Pathways to Achievement

Opera’s Suzanna Guzmán
On the cover — Many people would be satisfied with what mezzo soprano Suzanna Guzmán has already achieved, yet Guzmán never let go of an earlier dream of attaining her degree, so she has come home to “her” University.
How did Cal State L.A. change your life?

2006 Alumni Award Recipients

Leo Dardashti (’78)
Distinguished Alumnus
President and Chief Executive Officer, Atlantic Inc.
Cal State L.A.’s flexible class schedule gave me the chance to continue my education while working. By finishing school, I was able to gain a better life and future for myself and my family.

Taguhi Sogomonyan
Outstanding Senior
The vast availability of tools and resources at Cal State L.A. has not only empowered me with core competencies, but also with confidence and strength, which have enabled me to excel in all facets of my life.

Elizabeth Devine (’85)
Distinguished Alumna
Co-executive Producer, CSI: Miami
Cal State L.A. brought me Criminalistics. It was in the master’s program that I found my niche. It gave me the tools to get a job with the L.A. County Sheriff and become a criminalist (one of the best jobs out there).

Terrence E. Deal (’66)
Distinguished Alumnus
Author, Speaker, Consultant
My experience at Cal State L.A. helped expand my career options and open personal and professional vistas. I was able to explore new ideas and begin a journey in educational administration.

Maxine M. Morisaki (’72, ’83)
Distinguished Alumna
Attorney, Susson, Parrett, Morisaki & Odell
Cal State L.A. changed my life because it forced me to re-learn how to study after years of bad study habits. It also opened up the entire world of critical thinking, and was an intense period of learning.

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President and Chief Executive Officer, Atlantic Inc.
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Paul J. White (’56)
Distinguished Alumnus
Managing Partner, White, Zuckerman, Warsavsky, Luna, Wolf & Hunt, LLP
Cal State L.A. was the key that opened the door to my professional career. It gave me the foundation that allowed me to take my first step into the real world.

Ruth Montes
Outstanding Graduate Student
Cal State L.A. has empowered me as a community leader both within and beyond this amazing University. By way of its professors and mentors, I have been inspired with the desire to give back to those less fortunate and make a difference in the lives of those seeking guidance.

John J. Tracy (’81)
University Service Award
Senior Vice President, Engineering, Operations & Technology, The Boeing Company
I had direct interaction with my professors on a regular basis. They took a personal interest in my life, career and studies, opening my life to limitless possibilities.

Donald J. Zuk (’61)
Distinguished Alumnus
President and Chief Executive Officer, SCPIE Holdings Inc.
Being a student at Cal State L.A. gave me the security and confidence to conquer my fear of failure, thereby enabling me to succeed in the challenging business world.

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Covering all the bases

Throughout Pete Paciorek’s (’04 BA, ’06 MA) successful pro-baseball career, he diligently took classes at community colleges toward his goal of earning an advanced degree. “A lot of other players didn’t go back to school, but because I’d been taking classes every off-season, I only had two quarters left when I finished playing,” he explains.

After retiring from pro ball at 27, Paciorek transferred to Cal State L.A. and completed his B.A. in communications. He then became assistant coach for Golden Eagles baseball while pursuing his master’s degree here. “I knew that getting an education would open so many avenues, and it has. I’ve been able to relate what I learned in class to my passion for baseball. And as soon as I got my master’s, the job offers started rolling in.”

Notes

• Published master’s thesis on how changes in Dodgers’ leadership affected the culture of the organization.
• Helped lead Golden Eagles baseball to its best overall record in school history.
• Head baseball coach at Principia College in Illinois.

Once a Golden Eagle, now an Oriole

As a member of the Golden Eagles baseball team, Jay Gibbons (’99) was a three-time All-Conference and All-Region player, leading to his draft into the pros by the Baltimore Orioles, where he is now a designated hitter. Despite a knee injury in the 2006 season, Gibbons registered the highest on-base percentage (.341) of his career.
Keeping up with the fast track

Karla Alburez strides toward success in everything she does. A junior majoring in kinesiology, the cross country/track and field stand-out covers 80 miles a week, pushing herself and her teammates to “take it to the next level.” And it’s paid off. For the first time in 12 years, the Golden Eagles women’s cross country team won the NCAA West Regionals, ranked #3 in the nation, and competed in the national championships.

