

U N I V E R S I T Y   O F   L A   V E R N E   M A G A Z I N E

# VOICE

FALL 2014

## ROSS MATHEWS

THE UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE'S  
MOST OUTRAGEOUS ALUMNUS  
TALKS ABOUT LIFE AS AN AUTHOR,  
A TV PERSONALITY AND A RISING  
STAR IN HOLLYWOOD







# FEATURES

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## ROSS MATHEWS '02

He could have thought things through, but it was the La Verne alum's spontaneity that made him a Hollywood sensation.



## **14** RICHARD ROSE

La Verne scholar of religion opens his heart and mind to students of all faiths as they discover their own spiritual balance.



## **18** JAKE WARNER '14

When his 8-year-old daughter asked to see his college diploma, he figured it was about time he got one.



## **22** ALVIN CHANG '01

A leading businessman in Taiwan, this La Verne alumnus is the University's first international Board of Trustees member.

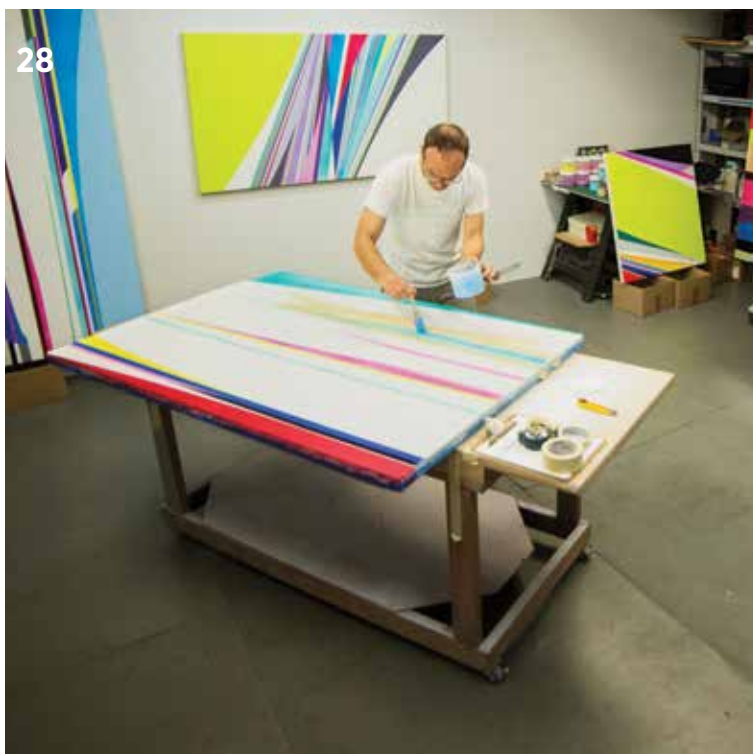


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By giving back to the communities they serve, the family's chain of markets sets a fine example of good corporate citizenship.

ROSS MATHEWS IMAGES, INCLUDING COVER: TIMOTHY WHITE, E! ENTERTAINMENT

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Welcome to your new, completely redesigned and reimagined VOICE Magazine. Over the last year, the new Office of Strategic Communications collaborated with alumni, trustees, faculty and staff – many of whom make up our new VOICE Advisory Board – to gain a broader perspective on what our University of La Verne audience wants to read. This issue of VOICE is a result of the feedback we received. You will find a more diverse variety of stories, engaging photography and imagery, and vibrant colors and layouts making for a much more updated, modern look and feel. We have also refreshed VOICE Online ([laverne.edu/voice](http://laverne.edu/voice)) which will serve as a platform for continuously updated dynamic content.

Yes, much has changed, and we hope you enjoy the finished product. What remains, however, is our commitment to bringing you compelling content about the people and programs that make up the University of La Verne. It is our hope that you feel a sense of pride... as your fellow alum, I know I do.



Alisha Rosas  
Executive Editor

## The VOICE throughout the years...



1989



1992



1997



1999



2002



2014

UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE MAGAZINE

# VOICE

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PRESIDENT

**DR. DEVORAH LIEBERMAN**

VICE PRESIDENT OF STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT  
MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

**DR. HOMA SHABAHANG**

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

**ALISHA ROSAS '02**

MANAGING EDITOR

**MARK VIDAL '10**

WRITERS

**CHARLES BENTLEY '81**

**NANCY NEWMAN '89**

**MARK VIDAL '10**

**ALISHA ROSAS '02**

**MELISSA PINION**

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

**MYRA GARCIA**

**SEAN LEE**

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

**GREG SCHMUTZER '06**

**CHARLES BENTLEY '81**

**RUSTY EVANS**

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT  
OF STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT  
MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS  
& CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

**FRED CHYR**

ART DIRECTOR

**MAUREEN PANOS**

DESIGNERS

**RUSTY EVANS**

**KANDACE SELNICK**

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO

**JAKE WEINHEIMER**

**PHILIP HIGSON**

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

**NANCY NEWMAN '89**

**JEANINE HILL**

PHOTO/DESIGN INTERNS

**JASMIN MIRANDA**

**NICOLE RODRIGUEZ**

DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL  
MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

**EVELYN SOMOZA**

WEB DESIGNERS

**ZACHARY ROUNDS**

**VICTORIA CASTANEDA '14**

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WHO PROVIDE EDITORIAL INSIGHT AND COUNSEL.

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VOICE

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE

1950 THIRD STREET

LA VERNE, CALIFORNIA 91750

EMAIL: [VOICE@LAVERNE.EDU](mailto:VOICE@LAVERNE.EDU)

[LAVERNE.EDU/VOICE](http://LAVERNE.EDU/VOICE)

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**M**uch transpired at the University of La Verne over our summer months. For example, during July, our Director of Public Relations Alisha Rosas and I traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with national editors from higher education publications to continue to spread the word about our remarkable University. Each editor asked for an “overview of the University,” and as we described our campus community, I was repeatedly reminded why I moved across the country to become a part of a University that has a significant mission and serves students, graduate and undergraduate, who reflect this mission.

We spoke of our quality academic programs, the committed faculty and staff, and described how La Verne is a place where people live and breathe the mission of the University. When the editors asked about our student population, we proudly told them that our campus demographics mirror that of California’s diverse population and how we currently reflect how the nation’s population landscape will look within the next two decades. We

were pleased to explain our University 2020 Strategic Vision and how our graduating students are prepared to meet the regional, national and global needs of the future.

We discussed The La Verne Experience and our strategic foci: the support we offer students and how we are institutionally committed to ensuring that all of our graduates have the tools necessary to succeed – whether they are choosing a future job or pursuing an advanced degree.

Efforts to increase national visibility are yielding results. This issue of our newly-redesigned VOICE includes a look at several different stories of perseverance. These include alumni who have worked to achieve their dreams, such as television personality Ross Mathews, to College of Law student Andrew Salera, who worked tirelessly preparing for the California State Bar Exam. The stories of Professor Dr. Richard Rose and Burbank Regional Campus student Betty Ganther remind us that sometimes the obstacles life presents help us to arrive exactly where we should be. This issue of VOICE also

offers an introduction to alumnus Alvin Chang, the University’s first international Trustee, who lives in Taiwan and is president of a highly successful technology corporation. There is no shortage of success stories about La Verne graduates, faculty and staff.

While our successes are evident in our current student and alumni stories, our institution is also gradually becoming a larger part of the national higher education conversation. Our most recent example is the honor of being included in the 2014 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll in the category of interfaith/community service. Each year, the President of the United States recognizes higher education institutions that reflect the values of exemplary community service and achieve meaningful, measurable outcomes in their communities through service. This is a significant honor and point of pride for La Verne, not for only for the recognition it brings, but for the level of excellence it represents.

La Verne continues to strive for such excellence because we aim to achieve more than we ever imagined. The diligent and ever-present contributions of our students, faculty, staff and committed Board of Trustees bring us to new heights. As you read this issue and future issues of the VOICE, you will learn of and connect more with the successful paths our students, faculty and staff are taking.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Devorah Lieberman'.

Devorah Lieberman, Ph.D.  
President

## WHAT'S NEW

### SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

## FAST FACTS WITH DIRECTOR SEAN SNIDER



#### **Q Why is the new Small Business Development Center on campus?**

Dean Abe Helou of the College of Business & Public Management is the visionary responsible for bringing the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) program to the University as a way to support the local business community. The SBDC program is built on the concept of combining the resources of institutions of higher learning and government to assist small businesses.

#### **Q Who can benefit from the Center?**

La Verne's SBDC will serve business owners living or working in cities such as La Verne, Pomona, West Covina, Diamond Bar, Claremont, San Dimas, Industry and Hacienda Heights. The entrepreneurs in other surrounding cities will also have access to the center.

#### **Q What are the business hours?**

The SBDC will be open to serve businesses by appointment Monday-Friday between 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

#### **Q What are the tools and resources offered?**

The University's SBDC stimulates economic growth in the East San Gabriel Valley by providing small businesses and entrepreneurs with expert consulting, effective training and access to resources. The SBDC provides services to both current and prospective small business owners.

#### **Q Is there a cost?**

The SBDC program provides no-cost, one-on-one consulting and low-cost or free seminars and conferences for small businesses.

#### **Q How does the Center align with the University's 2020 Strategic Vision?**

Creation of the SBDC will support the 2020 Strategic Vision to achieve educational excellence and to heighten the reputation, visibility and prominence of the University. Additionally, the SBDC mission aligns perfectly with the University's core value of community and civic engagement to improve and enhance local, regional and global communities.

