUP commander, he served as director of



logistics for the U.S. European Command, serving both U.S. and NATO forces.

“It’s been very exciting,” he says. “Every experience has built on prior experiences. I’ve worked with the defense industrial base, commercial providers and vendors, joint and allied partners.”

Among the many recognitions he has received over the years, Stamatopoulos says he is most proud of one — the 2006 Adm. Stan Arthur Logistics Team of the Year award. “We were called to do a noncombatant evacuation of American citizens out of Lebanon,” he recalls. “And we evacuated safely — without any injury to anybody — about 15,000 U.S. citizens to safe havens in Cyprus and other European countries.”

Stamatopoulos remains very connected to San Diego and to USD. He and his brother co-own the Turf Supper Club in Golden Hill, an old-time neighborhood steakhouse established in 1950 that remains a beloved landmark from a bygone era. His son, George ’21 (BA), is a political science major who’s following in his father’s footsteps in the Navy ROTC.

Although it’s been decades since he graduated, Stamatopoulos still credits the university with shaping his character and enriching his world view, and the business school in particular with giving him the grounding and the tools that led to a level of success he couldn’t have begun to imagine.

“I really value my time at USD, and I can’t believe I graduated more than 30 years ago,” he says. “The faculty and students exposed me to a diversity of thought, theory and perspectives. Those interactions and experiences definitely helped to shape me to be the leader in the Navy that I am today.”



# Wine Classic

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

PRESENTED BY SETH O’BYRNE

## Saturday, July 10

The USD Alumni Association hosts the 13th annual USD Wine Classic virtually as we toast one another from coast to coast. Experience an interactive virtual wine event open to all while also supporting scholarships for underrepresented USD students! Free registration opens at the end of May. More details at [usdwineclassic.com](https://usdwineclassic.com).

A VIRTUAL TOAST FROM COAST TO COAST IS BACK FOR ANOTHER YEAR!

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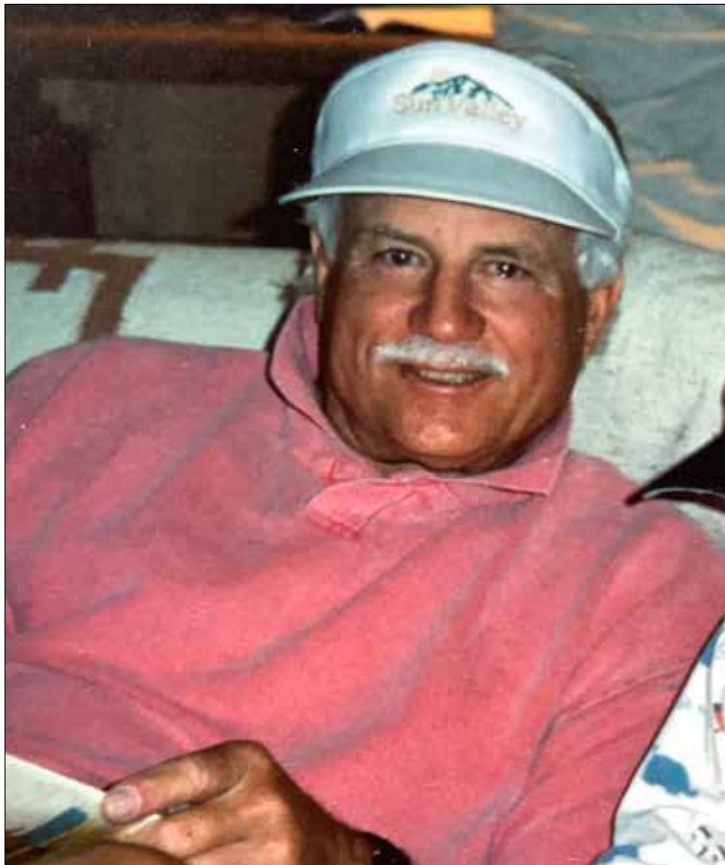
O’BYRNE TEAM | COMPASS

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*[rest in peace]*

**THOMAS V. KELLY '60 (BBA)** died on January 21, 2021 surrounded by his family. He graduated from the first class of Helix High School in San Diego in 1953 as a star running back, and subsequently went on to Riverside Junior College, where he continued his winning streak as the team became National Football Champions.