With a can-do attitude that extends into the classroom, Alburez says, “I try to be consistent — you put in hard work and you take a lot out of it.” She’s crossing the finish line in both arenas with a 3.4 GPA and dean’s list honors. “You have to be hungry for it,” she says. “If you work hard enough, nothing’s impossible.”

Notes

• Practices three hours a day, seven days a week.
• Transferred from Los Angeles City College.
• Helps pay for school as a Greek Theatre concession cashier.
• About team travel: “Athletes from other schools are friendly and supportive.”

“Being at Cal State L.A. has changed the way I see life. Now I always strive to accomplish more.”
**Taking on challenges ahead**

Rex Cheng (’06) is not your average 19-year-old. With a bachelor’s degree in biochemistry under his belt, he’s already attending Duke University School of Medicine. Cheng came to Cal State L.A. immediately following his freshman year of high school through the Early Entrance Program (EEP), which admits extraordinarily gifted youngsters directly into college. “I’d heard great things about the program so I decided to try it out,” he says. “I really liked college life and the interactive style of teaching.” Cheng found the campus environment to be very close-knit. “There was a lot of support among students, and my professors really got to know me.”

Upon entering medical school, Cheng found that his CSULA experiences prepared him for the challenges that lay ahead. “Now that I’m in medical school, I realize that the curriculum at Cal State L.A. was very thorough, and prepared me to be a med student,” he says.

**Notes**

- Awarded the prestigious Phi Kappa Phi Graduate Fellowship.
- Served as president of the Epsilon Theta chapter of the National Biological Honor Society, vice president of the General Education Honors Club, and academic and social chair of the EEP club.
- Participated in chemistry/biochemistry outreach programs for surrounding elementary schools and volunteered at Huntington Hospital, Pasadena.

“I really appreciated the support among students and being part of a close-knit group.”
Mary Helen Durban (‘06) is the only 2006 graduate who can say she witnessed Cal State L.A.’s first phases of construction with her very own eyes. “I grew up in Monterey Park, so I watched Cal State L.A. being built in 1957 from the foundation on up,” says the youthful 72-year-old great grandmother.

“When my husband passed away in 1985 I felt lost and I knew I had to do something with myself,” she explains. “I had always enjoyed school, and I realized I should earn my degree. At graduation I felt so proud I thought my buttons would burst!”

She plans to enter Cal State L.A.’s English M.A. program with an eye toward teaching elementary students how to interact with young burn victims. “My children and I are burn victims, so I want to teach young people that although someone may look different on the outside, they’re still the same person inside,” she says.

“Finding friendship, sharing understanding

One of the best things about Cal State L.A. is the friendships I’ve formed with my fellow students regardless of age, and the respect and camaraderie we’ve shared.”

Notes

• First in her family generation to graduate from college.
• Durban’s children, grandchildren and great grandchildren cheered her on at Commencement.
• “It’s so fulfilling to know I’ve gotten this far,” she says. “It means so much to me.”
A trek to explore and teach

Associate Professor of Anthropology James Brady took a scenic route to Cal State L.A. and then back again. After earning his bachelor’s degree at UC Berkeley, Brady came to Cal State L.A. to earn his master’s degree. “Although I was an anthropology major at Berkeley, I feel that Cal State L.A. is where I really learned anthropology,” he says.

After completing his M.A. (’74), Brady taught classes at East Los Angeles College, and found he greatly enjoyed it. He then spent time living in Guatemala and discovered another passion: exploring Maya caves. Combining his two loves, he earned a Ph.D. in archaeology at UCLA and returned to Cal State L.A. to teach. Today, he involves his students in hands-on field research throughout Latin America. Several of his students, such as Sergio Garza, have published articles in academic journals and entered Ph.D. programs with scholarships. “This is where I learned to love anthropology, and I want to help my students do the same,” says Brady. “My experience at Cal State L.A. was so positive that I’d always wanted to come back and return the favor.”