## LEO ON THE STREET

with David Asbra, ASULV President



**Though it may not be seen very much in La Verne, 15.3 percent of Californians live below the poverty level. Whose responsibility is this, if anyone's, to fix this?**

The problem with California's poverty stems in part from a culmination of failed policies on behalf of our legislature throughout the years. It is not the problem of one particular party, it is the problem of the polarization of politicians on both sides. Another area that needs to change is California's K-12 education system, which is 44th in the nation. It is not as great as it was in the past and we need to get it to where everyone has the ability to receive a quality education that competes with the states that have a better-functioning system.

 Read More Online

## SAVE THE DATE

### OCTOBER 24, 2014

#### **(HOMECOMING WEEKEND) ALUMNI AWARDS DINNER**

7 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

SHERATON FAIRPLEX  
CONFERENCE CENTER,  
POMONA, CA

The Alumni Advisory Board invites you to continue the tradition of recognizing the quality and excellence of University of La Verne alumni and faculty with a celebratory dinner for our 2014 Distinguished Alumni and Professor honorees.

Register at:  
[laverne.edu/homecoming2014](http://laverne.edu/homecoming2014)

### NOVEMBER 2, 2014

#### **SUNDAYS AT THE MORGAN CONCERT SERIES PRESENTS:**

**ULV CHAMBER SINGERS  
AND BARBERSHOP SINGERS**

#### **SONGS OF REMEMBRANCE**

6:00 p.m.

ANN & STEVE  
MORGAN AUDITORIUM,  
FOUNDERS HALL

### JANUARY 19, 2015

#### **MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY OF SERVICE**

8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

### MARCH 21, 2015

#### **SCHOLARSHIP GALA**

SHERATON FAIRPLEX  
CONFERENCE CENTER,  
POMONA, CA

Honoring Richard, Robert, Roger, and Randall Lewis, of the Lewis Group of Companies, for their long history of generosity and commitment to the University of La Verne.

Visit: [laverne.edu/gala15](http://laverne.edu/gala15)

## MY PERSPECTIVE: JOY LEI

**Since I began my position as the inaugural Chief Diversity and Inclusivity Officer (CDIO) at University of La Verne two years ago, I often get asked the question: “So...what is it that you do?”**

On a personal level, I want to say that I get to do what I am passionate about and dedicated to, and that is to work towards equity and inclusivity through education. Professionally, I would say that Chief Diversity Officers (the more common title for this position) are executive-level administrators who provide dedicated leadership to fulfilling an institution’s diversity mission and goals. At the University of La Verne, I report directly to the President and sit on the President’s Executive Cabinet. Also, rather than centralizing all diversity functions, personnel and offices to report to me, I work closely with President Lieberman and senior administrators to collaborate with other offices and departments across the University to achieve our diversity and inclusivity goals.

These goals include continuing to provide educational access to underserved populations as well as academic and socio-emotional support to increase their retention and graduation. They also include creating a diverse and inclusive campus climate in which all students, staff and faculty feel a sense of belonging to the University community and that they have a voice as members of this community. In addition, we are deepening our understanding of diversity as an essential asset to increasing learning, workplace productivity and morale, as well as fostering research and improving the University’s success and reputation. The focus on maximizing diversity’s broad impact is based on research that shows that more diverse learning environments lead to improved creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking; students of all backgrounds are better able to envision multiple perspectives, explore diverse social and cultural contexts, and engage with the challenges and opportunities of a society and economy that are now globally connected.

It is important that we, as a University community, engage



in dialogue and education to determine what these broad goals mean for the University of La Verne and how we will achieve these goals. This is an opportune time to be having these discussions. Not only is diversity and inclusivity stressed as a core value of the University, President Lieberman has strengthened this institutional commitment by filling the Chief Diversity and Inclusivity Officer position and integrating diversity into the four key initiatives of La Verne’s 2020 Strategic Vision. We have also begun a University-wide conversation about what it means for La Verne to be an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI, as designated by the federal government), how being an HSI affects our institutional identity and what it means to be a successful HSI. These are two exciting and difficult conversations, but they are critical to La Verne’s future.

So, what is it that I do? My areas of focus include: University policies and practices; curriculum, co-curriculum and pedagogical practices; student diversity and success; faculty, staff and administration diversity, including recruitment, retention, evaluation and professional development; campus climate assessment; diversity and cultural competency education; individual and group support and advocacy; and strategic planning. At the core of it all, I work with caring individuals who are dedicated to our students’ educational, personal and professional success. My role, as the CDIO, is to lead, support and serve as a resource in understanding and instituting diversity as a vital component of educational excellence. Personally, I believe our students will go on to change the world for the better. And nothing makes me prouder than to be a part of that.

# READERS CORNER

## READ THE VOICE ONLINE

Did you know that VOICE Online contains exclusive web-only stories, videos, slideshows and other interactive media? Stay connected!

**Visit:** [laverne.edu/voice](http://laverne.edu/voice)

 Read More Online

## TAKE LA VERNE WITH YOU

Traveling the world? We are calling on all students, alumni, faculty and staff to share their trip with the rest of us by sending a photograph of themselves on location wearing La Verne garb (hat, shirt, sweater, etc.). Please send images that are at least 1MB to [proffice@laverne.edu](mailto:proffice@laverne.edu).

## MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

We want to hear from you! We encourage you to submit comments on VOICE at [laverne.edu/voice](http://laverne.edu/voice). Please include your full name, class year, degree and the city in which you live. We reserve the right to tailor submissions for style and length.

 Write Online

## TWITTER WALL

 [twitter.com/ULaVerne](https://twitter.com/ULaVerne)

Like a story or have a comment to share?

Tweet to us @ULaVerne using hashtag #TheVOICEMag



An honor to meet @PresLieberman at @ULaVerne reception! Thank you for supporting my fight against childhood obesity!

- @CARRIESWIDECKI

Excited to see a student from @ULaVerne join @riversidecagov's Innovation & Technology Department as an #Intern!

- @CHASEMATAMOROZ



REACH Summer Business Camp Helps At-Risk Students Succeed in Higher Education @SCE @ULaVerne

- @SCE\_CAROLINE

I cannot wait for my college tour @ULaVerne on Friday!

- @ROBCASTANEDA97



LA Opera Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artists ready to take the stage at @ULaVerne #operaeverywhere #busyweekend

- @LAOPERA

# HOMECOMING & REUNIONS 2014 SPOT YOUR LEOPARD PRIDE

## Congratulations to the 2014 Distinguished Alumni & Professor Award Honorees!

Service to Profession  
**Barbara Poling '70, '82**

Service to Community  
**Lucile Leard '59 & Dawn Orlow Townsend '94**

Distinguished Professor  
**Robert Neher**

Ann & Steve Morgan Award for  
Dedicated Service to the University  
**Eric Boardman '66**

Distinguished Alumna of the Year  
**Wendy Lau '98**

## FRIDAY OCTOBER 24

10:30 AM - 2:00 PM  
Back to College

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM  
College Receptions

7:00 PM - 9:30 PM  
Alumni Awards Dinner

Congratulations to the alumni  
and professor award honorees.

9:30 PM - 11:00 PM  
Moonlight Desserts  
& Dancing

## SATURDAY OCTOBER 25

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM  
5K Community  
Fun Run

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM  
Homecoming  
Welcome Breakfasts

CAPA Breakfast

9:30 AM, 10:00 AM, 10:30 AM  
Campus Walking  
Tours and Campus  
Master Plan Overview

10:00 AM - NOON  
Homecoming  
Street Fair

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
All Alumni &  
Campus Picnic

Homecoming  
Tailgating

12:30 PM - 12:50 PM  
Spot Your Leopard  
Pride Parade

1:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Homecoming  
Football Game

Post-Game Party

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM  
Decade Reunion  
Dinners

Young Alumni Mixer

## SUNDAY OCTOBER 26

10:30 AM - 11:45 AM  
Church of the  
Brethren Service

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
Farewell Brunch

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM  
Friends &  
Floaters Potluck



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LA VERNE**  
Alumni Relations

# October 24-26

For more information or to register, visit us at:  
[laverne.edu/homecoming2014](http://laverne.edu/homecoming2014)

(909) 448-4665 ■ [alumni@laverne.edu](mailto:alumni@laverne.edu) ■ [laverne.edu/alumni](http://laverne.edu/alumni)



### JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ INSPIRES GRADUATES AT COMMENCEMENT

Migrant farm worker turned NASA astronaut José Hernández lifted up candidates at the 2014 Spring Commencement celebration on May 30. He served as keynote speaker at Citizens Business Bank Arena in Ontario. He urged graduates to work hard to reach their potential. He also served as the keynote speaker at last year's "Latino Education Access & Development Conference" (LEAD). This year's conference will take place October 4.



### EARNING NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

La Verne junior Mirrella Bautista's dream to one day become a special education teacher reached a national television audience in May when she won a \$15,000 scholarship on Katie Couric's daytime talk show. Bautista, who majors in education and political science, competed against 3,000 applicants. She and 11 other finalists flew to New York to appear on "Katie," where she was announced as winner of the Scholarship America Dream Award. The 20-year-old plans to graduate in the spring of 2015.



### REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

They pedaled their way to the top. Five high school students participating in the College of Business & Public Management's REACH business camp won \$1,000 for their start-up business plan outlining a bicycle sharing system at a college campus. The students modeled their fictitious plan after a New York City system that uses 6,000 bicycles, 330 docking stations and a \$15 monthly fee to use a bicycle on campus. In all, 52 high school juniors and seniors participated in this summer's program.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

More than 500 newly admitted freshmen participated in the annual First Year La Verne Experience (FLEX) Community Engagement Day on August 23. Students joined University faculty and administrators for a day of giving back, putting theory to practice. Among the communities and organizations served were Hope Gardens, Union Rescue Mission, Sowing Seeds for Life, Amy's Farm, City Link, Boys and Girls Club of Pomona Valley, David & Margaret Youth and Family Service, Hillcrest Homes and more. From planting gardens, to assisting the elderly, to feeding the homeless, students were acclimated to what will become their La Verne Experience. "This day represents who we are," President Dr. Deborah Lieberman said. "You are at a University that lives its mission. This is the beginning of not only your next four years, but the rest of your life."



## PUTTING CAMPUS SAFETY FIRST

A national organization presented La Verne's Campus Safety Department with an award in July for increasing officer training, security equipment and making other school safety improvements. It occurred during the 9th Annual National School Safety Conference in Orlando, Fla. La Verne was the only higher education institution recognized during the event, which was hosted by the Maryland-based School Safety Advocacy Council. The group provides specialized services and training for law enforcement, school departments, colleges and universities.



## HOSTING LEADERSHIP

In an effort to build community partnerships and address issues of college access and readiness, the University of La Verne was host to the Campus Compact National Meeting in July. College and University presidents as well as Campus Compact state coordinators from across the country gathered on the main campus to empower one another and focus on ways to further engage students into the culture of community service. "The University of La Verne went to extraordinary lengths to make our Campus Compact meeting a success," noted Campus Compact President Dr. Andrew Seligsohn. "It was marvelous to learn about the great work the faculty and staff are doing at the University of La Verne."

## MBA STUDENTS TRADE UP

A lesson in bartering took six La Verne graduate students on a journey from the classroom to the world of philanthropy. Chinese MBA students Keyan Guan, Haiyan Lu, Xue Rong, Xianlong Xu, Ruoxun Yang and Yuan Zhou turned a \$1 lint brush into a four-figure donation for a children's center at a San Gabriel church. Students were charged with trading a \$1 item for one of greater value, with a minimum of four trades required. Their last trade resulted in a windfall worth \$1,750: 11 basketballs and two water coolers from the Los Angeles Lakers.





WORKING WITH BOTH

# MIND & HEART

## Professor Richard Rose Finds Balance Integrating Faith and Academia

BY ALISHA ROSAS '02

PHOTOGRAPHY JAKE WEINHEIMER

Dr. Richard Rose is a man of global faith. The Professor of Religion and Philosophy's entire career has revolved around interfaith studies and the understanding of global interfaith exchange.

"It really is my passion," he said.

It shows. In addition to teaching, Dr. Rose serves as an ordained elder with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, while he is also on the advisory board of the Southern California Committee for a Parliament of the World Religions and serves as chair of the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Conference in Irvine.

**T**he courses he teaches are designed to appreciate interfaith understanding and are far reaching, including: World Religions: East; Religion Science and Consciousness; and Power & Oppression, just to name a few. He has presented at countless conferences around the world as an expert in interfaith studies, and despite teaching and his work in the community, he is still able to serve as the advisor for La Verne's Brothers Forum, the African American male mentoring/support group on campus, for the last 18 years.

And while his religion was always an influential part of his life and family upbringing, years back, Dr. Rose was not planning to make his career out of it. In fact, after high school, he planned to become an architect.

But a tragic event made his life take a turn. Dr. Rose was involved in a car accident that resulted in the death of his childhood friend. Dr. Rose was behind the wheel. The event sparked many emotions and questions in his head: "Because of what I felt was God's gracious concern for me, there was one question that stuck out in my mind: Would God had loved me as much as God obviously did, if I had been born of a different faith?" he asked. That same question has served as the guiding question in his ministerial and academic career.

"At that point, I believed I was being called to ministry, but I wanted to learn more about the degree to which God moved and connected the lives of people," he said.

These aspirations led him to Pacific Christian College in Fullerton, Calif. There, he enrolled in the dual program with the Philosophy Department of California State University, Fullerton (CSUF). He earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy at Pacific Christian College.

"Taking courses at both institutions really did provide me with a broader understanding of philosophical traditions and worldviews," he said.

Dr. Rose's parents raised him and his six siblings in the AME. But as his undergraduate studies were nearly complete, a professor asked him a question.



**Dr. Richard Rose has been teaching religion at La Verne for more than 20 years.**

"He asked me what the difference was between the theology that was taught there (at Pacific Christian College) and what they teach in the AME Church. I told him there was no difference. Both the AME Church and the theology of the school teach Jesus' birth, death and resurrection. He then challenged me to learn more about my heritage."

That professor's challenge resulted in Dr. Rose pursuing his master's degree in divinity from Howard University. Attending when James Cone's theories on black theology were very well known, Dr. Rose found himself questioning Cone's notion that God was "exclusively" black because black people were oppressed in the United States. He felt Cone's argument did have merit due to the idea that God becomes one of the oppressed in order to liberate those who are suffering in a particular social context.

Dr. Rose, however, questioned the exclusivistic notion in liberation theology because, as he says, "I was coming from a white religious institution," and, "I had seen God working in the lives of white people so why couldn't God also be white?"

Such questions sparked the research for his thesis at Howard, entitled, "Liberation Themes in The African American Religious Tradition." His work led him to research the writings of bishops within the AME Church, studying the speeches and sermons of key historical African American figures, uncovering core themes that were consistently deemed as critical. One was the parenthood of God for all humanity. Second was the right of every child to have a first-class education no matter their background. And finally, all people have the right to first class citizenship within the nation.

After graduating from Howard, Dr. Rose moved back to California. He applied and was accepted to pursue his doctorate from Claremont Graduate School. After completing his coursework, he began working at La Verne, where he has taught for more than 20 years. He believes it is the strong relationships he has with his students, as well as the creativity he puts into the courses he teaches, that keep him passionate about the work that he does. He also serves as an associate minister at Christ Our Redeemer AME Church in Irvine, Calif. where he serves a congregation of more than 2,000 members.



**Want to learn more about Dr. Rose's philosophy on life?  
Watch his exclusive interview at [laverne.edu/voice](http://laverne.edu/voice).**



Dr. Rose has served as a minister or assistant pastor in

**10**  
churches

over the past 35 years.

Dr. Rose pastored a small church in Virginia that had four members when he started. When he left, it had 12 members. "I like to say we experienced a 300 percent growth when I was there," he says, smiling.



Dr. Rose has two daughters, Rochelle and Tiara. Rochelle recently completed the first year of a Master's Program in Production at the College of Motion Picture Arts at Florida State University. His younger daughter, Tiara, just completed her undergraduate degree in biology at Arizona State University. She plans to complete a two-year degree in early childhood development at the University of La Verne and then take the MCAT to pursue her medical degree.