He then enlisted in the Marines to play football at a time when military football was huge and was stationed in Hawaii. His duty, other than football, was to be in charge of the Military Swimming Pool at Pearl Harbor. He gave swimming tests, taught life-saving techniques, and the practice of amphibious landings while in full uniform and gear.

After discharge, his former MCRD athletic director told Tom that a small Roman Catholic school in its infancy — now known as the University of San Diego — was starting a football program. Tom helped lead the effort to recruit players for the first football team at USD in 1956, and played for five seasons. In addition to being a full-time student, playing football, and starting a family, Tom had a job as a San Diego City lifeguard working in Mission Beach and La Jolla.

After graduating, Tom took a job with Kraft Foods, where his charismatic personality accelerated his selling skills. While still in his twenties, he was promoted to sales manager at the main office in Atlanta, Georgia. He had a long and varied career, including stints in marketing and advertising, as a deep sea commercial fisherman, sports equipment store owner and enjoyed sunshine, travel and golf well into retirement.

ported students in a holistic way. Since 2015, she served as an assistant vice president and was a strong leader supporting Campus Recreation, the Center for Health and Wellness Promotion, the Counseling Center, the Disability and Learning Difference Resource Center, the Gender Identity Resource Center and the Student Health Center. Her wise counsel and calming demeanor benefited many important areas of the university; she was an outstanding to the USD leadership team, particularly through the COVID-19 pandemic. A humble and selfless leader, she built others up and found the good in every situation. She was named the Sister Virginia Rodee USD Administrator of the Year in December 2020. She is survived by her mother, Mary, her siblings, Kathy Halter, Tom Halter, and Kristin Elliott, and six dearly loved nieces and nephews, Tommy, Max, Grace, Abbie, Emmie and Teddy.

**MAUREEN McGRATH AGGELER '60 (BA), '73 (MA) RSCJ** passed away Sept. 18, 2020. She taught at Sacred Heart schools in El Cajon, Palo Alto, Seattle and at Convent of the Sacred Heart High School in San Francisco, where she was dean of students. She advocated for education, women's rights and social justice and attended the U.N.'s first World Conference on Women in Mexico City. She cherished her Irish heritage, but counted herself part of the global family. Survivors include her sister, Anne Will, brother, Terry Aggeler and an enormous loving family. Donations may be made to the Society of the Sacred Heart or favorite charity.

**ROBERT MELBOURNE '90 (MA)** died peacefully at home on December 24, 2020, surrounded by his family. He was 91. He served his country first as a private in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve with the 4th Tank Battalion in San Diego from 1947-1950, and then as an officer in the U.S. Navy, in the Civil Engineering Corp (Seabees) with American Construction Battalion One in Korea from 1951-1954. Bob graduated from the University of Southern California in 1951 with a BS in civil engineering. Upon returning from service in Korea, he earned a master's degree in engineering and construction management from Stanford University. His career included infrastructure construction services, civil engineering and a 28-year stint working on large scale water construction projects for