Notes
• Distinguished Faculty Alumnus 2006.
• With assistance from Trustee Professor Barry Munitz, the program recently received a major five-year grant from the Cotsen Foundation to expand fieldwork and conference travel opportunities for Cal State L.A. archaeology students.
• Encourages students to conduct field research, write articles, present conference papers, and earn doctorates.
• Work has been featured in Smithsonian magazine, the Discovery and History Channels, and National Geographic, among many others.
Discovery of learning is its own reward

For Sergio Garza ('03), Cal State L.A. served as both a destination and a springboard. He came to Los Angeles from his native Mexico City to follow his dream of pursuing a higher education, and ended up achieving all he had hoped for and more. After earning his B.A. magna cum laude at Cal State L.A., he entered a Ph.D. program in anthropology at the University of California, Riverside with a full scholarship, due in large part to the research he conducted and papers he authored as an undergraduate.

“My training at Cal State L.A. was so good that I’ve been one of the top students at UCR,” says Garza, who credits Associate Professor of Anthropology James Brady ('74) with putting him on the right path. Brady’s team has been conducting research on Maya caves in Guatemala and the ancient Aztec game, Ulama, which led to Garza being named a Ford Foundation Fellow last year. “I am where I am because of Cal State L.A.,” he says.

Notes
• Plans to return to Cal State L.A. as a professor and (he hopes) a role model.
• A History Channel documentary is being prepared featuring Garza and Brady’s Maya cave explorations.
• Smithsonian Magazine recently featured Garza’s research with Brady and Manuel Aguilar, of the art faculty.
• Mentors Cal State L.A. anthropology students toward Ph.D. programs.

Another shining star

Leana S. Wen ('01), now a medical student at Washington University School of Medicine, was named a Rhodes Scholar for 2007. She plans to earn an M.Sc. in global health science at Oxford. Wen entered Cal State L.A. at age 13, graduating with a degree in biochemistry.
“I’m an Angelina girl through and through,” says opera’s renowned mezzo soprano and music major Suzanna Guzmán, whose career path has taken her from Cal State L.A. to Carnegie Hall to European opera houses and back again. “I have almost a spiritual tie to Los Angeles,” she says. “My parents were born here and I grew up here in El Sereno. We have amazing institutions here—like Cal State L.A.—that belong to us.”

Throughout her career, Guzmán has performed with acclaimed artists such as Plácido Domingo—in front of presidents, kings and queens—but she says the highlight of her career happened right here in Los Angeles in front of a jeans and t-shirt audience. “The greatest performance of my life was singing the national anthem at a Dodger game,” beams Guzmán. “It was so much fun. I stood there with my son and I looked up at the blue seats way up at the top, and that’s where we’d come to watch the Dodgers. And it was the biggest full circle of my life.”

Guzmán started her education at Cal State L.A. in 1975 but left when her stage career began taking off. “I really wanted to be a Shakespearean actress,” she explains. “I had read all of Shakespeare’s plays, which was completely weird for a girl from East L.A. I loved acting, but I found I was getting cast in choruses because I could sing. It seemed I had a natural tendency toward opera.” After landing a small part in the musical “The King and I” starring Yul Brynner, she began entering opera competitions—and winning. With her tremendous success and glowing reviews, she decided to pursue opera, even though she initially found it intimidating. In her second season as a professional she sang a duet with Plácido Domingo in a production of “Goya.” She had found her calling. But she never relinquished her dream of completing her degree.

Thirty years on the world’s most famed stages and countless productions later, Guzmán chose to finish what she’d started at Cal State L.A.
“I’m aglow at being back in school,” she says. “Being back is like being on the crest of a wave. Wonderful things are happening in the music department and at my University. And I will be able to say it’s my alma mater very soon!”

Most of all, Guzmán wants to leave a legacy of education for her 14-year-old-son, Conor. “I want him to see that education opens our spirits to all possibilities and allows us to understand other cultures and philosophies. It gives us the ability to make choices.”