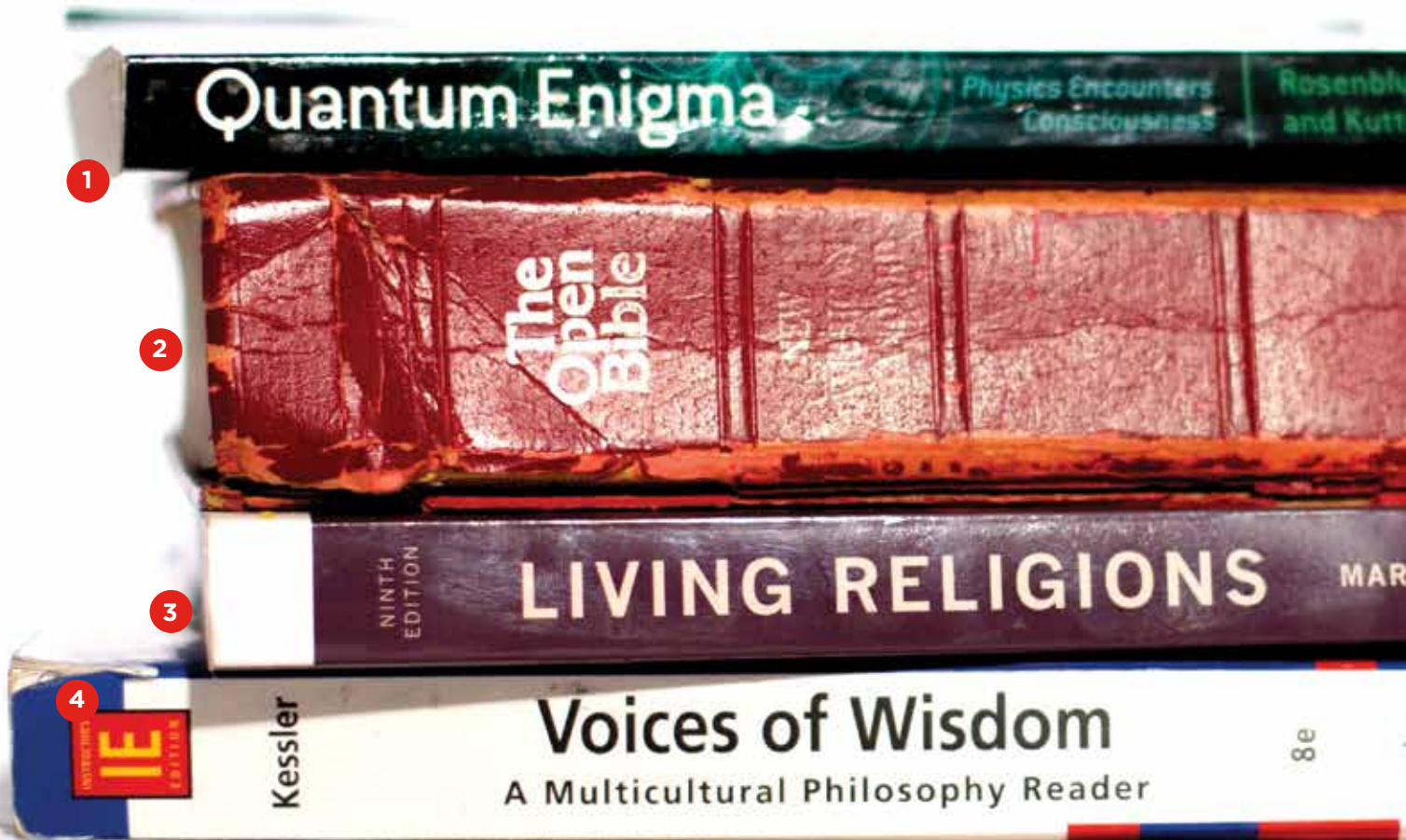


As a result of his global role, Dr. Rose has been instrumental in the creation of an Interfaith Studies minor at La Verne.

Dr. Rose has been involved with the Council for a Parliament of the World Religions, a global organization that works to bring together religious leaders and devotees to talk about current issues, for more than

**15**  
years

For more information, please visit [parliamentofreligions.org](http://parliamentofreligions.org)



**What books have had the most profound impact on your life?**

**1. Quantum Enigma**

**2. The Open Bible**

**3. Living Religions**

**4. Voices of Wisdom**

# for the family

BY **NANCY NEWMAN '89**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **JAKE WEINHEIMER**

Jake Warner '14 earned a degree through the CAPA program, making his mother proud and setting an example for his daughters.

**H**is family stood and cheered as Jake Warner walked across the stage at the University of La Verne Commencement Ceremony last spring to accept his diploma. At 35-years-old, and well into a successful career as a Senior Technical Producer at Fox Sports Radio, his college graduation was a much awaited and defining moment in all their lives.

The moment he accepted his degree, Warner fulfilled a promise made to his 8-year-old daughter, accomplished a life-long goal and gave his mother her proudest day.

After high school, Warner worked, and also joined the U.S. Navy. He later married and started a family. Through it all, he had always dreamed of college and remembers how his mother, Pam, stressed the importance of education. "There were times when things were really tough and she was raising me and my brother on her own," he said, "but she always told me I was going to college." On commencement day, Warner says, both he and his sister-in-law were graduating from La Verne, and half joked that their families might have been the loudest people in the audience.

"From my seat, I could see my mom sitting front and center in the crowd, and she was smiling from ear to ear. She was yelling and screaming, 'I love you' through the whole commencement!" He added, "I was the first one in my family to earn a college degree, so she was pretty excited."

Warner received inspiration and support from his wife Sulma, and daughters Kendra and Savannah, when he decided to make college a reality. In fact, his daughter Kendra was the catalyst for change. "My wife has her degree framed and hung in our home," he said. "One day, my daughter asked me why my degree wasn't on the wall next to hers, and I had to tell her it was because I didn't have one.

I remember she told me, 'Well Daddy, I really hope you get it so I can see yours up there.' From that moment, I knew that was what I was going to do."

Sulma was the one who signed him up for an information session to learn more about the programs La Verne offered. "She is subtle that way," Warner laughed, "but you know what? Her doing that was the push I needed." Warner enrolled shortly after that and fully dedicated himself to his goal of earning his degree. A first-generation student in the Campus Accelerated Program for Adults (CAPA) program, he had to arrange his schedule accordingly. He worked the graveyard shift, so his mornings consisted of doing his homework then picking his daughters up from school. He would then help them with their homework, and then head back to work. "I really had no time to do anything else but stick to the schedule," he said. "During the summers, I would take online classes so if we had a family vacation, I could take my class with me and study at night in the hotel room, while the rest of the family slept."

Warner's bachelor's degree in organizational management, with an emphasis in human resources, offers new skills which Warner applies directly to his job, and to his life. Having worked at Fox for 12 years, he has seen the industry change in many ways, and his degree gives him new tools to evolve with it.

"By learning the science of leadership, I have learned to be an effective leader in the workplace and in life in general. La Verne provided that for me, and I am eternally grateful, Warner said."

Today, his degree hangs next to his wife's in their home. The piece of paper is a symbol of a dream fulfilled and reflects countless hours of hard work. It is also a daily reminder of sacrifices made and the family support that was given. And more than anything, his degree represents the promise he kept to his daughter.

**JAKE WARNER AND**  
his wife, Sulma, stand  
proudly with their  
daughters, Kendra and  
Savannah, beside their  
two degrees.



## THE STUFF THAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF

### HIBERNATING IS AN ODD WAY TO SPEND A SUMMER.

But for Andrew Salera, it's the best way to describe what he's been through.

"It's a weird feeling, not knowing what's going on. It's hard to explain," said Salera, a University of La Verne College of Law graduate who shut himself off from family, friends and most of the rest of the world for 12 weeks to prepare for the longest, most grueling three days of his life. "How many people you know can say they studied for an 18-hour exam?"

From July 29 to 31, Salera spent six hours each day at the Ontario Convention Center taking the California State Bar Exam. That exam, recognized as one of the nation's toughest, is permanently etched upon the psyche of everyone who attempts it.

"I've talked with attorneys who are practicing now, 10-15 years later, and they tell me they still dream that they didn't pass the bar," Salera said. "It stays with you."

Salera came to La Verne Law after earning his bachelor's degree in Finance from Cal Poly Pomona in 2009. The Moreno Valley native found few job opportunities in the midst of the national recession and decided to follow a lifelong passion for the law.

"It's probably the best decision I've ever made," Salera said.

In May, Salera completed his studies and graduated with his Juris Doctor from La Verne Law. But his journey was far from finished.

"Graduating from law school is very anticlimactic," Salera said. "With any other degree, it's all about walking across the stage and getting your diploma. But for us, as law students, the goal is getting your license."

In preparation for taking the California State Bar exam, Salera joined other recent La Verne Law graduates and



began intensive study only a few days after commencement. All returned to the Ontario campus for customized post-graduation bar review — the Bar Exam Strategic Training (BEST) Program. Provided by La Verne Law's Center for Academic & Bar Readiness (CABR), BEST utilizes the highly acclaimed BARBRI bar review course in conjunction with CABR staff and members of the law school's faculty. Established in 1967, BARBRI has helped more than 1 million law school graduates prepare for the bar exam.

Recent results turned in by La Verne Law graduates have been impressive. For the February 2014 California bar exam, La Verne first-time exam takers recorded an 87.5 percent success rate, surpassing the 69 percent average of all California ABA schools pass rate by more than 18 percent. The figure also represented a 13 percent improvement on the July 2012 exam. Couple that with the July 2013 results in which La Verne Law graduates achieved a 68% first-time taker pass rate, and it is apparent that both CABR and the BEST Program are having a positive impact.

For 12 weeks, Salera spent 14 hours each weekday preparing for the bar exam. Lectures, practice tests, essays and review filled almost all of his waking hours, fueled by lots of coffee and offset by a scant few minutes of non-legal thought each day.

Even during his six hours of sleep each night, he found the law working its way into his mind.

"So far, I've only had one dream where I failed because I was late," he added with a laugh. "I think that's pretty good."

## ANDREW SALERA'S TYPICAL DAY AS HE STUDIED TO TAKE THE JULY 2014 CALIFORNIA BAR EXAM:



**6:30 a.m.**

Alarm goes off and the day begins.



**7 a.m.**

Out of bed & getting ready for the day; quick breakfast & 1-2 cups of coffee.



**8 a.m.**

College of Law library opens



**8:05 a.m.**

I'm usually in the library, doing a quick review and 20-30 sample multiple choice questions.



**9 a.m.**

BARBRI class starts. We do either video lectures, multiple choice questions or write essays. 1-2 more cups of coffee.



**12:30 p.m.**

Morning session over; quick lunch and couple of games of ping pong with my buddy Jones. We need to stay sane and get our minds off the law for a little bit.



**1 p.m.**

Back to BARBRI class. We do either video lectures, multiple choice questions, write essays, or review. 1-2 more cups of coffee, none after 3 o'clock.



**6 p.m.**

Class is over. I go straight to the law library, and except for taking 15 minutes for dinner, I write essays, do sample multiple choice questions, or review the subject we went over during class.



**10:30 p.m.**

Leave law library and head for home.



**11 p.m.**

I'm home. I spend 30 minutes watching something on Netflix.



**11:30 p.m.**

Day is done. I try to be asleep by midnight.

**"That's my Monday through Friday. Saturdays and Sundays I sleep in a little bit and just go to 10. There are no classes, but there is homework."**





**RF FULLY-ANECHOIC CHAMBER:** This facility is designed for the measurement of antenna pattern, average gain and RF parameters of radiated frequency products according to international standards.



# CERPASSING EXPECTATIONS

BY MYRA GARCIA  
PHOTOGRAPHY KAVEN TSAI

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From student to entrepreneur, Alvin Chang '01 has come full circle as he proudly introduces the headquarters of his multimillion dollar company, CerpPASS Technology Corporation to his alma mater.