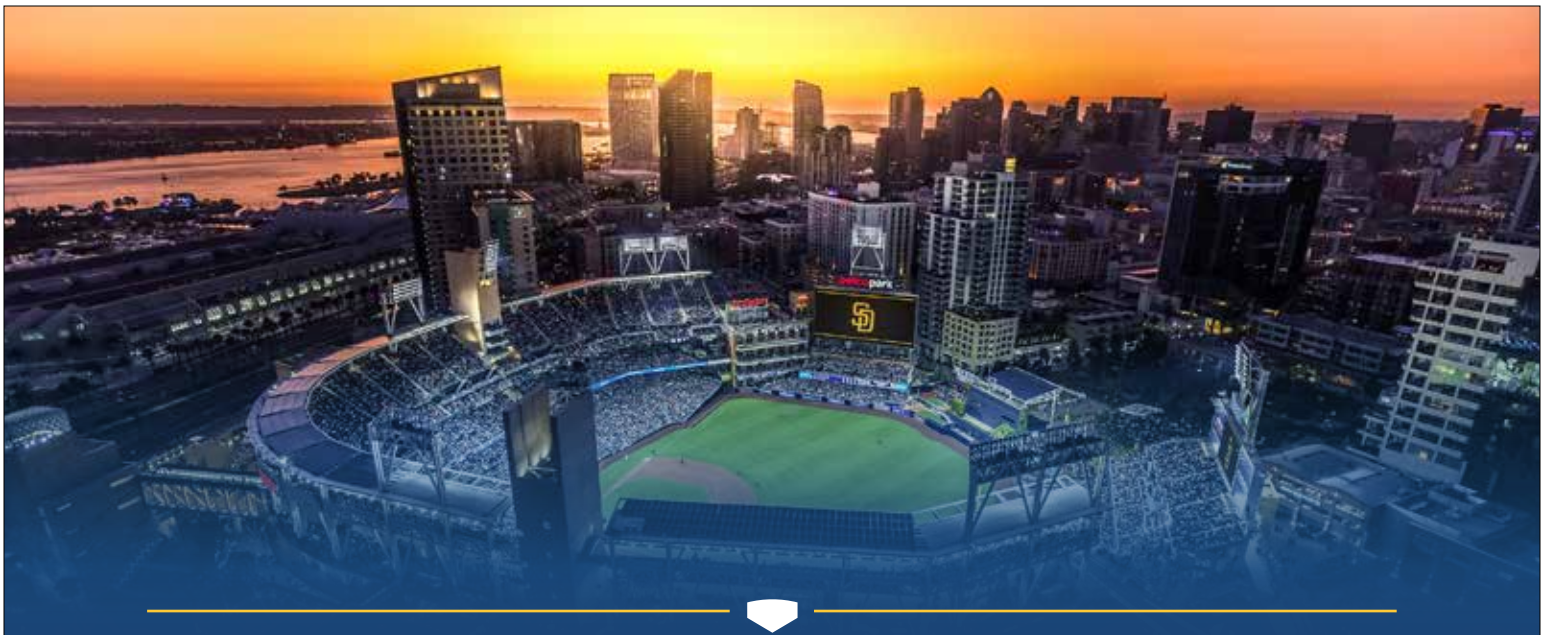
the San Diego County Water Authority. He retired as assistant chief engineer, but was also called upon at various times to serve as chief engineer. His strong interest in history led him to earn a master's degree in history from USD in 1990, and a PhD in history from USC in 1996, with his dissertation on Advance Base Construction By Civilian Contractors in War Zones, which combined his military and civil engineering enthusiasms. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Jeanne; his children, Ann Farley, Maria Melbourne-Hayes, Steven Melbourne and Louise Vance; as well as eight grandchildren: Katie, Mary, Abby, Grace, Colette, Rose, Robert and Trevor.

**ECKHARD (ECKI) SPAETH '93 (BBA), '95 (MBA)** died suddenly on Dec. 20, 2020, of cardiac arrest while ski touring in the Austrian Alps. He left behind a wife, daughter and son, as well as friends and admirers around the globe.

**ROBERTA MARY CALLAHAN WEBSTER '81 (BSN), '84 (MSN)** passed away on Jan. 18, 2021, from acute respiratory distress syndrome secondary to COVID pneumonia. Professionally, she demonstrated a commitment to the greater good as a registered nurse, lactation consultant and nursing educator. She worked as the charge nurse in the USD health clinic in the 1980s, as an ICU nurse at the El Centro Regional Medical Center (ECRMC), as a lactation consultant at Kaiser Permanente in San Diego as well as lactation consultant and program director for ECRMC. Roberta had a long career in nursing education, primarily at Imperial Valley College, where she was a full time faculty member and most recently was associate dean of nursing. She is described by her colleagues at Imperial Valley College as a hero for her service to the nursing community during the COVID pandemic. Roberta put the needs of others ahead of her own and was always there for her family. She is survived by a number of family members, including her brother, Wendell J. Callahan, who is professor of practice and counseling program director for USD's School of Leadership and Education Sciences.

**Send Class Notes**

Submit class notes via email to [classnotes@sandiego.edu](mailto:classnotes@sandiego.edu).



# NOVEMBER 13, 2021

*Petco Park*

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**June - August**  
Summer Send-Offs

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**July 10**  
USD Wine Classic

[usdwineclassic.com](https://usdwineclassic.com)



**August 28 - 31**  
OLÉ! Weekend and  
Parent Orientation

[sandiego.edu/orientation](https://sandiego.edu/orientation)



**August 29**  
Mass of Welcome

[sandiego.edu/ministry](https://sandiego.edu/ministry)



**September 9**  
Mass of the Holy Spirit

[sandiego.edu/ministry](https://sandiego.edu/ministry)



**October 12-17**  
Homecoming and  
Family Week

[sandiego.edu/hfw21](https://sandiego.edu/hfw21)



**November 13**  
Founders Gala

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