In addition to pursuing her degree and teaching master classes at Cal State L.A., she sits on several educational boards including The Los Angeles Opera Educational Committee, the Pasadena Arts Council, and Discover the Arts. She also created the one-woman show, “Don’t Be Afraid: It’s Just Opera,” in which she performs for inner-city students throughout the nation to educate and welcome them into the world of opera. Guzmán has been recognized as a role model and received the coveted El Angel Award in 1999 from the Bilingual Foundation for Excellence in the Arts. She was the first recipient of the Plácido Domingo Award in 1997, and was honored in 1998 as one of twelve Outstanding Latinos in Music in America. Currently, Guzmán is a principal artist with the Los Angeles Opera and an artist-in-residence with the California Philharmonic. Her varied career also includes a recent appearance on television’s CSI: New York, where she performed as Madame Butterfly, and two 2006 Grammy nominations for her vocals on Carlos Chavez Complete Chamber Music Vol. 3 with the Southwest Chamber Music and Tambuco.

She demurs on being described as a role model. “I don’t really feel comfortable with the term ‘role model.’ I’m more comfortable being a pathfinder. If I could go from El Sereno to the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall, then it’s a road that others can travel too.”
Monica Chew ('04) entered Cal State L.A. as a President’s Scholar, receiving a full scholarship based on her high school GPA and high SAT scores. “Both my parents came here and they gave it great reviews,” she says. Chew—who is currently a President’s Scholar—works as a client services coordinator at CB Richard Ellis, a commercial real estate corporation.

“The President’s Scholar experience was awesome,” says the ever-sunny Chew. “My professors made me enthusiastic about learning.”

That learning excitement inspired her to become a donor. “I’ve always wanted to give back to Cal State L.A. and to the President’s Scholars program,” she says. “It’s such a great program, I decided to work and save up so I could do my part to contribute. And I knew I wouldn’t spend the money on frivolous things if I gave it away to a good cause!” she laughs.

Notes
- Just two years after her graduation, Chew is the first President’s Scholar to become a President’s Associate (minimum $1,000 gift to the President’s Scholars program).
- Chew uses her graphic design abilities to donate artwork support for non-profits.
- “My degree gave me the skills and the know-how to succeed in the working world.”

“A family commitment to giving

Keep your eye on:

Myle Ott, ('06), entered the Early Entrance program at age 12, and was the first to be awarded the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Scholarship. Now 18, and studying artificial intelligence at Cornell, he says Cal State L.A.’s engineering faculty prepared him for further academic challenges, including a doctorate and a computer science career. “I want to design robots that can interact with humans and learn,” he said, “involving everything from speech recognition software to detecting national security threats.”
Julie King’s (’04) master’s degree in biology has taken her exactly where she wanted to go. “It’s my dream job,” she says of being a senior wildlife biologist for the Catalina Island Conservancy. “I’m outdoors all day, monitoring and breeding foxes.” King is working to restore the rare and endangered Catalina Island fox population. Her research on squirrels, supervised by biology professor Alan Muchlinski (now associate dean of Graduate Studies) attracted a lot of attention. An article in the L.A. Times, in fact, stirred more than 11,000 hits to the research website http://instructional1.calstatela.edu/amuchli/squirrelform.htm.

“Cal State L.A.’s a wonderful place to do research because of the personal interaction with professors,” she says. “Working with Dr. Muchlinski focused my research and enabled me to make contacts within the community.”

Notes
- Catalina Island foxes are a rare subspecies of the gray fox.
- King frequented CSULA’s greenhouse to nurture plants for lab experiments.
- Found that commuting from Yucaipa wasn’t difficult. “It’s one of the few campuses accessible by rail, and I got a lot of homework done on the train.”

“The personal interaction with professors makes Cal State L.A. a wonderful place to do research.”
“L.A. is the perfect location to get an education and to get experience in your field,” says Monica Rodriguez ('06 MA). “There are so many resources here.” Rodriguez’s educational path led to Cal State L.A. from Ventura because she wanted to study a unique field—medical anthropology.