**A**lvin Chang '01, the University of La Verne's newest and first international trustee, is CEO and co-founder of Cerpass Technology Corporation, a leader in the world of electronic certifications. Cerpass was founded in 2003 and employs more than 240 engineers, sales, technical and administrative staff. Headquartered near Taipei, Taiwan, the company also has offices/labs on mainland China. Putting his La Verne MBA skills to practice, Chang took Cerpass from a \$200,000 initial investment to a \$27 million company in a 10-year span.

He hadn't always intended to go into business.

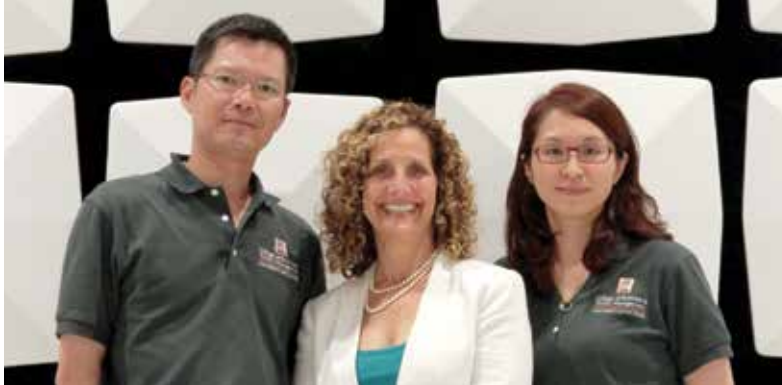
Before completing required military service, Chang earned an undergraduate law degree in Taiwan. He wanted to follow in his older brother's footsteps and continue his studies in the United States, figuring law school would be the next logical step. Eventually, Chang envisioned becoming a corporate counselor, planning to one day lead his own law firm.

Chang's prospective interest in corporate law evolved into an active interest in current business opportunities. Chang's future wife, Kerry Ho '99, suggested he continue his business study in the U.S., referencing La Verne's "bridge" program, which helps international students become proficient in English, facilitating classroom and business success.

"After meeting Dr. (Abe) Helou, I felt confident that I would learn what I really wanted to know: business methods to analyze and solve problems," Chang said.

La Verne's integrated curriculum and experiential opportunities provided Chang the tools he needed.

Chang and Ho credit Dr. Helou, dean of the College of Business & Public Management, with helping them acclimate and adapt culturally to American higher education, a significant enhancement to their lives.



**Dr. Devorah Lieberman received a tour of Cerpass Technology Corporation by Alvin Chang '01 and his wife Kerry Ho '99 on her summer visit in 2014.**

## CHANG TOOK CERPASS FROM A \$200,000 INITIAL INVESTMENT TO A \$27 MILLION COMPANY IN A 10-YEAR SPAN.

"I know that the international students are thousands of miles from home and that they need a fatherly or brotherly influence," Dr. Helou said. "I treat all of our students as if they were my own children, with the same love."

A teaching style devoted to student participation/integration is not unusual for students raised in the U.S., but for someone from Asia, this integrated learning process offers an entirely new way of teaching and learning.

"Dr. Helou was my most influential professor because he never gave you the answer," Chang said. "Problems are not black and white; solving them requires independent thinking."

As a new Board of Trustees member, Chang has the opportunity to break new ground and is looking forward to giving back to the University that gave him the skills to succeed.

"I see two ways that I can help immediately: one is to offer a personal perspective on strengthening the MBA program, by understanding what [international] students are looking for – considering the skills and knowledge that are necessary for success in the business world," Chang said. "I may also be able to raise La Verne's presence and reach in Asia through connecting with our alumni and helping to recruit new students."

During a recent alumni event in Taipei, Alvin Chang – a young, successful businessman, new Board of Trustees member and proud graduate of the University of La Verne – stepped up to the podium and made a passionate pledge to the assembled alumni.

"La Verne means so much to me. It has allowed me to grow both as a person and as a businessman. It is my duty to give as generously as possible," he said.

Welcome aboard.

*Vice President of University Advancement Myra Garcia recently traveled with President Lieberman and Dr. Abe Helou to Asia to connect with alumni and continue partnership opportunities with other colleges and universities in Taiwan and China.*



**10 METER SEMI-ANECHOIC CHAMBER:** This facility is designed for full-compliance radiated emission measurement in the 3m and 10m distance and for radiated immunity testing in the 3m distance according to US and European standards for EMC testing.

# BURBANK CAMPUS STUDENT RISES ABOVE HOME, HEALTH ADVERSITIES

## **BETTY GANTHER GRABBED HER CHILDREN, BIRTH**

certificates and other important paperwork and fled her home in 2000.

It was the latest in a series of hardships facing the Bellsflower woman, who is majoring in child development at the University of La Verne's Burbank campus.

Medical issues seriously changed Ganther's life, with kidney failure in 1999 subjecting her to regular dialysis treatments. As if that weren't enough, she says she suffered regular physical and verbal abuse from her former husband. She didn't want her two sons to endure that kind of life.

"We just uprooted and left everything behind," Ganther said.

They stayed in domestic violence shelters for more than a year, but it never stopped Ganther from dreaming of a career teaching young children.

Ganther says her drive to help children began when she was a child herself. She began babysitting when she was 8.

"As the years progressed, I felt it was my God-given gift to be around children and interact with them," she said.

Despite her lack of education and experience, Ganther was selected in 1995 by Kedren Community Head Start Preschool in Los Angeles to be a teacher's assistant volunteer. She eventually moved into a teaching position at the school. Then heartbreak came at the end of that school year. School administrators claimed she didn't have enough college credit to stay, so they terminated her.

Ganther decided to remedy the lack of college credit. She enrolled at East Los Angeles Community College, earning an associate's degree in child development. She is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree from La Verne and is set to graduate in 2015.

Holly Buckley, an adjunct professor at La Verne who taught

Ganther in 2013, described her as a student who is committed to succeed. Buckley said she observed Ganther while she worked with young children, putting into practice what she had learned in the classroom.

"Betty has a great way with children and they respond well to her leadership," Buckley said. "She will be a great addition to the field of child development."

Along the way, Ganther's health and home life began to improve. In May 2009, she received a kidney transplant, giving her more time away from the doctor's office. Ganther's home transformed from one of violence to a sanctuary for learning. It was not uncommon for her and her two sons to do their homework together.

Her oldest son now attends Arizona State University, where he is majoring in political science. Her other son is studying kinesiology at East Los Angeles Community College.

Ganther says her La Verne education helped her to discover that embracing diversity plays a major role in teaching young children.

"As I'm moving forward, I'm gaining more insight and knowledge about other people's cultures, their beliefs and how things operate," she said.

During a student teaching assignment, she encountered a 4-year-old girl on the playground meditating after becoming frustrated with other children.

"I have to understand their perspective on things, their beliefs, to help them," she said.

Ganther hopes her passion for teaching young children rubs off on others, because she believes a child's healthy upbringing is so critical.

"What happens that early in life can change each child," she said. "For the better or for the worse."



## ON THE MOVE ARTS & SCIENCES



Dion Johnson blends art and science at his studio in Los Angeles.

WRITTEN BY  
Mark Vidal '10

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
Jake Weinheimer



Watch a sit-down  
interview with the  
artist himself at  
[laverne.edu/voice](http://laverne.edu/voice)

# NEON DION

A paintbrush with a yellow handle and a black ferrule is positioned on the left side of the page. A small, clear plastic cup filled with vibrant purple paint is placed near the center, partially overlapping the word 'DION' in the title.

## Dion Johnson

Director of University Art Galleries

**H**e is an artist whose work is sought after around the world. His use of acrylic paint on canvas is vibrant, masterfully colorful and precise. Just recently, Twitter contacted him and purchased one of his paintings for its art collection.

When asked what it is he does, Dion Johnson modestly responds, "I paint." Such simplicity exhibited in his character has contributed to the proliferation of his abstract brand, which he has created over the years through "intention" and "intuition."

As Director of University Art Galleries, Johnson is charged with bringing dynamic and meaningful art from all over the world to La Verne's campus for students to appreciate and study. But it is through his own art, influenced by the beauty of color in the world that he sees, that students and audiences alike experience their own personal discovery.

In fall 2014, Johnson's acrylic paintings were showcased in NOW-ISM: Abstraction Today, at the Pizzuti Collection exhibition space in Columbus Ohio, and were part of the 35 x 35 Art Project at the Copelouzos Family Art Museum in Athens Greece.

# FEEDING DREAMS

BY NANCY NEWMAN '89  
PHOTOGRAPHY JAKE WEINHEIMER

Jesus Cardenas arrived in the United States from Jalisco, Mexico in 1957. He began working in the fields as a farm worker, toiling the land and dreaming of starting his own family business.

He decided to open a store. Together with his wife, Luz, they opened a 4,000-square-foot market in Ontario in 1981. They provided unique Latino products and foods that reminded people of their home country. Little did he know, but that one store would evolve into the business empire and philanthropic power house now known today as Cardenas Markets.

Presently located in 19 different cities throughout the Inland Empire and Las Vegas, they are opening their 32nd store, a 40,000-square-foot market in Murrieta. Truly a family business, the stores are managed by the Cardenas' now-grown children Jesus Jr., Lupe, Jose and George.

They have worked for more than 30 years to bring high quality foods to traditionally underserved areas.