This creative field employs anthropological and social science theories and methods to health, illness and healing questions. Rodriguez’s research focused on chronic diseases, primarily cancer prevention for Mexican women in Los Angeles County.

This fall Rodriguez embarked on a new journey, traveling to Detroit to begin a Ph.D. program in anthropology at Wayne State University as a Sally Casanova pre-doctoral scholar.

“CSULA has provided me with the background I need to be successful in a Ph.D. program,” she says. “It has opened doors for me, and I’ve discovered a lot of exciting things you can do with a degree in anthropology.”

Opening doors to better health

Notes:
- Plans: earn a Ph.D. to become a professor and conduct research.
- Acquired valuable experience researching health issues in Los Angeles County.
- “When I got here I wasn’t really focused,” says Rodriguez. “But my professors guided me and showed me the different paths you can take with a degree.”
“Degrees are building blocks. They show employers you’ve had the dedication to invest in yourself.”

A learning journey to success

Alan Fohrer (’81) had been selected to participate in an executive development program at Southern California Edison (SCE) when he decided to earn his MBA.

“Cal State L.A. was nearby, it had a night program and was affordable. It provided the ideal path for a working person like me to further his education,” he says. Now, as chief executive officer of one of the largest electric utility companies in the United States, he has 33 years of service at SCE and two postgraduate degrees under his belt. But his learning journey is far from over. “Having a bachelor’s and two master’s degrees has taught me what I don’t know,” says the Alumnus of the Year. “We need to learn more every day to succeed in what we do.”

Notes

- Odd jobs throughout high school and college at grocery stores, hardware stores, and driving a truck helped pay the bills.
- Team accomplishments, such as finding a path out of the 2000 California energy crisis, he rates as career highlights.
- Member of the Dean’s Advisory Council for Cal State L.A.’s College of Business and Economics.
Alumni Awards Gala

The 34th Annual Alumni Awards Gala will take place October 25, 2007 at Cal State L.A. The event, organized by the Alumni Association, includes dinner, awards ceremony with multimedia presentation.

For information please call the CSULA Alumni Association at (323) 343-4980.

CSULA Alumni Association Member Benefits

- Up to 60% off most office supplies at Office Depot stores nationwide
- Invitations to networking receptions, career workshops and professional development seminars
- Access to CSU libraries ($35 value)
- Subscription to Cal State L.A. TODAY university magazine
- Free subscription to our “Members-Only” e-mail newsletter
- Free access to the CSULA Career Development Center
- Free “call ahead” campus parking (twice a quarter)
- Discounts to popular theme parks and museums
- Access to the CSULA Federal Credit Union
- Health, auto and home insurance…and more!

To join the Alumni Association or for more information, visit http://alumni.calstatela.edu or call (323) 343-ALUM.

For many of the more than 20,000 students studying here, Cal State L.A. represents a place of new beginnings and endless possibilities. This year, 40 top students are President’s Scholars—a prestigious honor for high school graduates with a history of achievement in the classroom as well as in community service and leadership. Here, some of the current President’s Scholars surround President James M. Rosser at the 2006 Alumni Awards Gala.

For those who will follow in the footsteps of these President’s Scholars, Cal State L.A. alumni have generously supported the University’s Annual Fund, ensuring that the best opportunities, access and quality remain available to young scholars (see related story, page 10). To find out more about the Annual Fund and how you can make a gift toward excellence in scholarship at Cal State L.A., go to http://alumni.calstatela.edu/annualgiving or call us, at (323) 343-4866.
1960s

Marshall Geller ('61), founder of St. Cloud Capital, a lender that uses a combination of debt and equity to fund small public and private firms, was recently featured in the Los Angeles Business Journal.

Félix Gutiérrez ('65), professor of journalism at the USC Annenberg School, delivered the keynote speech at the rededication of Cal State L.A.’s Rubén Salazar Hall, named for the Los Angeles Times reporter who was killed in 1970 covering a rally.


1970s

Timothy Brick ('71) is chairman of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which oversees the major water importer and wholesaler for 18 million people in six Southland counties.

Steven P. Erwin ('70) is vice president and chief financial officer of 21st Century Insurance.

George Frahm ('75) is group senior vice president of retail operations and administration for Stater Bros. Markets.

Mark James ('78) is a cameraman for the NBC news team recognized for excellence in broadcast journalism, receiving the University of Georgia’s George Foster Peabody Award in 2006.

Alfred Jenkins ('70), retired Los Angeles attorney, received the California State Bar’s Diversity Award.

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Barry Gordon ('86), actor and former president of the Screen Actors Guild, hosts the political talk radio show “Barry Gordon From Left Field” on KCAA 1050 AM.

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Nelida Duran ('98), director of HIV Services at AltaMed Health Services in Los Angeles, recently married Joseph Alan Acevedo.

Lorrie-Ann Diaz ('99) was promoted to director of marketing communications for NBA basketball team Miami Heat.

Kevin Fox ('91), a teacher at Arcadia High School, was one of 50 recipients nationwide to receive the 2006 James Madison Fellowship, awarded to individuals dedicated to secondary education in American history and government.

Jess Romo (MA '92) is manager of the Ontario International Airport.

Brian Sassi ('94) is president of Blue Cross of California, the largest publicly traded commercial health benefits company in the United States.

Aradna Tripati ('96), a University of Cambridge Research Fellow, spoke at Cal State L.A.’s 2006 Geology Banquet on “Relationships Between Rapid Climatic Changes and the Carbon Cycle.”

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Leana S. Wen ('01), national president of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), was appointed to the board of the Council on Graduate Medical Education, which provides assessments of physician workforce trends, training issues and financing policies.

Carlos Illingworth, Jr. ('04), former Associated Students, Inc. president, is field representative for California State Assemblyman Ronald S. Calderon in the 58th District.

Class Notes

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Daniel Kwong ('82) is founder of the National History Center in Washington, D.C.

Norma Mttune ('82, '85 MA) is associate director and chief financial officer of SHIELDS for Families, Inc., a South Los Angeles family services agency. She was named a 2006 Durfee Stanton Fellow for her project “Young Executive Mentoring and Coaching Institute,” which trains nonprofit executives.

Mike Nessen ('82) is vice president of business development for Imaging3, developer of a medical imaging device that produces 3-D diagnostic images in real-time.

John J. Tracy ('81), senior vice president of engineering operations and technology for The Boeing Company, was named Hispanic Engineer of the Year for 2006 by the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Conference.

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In Memoriam

Rose Katherine Koski Brownell ('72), teacher and minister serving the Johrei Fellowship.

Helen Brocklehurst ('55, '56 MA), counselor and associate professor of education, established the Helen Pylar Brocklehurst Endowed Scholarship for single parents or re-entry students pursuing an advanced degree.

Millie Burnett, emeritus professor of music and an expert in music education.

Calvin Burke ('53), former principal of Central High School.

Louis C. DeArmond, emeritus professor of history and translator in Japan following World War II. Cal State L.A.’s first Latin American history professor, he established the Latin American Studies program and was coordinator of the Latin American Center from its founding in 1964 until his retirement in 1979.

Sue Kunimoto Embrey ('69), political activist and founding member of the Nisei Progressives. Embrey, forced to live in an internment camp during World War II, later worked to raise awareness of the plight of Japanese Americans during the War. As chairperson of the Manzanar Committee, she successfully campaigned to establish former internment camp as a national historic site.

Eugene R. Fingerhut, emeritus professor of history, began a Canadian Studies program at Cal State L.A. He also published books on pre-Columbian America, and student guides on the use of library reference materials.

Robert Turner Lewis, emeritus professor of psychology and ground-breaker in the field of neuropsychological assessment. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1943-1946.

John La Monica ('74), senior vice president of engineering operations and technology for The Boeing Company, was named Hispanic Engineer of the Year for 2006 by the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Conference.