With their success, the Cardenas family believes in giving back to the communities they serve. Working within their

communities on issues such as education, healthy living, and even early voting sites, Cardenas Markets is as much a corporate citizen as it is a community market.

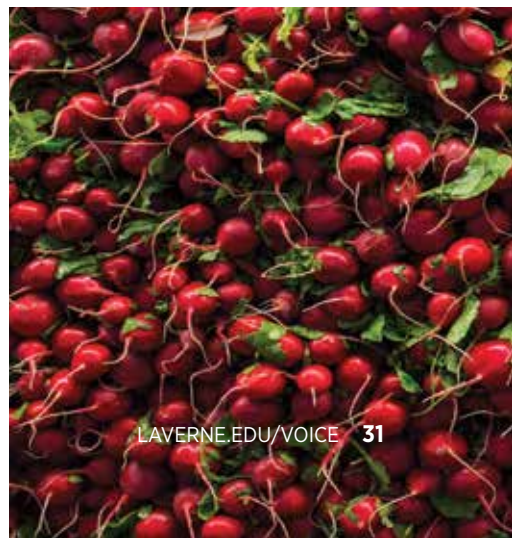
Jesus Cardenas never received a formal education before he died in 2013, but his family has always stood behind the idea that everyone deserves the opportunity to receive a quality education.

"We have an inherent responsibility to serve our communities, and to change some of the dismal statistics that exist. What better tool to solve our problems, than through education?" asked Cardenas Public Affairs Director Marco Robles.

Cardenas Markets gives to a multitude of colleges and universities, and the University of La Verne is honored to be one of the beneficiaries of their effort. They have donated more than \$60,000 to the University in the last two years.

The ever-growing business has sponsored La Verne's Scholarship Gala, LEAD Conference, Parent Empowerment Institute and the University Golf Tournament.





# HIGH PITCHED

## *Ross Mathews Found Success After He Found Himself*

BY **MARK VIDAL '10**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **TIMOTHY WHITE**

Ross Mathews '02 never anticipated the last day of his internship becoming the first day of the rest of his life. From becoming the longest-running correspondent in Tonight Show history to hosting his own talk show, Hollywood dreams have been coming true for La Verne's most vivacious alumni celebrity.



That's what you have  
to do in show business.  
You got to run 1,000  
miles an hour and not  
even care that you  
might hit a wall.



**R**oss Mathews made sure nobody on staff of *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno knew of his big secret. It was routine: take lunch orders for the producers and writers and deliver the food—a task that was easier said than done for the starving intern.

As a college student, money was tight; and Ross could not resist the temptation of regularly ordering an extra “daily special” for himself and sneaking it past his bosses at the NBC late-night talk show. It was risky. It was clever. His “cafeteria heist” would last the duration of his internship.

It was not until his last day that the fear of getting caught actually caught up with him. Ross received a message instructing him to “go see Joe” – one of the big bosses. Fearing that there was surveillance footage against him, Ross was prepared to learn a valuable lesson: “how to be fired in show business” – as he so remorsefully states in his national best-selling memoir, “Man Up!”

But just as unpredictable as Ross himself, the question that was asked of him in that room caught him by surprise.

“What would you think about coming out on stage during tonight’s taping, meeting George Clooney, and leaving with him to be our correspondent at the red carpet premiere of *Ocean’s Eleven*?”

In a single moment, he had stepped into the gateway of everything he had dreamed about and worked for since he was a child.

“I just remember thinking ‘Wow here is my door, so I’m going to have to kick it down and not look back behind me and run as fast as I can because I probably shouldn’t be here,’” Ross recalls of the day that changed his life.

He graciously accepted the opportunity and the next thing he knew, he was being prepped to go on air for the first time in his young life. What some might call a nerve-racking experience was nothing short of exhilarating for the eager intern. There was no time for nerves.

“When I think about it 13 years later, if I had stopped to imagine the gravity and weight of what I was doing, I probably would have never done it,” Ross said.

Ross knew his actions had to be intentional and strategic that night. His goal was to make a funny and memorable moment with each celebrity he met. His tactic? Be himself – only an amped up version.

In what seemed like minutes, Ross was on the red carpet at the *Ocean’s Eleven* premiere with George Clooney, mingling with and charming celebrities such as David Duchovny, Matt Damon, Casey Affleck and Brad Pitt.

By saying the first thing that popped in his head, he ignited a spark. He was a natural, all he had to do was just go with it.

“That’s what you have to do in show business. You got to run 1,000 miles an hour and not even care that you might hit a wall,” Ross says.

For Ross and his career, walls have never really been a problem. After producers saw the hilarious footage from his first red carpet experience, he was immediately assigned to cover more high-profile events such as the *Vanilla Sky* premier, 2002 Winter Olympics, and even the Academy Awards.

For more than a decade, Ross’ career flourished almost as fast as his fan base has grown. He has been a regular panelist on Chelsea Handler’s talk show, *Chelsea Lately*, a recurring guest and co-host on *The View*, a contributing correspondent on *The Insider*, a cast member on *Celebrity Fit Club* (Season 5), a recurring guest role on the *Days of Our Lives* and has co-hosted and guest appeared on several other national television shows.

Today, Ross is following in the footsteps of his mentors Jay Leno and Chelsea Handler. He has hosted his own late-night talk show, *Hello Ross*, on the E! Network and this fall became a panelist for E!’s new prime time roundtable show, *Live from E!*

Being on TV is a fulfillment of a lifelong childhood dream for Ross, a dream that began when he was a little kid growing up in Mount Vernon, Washington.

## GROWING UP ROSS

Ross discovered his passion at an early age. Television was a big part of his life, especially when he got his very own at the age of 10.

From *Saved by the Bell* to *Beverly Hills, 90210* to *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, Ross was enamored with the capabilities of his TV. He loved how it could bring him intimately close to celebrities and take him around the world.

It was during one particular summer month, while watching *Live! With Regis and Kathie Lee* with his mom, Gaye, that he had an epiphany.

"I remember watching that show with my mom and seeing how Regis and Kathie would make her laugh and thinking to myself, 'OMG! I want to make my mom happy too!'" Ross said.

It was settled. His purpose in life, he decided, was to become a talk-show host and entertain audiences on television.

"It made so much sense to me. I never questioned it. I knew I loved pop culture and being the ring-leader in conversations. It was my nature and my heart beat. That was my guiding force," he said.

By the time Ross entered his pre-teen years, he had already figured out who he wanted to be professionally. But he was just beginning to discover who he was as a person.

Despite growing up a fairly confident child, Ross was aware, and a little insecure, that he sounded different from other boys his age. He patiently waited for the day when he would "outgrow" his unique high-pitched voice. It did not happen.

The name-calling did not exactly help with his complex either, especially when he was called a "faggot," by an older kid while working in a spinach field during one summer.

"It was the first time in my 12 young years that I really felt the force field of my parents' love being shattered by the real hatred and bigotry that exists in the world," Ross said.


It was painful, but Ross overcame. He had love from his parents and a lot of love from the ladies. A self-proclaimed ladies man, Ross had quite a few girlfriends in his youth. But it was when he reached his teens and after his most serious relationship that he came to terms with who he was. Ross was gay. And that was OK.

"The truth is, there are some things we can't change about ourselves, even if we wanted to. And, really, why would you want to? You are not the problem. You are not defective. You are just right," he said.

Ross' decision to be his authentic self has not only made him a pioneer for current and future openly gay television personalities, but also positioned him as a national advocate for human rights.

In 2011, Ross was the recipient of the Human Rights Campaign's Visibility Award and in early 2014 he received the Celebrity Icon Award from the Long Beach LGBTQ Center.





It made so much sense to me. I never questioned it. I knew I loved pop culture and being the ring-leader in conversations. It was my nature and my heart beat. That was my guiding force.

## LA VERNE BOUND

Deciding to go to college was a no-brainer. Ross was intent on expanding his passion for television by mastering how it all worked. With that in mind, he searched for a program that would give him the hands-on experience he needed.

Among the many pamphlets that he received in the mail was one from the University of La Verne.

“I loved the communications program offered and that it was close to Hollywood,” Ross said.

“When I came to visit and saw how gorgeous the campus was, I said ‘OK, I’m home.’”

After graduating from high school, he made the trek from Mount Vernon to La Verne in his blue Ford Escort and never looked back..

“I wanted to learn every aspect of television – editing analog, editing digital, radio, media ethics, public relations – I learned all of that at La Verne and I use all of that on a daily basis. Thank you [Professor of Communications] Mike Laponis,” Ross said.

“He knew what he wanted to do and he always spoke it out loud,” Professor of Communications Mike Laponis said, recalling one of his most memorable students. “I remember Ross going on one of my class industry field trips – we went to a taping of a TV show. The moment we got on the bus, and especially once we got onto the studio lot, Ross came alive! It was like we had stepped into Disneyland.”

Ross thrived at La Verne, inside and outside the classroom. And he developed many lifelong relationships with faculty and friends. One of those friends was journalism major Ryan MacDonald '02.

“Ross and I were best friends at La Verne, so it was no question that our friendship would continue once we graduated,” MacDonald said. “What I admire about Ross is his ability to fearlessly go after his dreams. His belief in himself and his dreams is what has taken him to where he is today.”

MacDonald has worked on producing many projects with Ross, including the web talk show Inside Dish With Ross Mathews and most recently Hello Ross.