Hubert C. Winkler, emeritus professor of physics, an expert in fundamental nuclear physics and the use of the Van de Graff accelerator.

George Bachmann ('65, '71 MA) special assistant to the vice president for Student Affairs, who joined the University in September 1967. He founded the Cal State L.A. President’s Scholars Program, as well as the Accelerated College Enrollment Program (ACE), and the Pre-accelerated College Enrollment Program (PACE). To support the George Bachmann Memorial Scholarship, please contact Cal State L.A.’s Development Office, (323) 434-3075.
Aim high to attain goals

“Basketball teaches you a lot that you can apply to the business world,” says Bob Laemmle ('58), and he should know. A savvy businessman who owns the Laemmle Theatres chain in Southern California and a former CSULA basketball player who earned first-team All-CCAA honors in 1957 and 1958, he’s had tremendous success in both. “Teamwork and getting along with people are essential in sports and business,” he says. “You have to motivate players and employees to do the best possible job.”

The theatres have seen tremendous success since Laemmle joined the family business 45 years ago, expanding from a single-screen theatre to 47 screens in nine locations.

Laemmle says that the lessons he learned on the court and in the classroom have helped him solidify the business, one of the nation’s most successful alternative theatre chains. “We have a consistent dedication to the type of programming we do,” he says. “It’s more than just a business, it’s a passion.”

Notes:

• Inducted into Cal State L.A. Athletics Hall of Fame in 2005.
• While attending Cal State L.A., Laemmle worked 20-30 hours a week at the family theatre cashiering and selling concessions.
• Regularly plays basketball in a senior league.
• He often sees four or five films a week. “If I weren’t the owner of the theatre, I’d be a customer!”
A proud alumna, Rosemary M. (Rosie) McNutt ('70) says one of the best things she ever did was heed her parents’ plea to attend the “college on the hill” in the 1960s. “I’ve been given every opportunity here,” she says. Working as a student assistant, McNutt met her husband-to-be, fellow student David F. McNutt ('67, '76).

She worked at Cal State L.A. in various staff positions until she decided to be a stay-at-home mother to their three children. Ten years later, she was back. “It was serendipity,” McNutt says of a position that opened up at just the right time with her name written all over it. “It was as if I had never left.” People from all levels of the University, who had, years earlier, encouraged her as a student, now welcomed her as a colleague. “I felt I had a second family,” she says of her many years as executive assistant to the president.

Up until her October 2006 retirement after 26 years, she held the reputation of “can-do” Rosie. “Rosie is known and respected at all levels of the campus, the CSU system and beyond,” says President James M. Rosser. A retirement party drew hundreds, from both on and off campus, who enjoyed sharing in her poignant memories. “I’ve always said I had the best job on campus because I interacted with faculty, staff and students. And when it came time, it took me months to write my resignation letter…all I could say was, ‘Thank you.’”

Notes:
- McNutt’s career highlights include seeing the tremendous growth of the campus, the grand opening of the Luckman Fine Arts Complex, and congratulating graduates on Commencement Day.
- McNutt strongly emphasizes the importance of education: “A formal education helps you hone your talents and gives you direction. It also makes for a better society.”
- With retirement, McNutt plans to learn French, Italian, Portuguese, tap dancing and tennis.

Always taking the high road

The majority of the McNutt family are alumni, including husband Dave with grandson Jalen; and Melinda (two CSULA teaching credentials), with brother Daniel and sister Carrie ('99).
The two 2007 Cal State L.A. Commencement celebrations bestowed more than 5,600 degrees to new alumni. (Insets, from left) Kevin Baaske, Communication Studies faculty and chair of the Academic Senate is Bearer of the Mace; in recognition of his statesmanship former Secretary of State Warren Christopher was presented an honorary Doctorate of Law from the CSU; Freeman A. Hrabowski III, president of The University of Maryland, Baltimore County, received a standing ovation after his stirring speech to undergraduates; while John D. Petersen, president of the five campus University of Tennessee, inspired master’s candidates with his fond memories of Cal State L.A., where he earned his undergraduate degree in chemistry in 1970.