It's like a beach. When the waves run over the rocks and sand, most of the rocks look the same. It's the ones that look a little weird that end up being picked up.

“La Verne is a special place where there are special people. Of course it's always about learning and education but it's also about the people. I loved every second there,” Ross said. He graduated from La Verne in 2002.

“Even though he was a celebrity by night, he was still our student during the day,” said Dr. George Keeler of the Communications Department. “He was fairly low key around the other students and only showed the entertainment side of himself when the NBC cameras were on. Ross remains a loyal friend of mine and the Communications Department to this day.”

Although Ross' status as a celebrity places him in high-profile Hollywood social circles, he remains true to himself and loyal to his family and friends who have been with him since the beginning. People close to Ross know that his success did not come by conforming his way to the top; just the exact opposite.

“It's like a beach. When the waves run over the rocks and sand, most of the rocks look the same. It's the ones that look a little weird that end up being picked up,” Ross said. “To make a difference, you have to be different.” Ross, indeed, has made all the difference.



Ross Mathews returned to campus in the fall of 2012 to host a televised viewing party for the presidential debates with current students.



## JAY LENO

During Ross' senior year in college, he divided his time in the classroom by day and the "Tonight Show" by night.



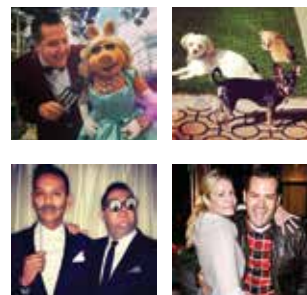
## ROSS SQUASH

Ross' favorite menu item at Koo Koo Roo Restaurant in Los Angeles was the butternut squash, which they renamed after him.



## MAN UP!

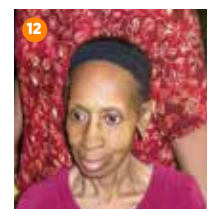
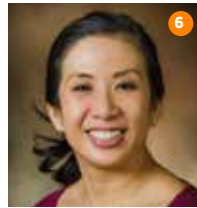
Ross' 2013 memoir, "Man Up!" is a national best seller.



## @HELLOROSS

Fans keep up with Ross through his active social media life on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

# WHAT'S NEW ALUMNI NOTES





## Little Leos

**Julie (Kolhof) Froid '04**, and **Matthew Froid '04**, welcomed their son Brady Matthew on March 31, 2014. Brady joins their first child, Payton.

**1 Sara (Kirk) Mertaban '04**, and her husband Amir welcomed their first child, Colette Anne Mertaban, on April 20, 2014 in Pomona, California. Colette was a healthy five pounds, seven ounces and 17.5 inches long. Soon after the family moved to Arlington, VA for job relocation, and they are enjoying the East Coast!

**2 Sybil Acevedo '07**, received the San Bernardino County Office of Education 2014 Excellence in Education Medal of Honor in the summer of 2014. In 2010 she was recognized by the California Association for Bilingual Education. She is currently a teacher at AB Miller High School in Fontana.

**Todd Blickenstaff '96**, works in product planning for Lexus, and is proud to be launching the NX 200t and NX 300h in the latter part of 2014. He has worked on these two luxury sport utility vehicle models for more than three years, and was part of the team that developed the CT 200h. Blickenstaff will now focus on the RX350 and RX450h.

**Dianalicia "Diana" Castillo '09**, moved from Texas to Iowa to continue pursuing her career as a News Director and Anchor. Castillo is now based at the Fox/CBS affiliate, KMEG/KPTH. She grew up in Upland and following her graduation from La Verne, anchored and produced for Southern California Life Morning News, worked for Univision KORO 28 in Corpus Christi, and anchored Laredo Fox News at 9.

**Melissa Collett '97**, earned her master's in Public Administration from Seattle University. Collett is a Development Manager at Washington Business Week, and also sits on the advisory board for the Fremont Abbey Arts Center.

**Nedra Cooper '00**, retired in February after 38 years of service to Los Angeles County as an Administrative Services Manager.

**Derrick DeBruyne '03**, was elected president of the Inland Empire Chapter of the California Society for CPA's for 2014-2015. DeBruyne is a partner at Vicenti, Lloyd & Stutzman, specializing in audits and consulting for nonprofit organizations and charter schools. He also serves on the advisory board for the University of La Verne's College of Business and Public Management.

**Mary Louise Dickinson '91**, has been with Southern California Edison for 18 years as a Senior Litigation Paralegal. She welcomed her second grandchild in August, and looks forward to retiring in May of 2015.

**Adrianna Gardner '06**, co-authored a book, "Intended Design: A Journey to Self-Awareness" with Reverend A. Todd Jackson in January of 2014. Gardner is a freelance writer and creative consultant, and has studied literature at the University of Ghana, Legon, where she authored her first book "Liberation Road: One Woman's Journey Home."

**Timothy George '14**, will be the new Flight Safety Manager for Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. In that role, George will oversee the flight safety program, conduct aircraft mishap investigations, and serve as the Risk Management Functional Area Manager for the entire 30th Space Wing. He started at Vandenberg in 2010 as a Management Analyst, and prior to that was a Senior Editor and Writer in the technical publications department for Hawker-Beechcraft Inc.

**Tammi Gray '10**, has received two promotions since completing her degree, and is now a Program Manager in the information technology field. She is in her second year of the Ph.D. program in Organizational Leadership at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

**Randy Guthrie '92**, is a Technical Evangelist for Microsoft Corporation, a role in which he provides academic and research support to faculty and students at schools in the western United States. Prior to his tenure at Microsoft, Guthrie taught software engineering, programming, and information systems courses at Cal Poly Pomona. Guthrie currently lives with his wife Jane and daughter Molly in Denver, CO.

**Alice (Eby) Hall '60**, is a retired teacher and seasoned writer whose latest foray has been in writing poignant Christian fiction novels. Hall's sixth book, "Reunions," was released on August 27, her 76th birthday. The novel traces the steadfast friendships that develop between four diverse, independent thinking girls, and how they draw strength and non-judgmental empathy from one another as they share the traumatic incidents of child abuse from which they have suffered. Hall was named the National League of American Pen Women Inland Empire branch's "Woman of Achievement" in 2002, and has taught in various Southern California school districts, colleges, and universities.

**3 Jacob Acevedo '12**, proposed to **Jenae Hodges '12**, on May 14, 2014. The couple met in Professor Claudio Munoz's accounting class, but their first conversation outside of the classroom took place when painting the University of La Verne Rock outside of Founder's Hall. Jacob proposed to Jenae in front of the rock, with a number of friends and family in attendance, some of whom emerged from Founder's Hall holding signs that told a different part of the couple's story. A crowd of students gathered to watch and encouraged Jenae to accept, which she did. The following day President Lieberman called to congratulate her and her future husband.

**4 Robert Lewis '03, '08**, was awarded the national "No Kid Hungry Breakfast Champion Award" by Share Our Strength, a national anti-hunger organization. Dr. Lewis, the Director of Nutrition Services at the El Monte Unified School District initiated a district-wide universal free breakfast program in 2013, as well as a free supper program in 2012. Blake Michael of the Disney Channel's Dog With a Blog! and television celebrity chef Melissa d'Arabian co-hosted the event.

**Merri (Fairchild) Ronquillo '87**, married Alfred Ronquillo, her high school sweetheart, on June 14, 2014. She is a teacher at Mesquite Trails Elementary in Hesperia, CA.

**5 Jon Blickenstaff '66**, former mayor of the City of La Verne, and current mayor Don Kendrick create all-wood cradles and rocking chairs in what they call "The Sawdust Factory" – otherwise known as Kendrick's garage. The creations are free surprise gifts to loved ones and people they admire, and to date they have created pieces for fellow Leos; **Sarah Ludwick '94**; **former President Stephen '68 and Ann '71, '74, '96 Morgan**; **Marty Lomeli '78**; and **Kay Sjol '05**. The two have no intention of going into business or ever selling their items, but they have submitted a cradle to the L.A. County Fair's arts and crafts/wood competition.

# WHAT'S NEW ALUMNI NOTES

**The Saugus Union School District** in Santa Clarita, CA has tapped two alumnae from the College of Education and Organizational Leadership for prominent administrative positions within the district. **Isa DeArmas '99**, is the new Director of Curriculum and Instruction. DeArmas, has worked as a teacher, assistant principal and principal since 1996, and is known for her positive outlook and solid understanding of instruction. **Kathy Stendel '98**, is the new Principal of Rosedell Elementary School. She began her teaching career as a 5th grade instructor in 1989, and has held various general education and special education assignments throughout the district. She was most recently Assistant Principal at Northpark Elementary School.

**6 Wendy Lau '98**, Trustee, was appointed by the La Verne City Council as the newest member of the City's Planning Commission in July 2014. Lau was the Council's unanimous choice from among 12 candidates vying for the open seat. Lau is an associate at Wood, Smith, Henning, and Berman Attorneys at Law focusing on civil defense litigation, and specializing in construction defects.

**7 Tim Morrison '77, '83**, best known for leading the City of La Verne's Independence Day Parade on his Harley-Davidson motorcycle, completed the American Motorcyclists Association-sanctioned Run for the Wall from California to Washington, D.C. in May of 2014. The Run for the Wall — which started in 1989 with 115 riders and now involves thousands — ends at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and seeks to increase awareness about POW-MIA's still in Vietnam. Morrison is the son of late Marine Richard Morrison and late Navy nurse Alice Morrison, both World War II veterans.

**Robert Owen '09**, accepted a position as Vice Provost and CIO at Santa Clara University in the Silicon Valley area. As CIO, Owen will be the principal member of the University's executive team responsible for strategizing and implementing innovative uses of technology to strengthen the University's position as a leading institution of higher education. Prior to taking the position at Santa Clara, Owen was Vice President for Information Technology at Western Kentucky University.

**8 Peggy Redman '60, '87, '91**, served as the Grand Marshal for the City of La Verne's annual Fourth of July Parade this year. "She is the La Verne experience," said the parade's chairwoman for the volunteer planning committee. Redman was the unanimous choice for Grand Marshall and was followed in the parade by the University of La Verne's

delegation of alumni, staff, faculty, and students, led by President Deborah Lieberman and her husband, Roger Auerbach.

**Michael Riggs '85**, was part of a select group who kayaked the Salmon River in Idaho from its source to its confluence with the Snake River, a distance of 425 miles. Only a handful of individuals have accomplished the task, and this group was the first to do so in inflatable kayaks. In addition the challenge itself, the secondary purpose of this adventure was the raise money for LEAP, a charity whose mission is to help individuals through wilderness counseling. You can learn more at [fukariexpeditions.dojiggy.com/mike80](http://fukariexpeditions.dojiggy.com/mike80).

**George N. Seide, Juris Doctorate '79**, was chosen by Los Angeles Magazine and [superlawyers.com](http://superlawyers.com) as one of the top 100 attorneys in Southern California in all practice areas for 2014.

**Theresa Stiles, BA in Organizational Mgmt. '13**, has been promoted to Vice-President of Human Resources and Administration at Fieldman, Rolapp & Associates in Irvine. The company provides independent financial and investment counseling for public agencies and nonprofits.

**Charlotte Gray, Legal Studies '08**, married Tyler Roth on July 26, 2014. Sister Shauna Savala '14 and fellow alumni Carolyn Brown '09 were bridesmaids. Carolyn also recently welcomed the arrival of her second daughter, Charlotte Olivia Brown on February 11th, 2014.

**Claire Bodenhoefer '08 and David Contreras '10**, married on November 9, 2013 in Orange County. They were surrounded by past ULV baseball players, Iota Delta Sorority sisters, Sigma Alpha Epsilon brothers, friends, and family. They met at University of La Verne and have been dating since 2007. Claire currently works as an Office Manager for her family's candy business (Balboa Candy) in Newport Beach and David is currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program for Clinical Psychology at ULV.

**9 Libby (Cline) Birmingham '05, '07, '12**, married Keith Birmingham on June 12, 2014. They share the same wedding date as his parents in 1948, and her grandparents in 1949. They were married during a private ceremony at Travel Town in Griffith Park, and celebrated with their family and friends at a baseball themed reception at the University Club in Pasadena nine days later.

**10 Friends since 1963**, these Leopards are still getting together. L-R (back row) **Ginny Brown Noyes, Sue Brown Daniel, Pam Williams Henry,**

**Teri Luce Kennan, Lynn Tegtmeier**. L-R (front row) **Barbara Ferrell Gross, Gary Zimmerman, Barb Morris Reynoso, Marji Gill Bothwell**.

**11 Rebecca Villaneuva '10**, pictured along with her teammates, who are also her bridesmaids, and the La Verne Women's Volleyball NCAA finals runners-up in 2008.

## In Memoriam

**Jesse "Dick" Coolbaugh '94**, who after earning his doctorate brought his experience as a retired US Naval Officer to teach Public Administration to students here at the University of La Verne, has passed away. He is survived by his wife Carrie Coolbaugh '93, who also earned her DPA from La Verne.

**Jane Silberstein Goldman '03, '08**, passed away on October 14, 2013 in Eagle Rock, CA. She is survived by her husband Mark, and son Jackson. Dr. Goldman graduated from Livingston High School and Rowan University. She was integrally involved in the Eagle Rock Elementary team for Eagle Rock Relay for Life, and many donations were made in her honor during the May Relay events in the area.

**12 Veronica Timpson '78**, passed away on July 15, 2014 at the age of 64. Timpson was petite and soft-spoken, but also the commanding president of a limo and charter bus company. A native of Miami, Timpson and her twin sister, Venita, built careers as educators in the Miami-Dade Public School system. They did everything together, rooming with each other at Tuskegee University in Alabama before coming to La Verne to earn their Master's degrees. They co-founded Timpson Limousine & Charter Bus Service in the 1980s.

**13 Sandy Weston Boulware '92**, passed away on July 3rd, 2014 after a courageous and inspiring battle with breast cancer. Through her ministry blog, [SandyBoulware.Blogspot.com](http://SandyBoulware.Blogspot.com) and through her life, she touched countless others, both known and unknown, and made a difference in this world. She loved spending time with her family and friends, led Women's Bible Studies at Glenkirk Presbyterian Church, was a Girl Scout Leader, Awana's Leader, taught Children's Sunday School, and chaired the Reflections Program for the La Verne/San Dimas School District.

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## HEART OF LA VERNE UNIQUELY LA VERNE



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Associate Provost Dr. Beatriz Gonzalez, Special Assistant to the Provost Dr. Mark Goor and Provost Dr. Jonathan Reed enjoy a lunch meeting at favorite local downtown La Verne Italian restaurant, Caffé Allegro.

# COURTING SUCCESS

University of La Verne tennis coach Yolanda Duron prowled the Claremont Biszantz Family Tennis Center courts, quietly analyzing the matches while giving advice to her players. It seemed, on the surface, like just another competition day on a hot May afternoon.





**TENNIS COACH YOLANDA DURON empowers Andrea Madrigal to be her best out on the courts.**

## La Verne improved its record by 13 wins in Duron's first five years, culminating in the program's first NCAA National Championship appearance in 2014

In actuality, the Leopards were competing in the NCAA championship tournament for the first time in program history. The NCAA Regional Semifinal match pitted La Verne against Pomona-Pitzer and a win would advance the Leopards to the round of 16 against national No. 5 Claremont-Mudd-Scripps. But it was not to be. La Verne lost 5-2.

This season marked many firsts for La Verne Tennis, besides appearing in the championship tournament.

The squad ranked among the national top 15, produced its first batch of All-Americans, and had its No. 1 singles player, Andrea Madrigal, compete in the United States Tennis Association (USTA)/Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) National Small College Championships.

National observers took notice. Duron was named the 2014 Wilson/ITA West Region and National Coach of the Year.

"When I first came to La Verne, my goals were to build a good program and develop a team of students who were committed and successful in their academics, tennis and personal growth," Duron said. "I wanted to build

a winning program that is respected at the University, our conference, our NCAA region and at the national level."

After a successful stint at Mt. San Jacinto College, where she won the 2009 Foothill Conference Coach of the Year award, Duron inherited a La Verne team that went 3-16 in 2008. In the four seasons prior, the team had won a total of nine matches.

Duron and the Leopards have made tremendous strides since then.

After implementing a new training program for the four-week fall season, she also added weight lifting to support the athletes' physical development. Additionally, a significant travel opportunity was included on each year's schedule to foster team bonding and to expose her players to new environments. In her second year, Duron instituted a mentorship program providing immediate leadership opportunities to returning student-athletes, while also giving incoming students an ally on the team.

Although the results were measured at first, the Leopards began to show steady improvement — increasing the win total in each of their first five seasons. La Verne won six matches

in 2010 — Duron's first year in charge — and seven in 2011. In the following season, the Leopards got to the .500 mark (10-10) for the first time in recent memory, and in 2013, La Verne won six matches in its first seven meetings en route to a 13-8-1 finish.

That brings us to 2014. The Leopards won the first six matches of the year, defeated seven nationally ranked teams, and even overpowered No. 6 Pomona-Pitzer in the SCIAC Semifinals.

Duron says the key to the season was the student-athletes themselves. "They were extremely self-motivated," she says.

Non-traditional NCAA season restrictions inspired members of the team to organize and run their own practices from October to January. They maintained their bodies and fitness levels, encouraged each other and continued their off-season weight lifting course. The 2014 squad completed the season with a 16-6 record.

Duron said she plans to continue the momentum, keeping her team in NCAA contention year in and year out. She believes a consistent, competitive, but fun training schedule will do just that.

"Focusing on the process instead of the outcome will allow for greater improvement because we will be more focused on our game and not concerned with whether we win or lose," she said.

Duron said her ultimate goal is to build a tennis community in La Verne by adding a tennis facility on campus.

"I really envision a great community of tennis supporters where we can have a college team, community classes and national tournaments," Duron said. "I want to keep promoting our program and college tennis, and for everyone to know about La Verne Tennis." As interest in the increasingly successful La Verne team increases, Duron's goal is definitely an attainable one.

SAVE THE DATE 03.21.15

UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE

SCHOLARSHIP  
GALA'15

Honoring Richard, Robert, Roger,  
and Randall Lewis, of the Lewis Group  
of Companies, for their long history  
of generosity and commitment to  
the growth and development of  
the University of La Verne.

[laverne.edu/gala15](http://laverne.edu/gala15)

# WAY-BACK-WHEN TRIVIA

A group of students supporting an affirmative vote for  
the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), 19\_\_\_\_.

PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT ARE:  
(Front row) Elaine Balanoff, Kim  
Palmer, Teddy Barber,  
Lori Nelson, Kathy Hauger,  
Tony Schaffer, Pam Swearingen;  
(Back row) Jill Bittinger.





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