

# VOICE



## LEOS FOR LIFE

Alumni and students who are in tune with their communities and making their voices heard.





SHE BELIEVED  
SHE COULD SO  
SHE DID





# FEATURES



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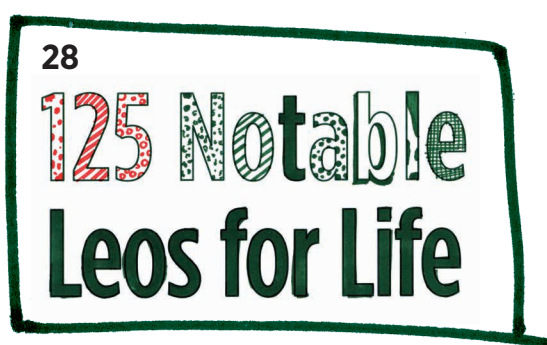
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## FROM THE EDITOR



One of the first people I met when I came to the University of La Verne was a highly-motivated Spanish major named Tahil Sharma '15. Tahil was involved in just about every extra- and co-curricular activity you could imagine. He fought discrimination and violence, helped feed the hungry, and built bridges between people of different faiths.

I still keep in touch with him, and in a recent e-mail he told me about his work with AMP Global Youth, which empowers young people to get involved in issues such as sustainability and human rights. He has been speaking, attending conferences, and writing blogs on his interfaith work. Tahil exemplifies what it means to be a Leo for life. This issue of VOICE is dedicated to Tahil and the tens of thousands of alumni like him who live the university's values long after graduating.

We will take you to Kern County in California, where an alumna is changing the lives of developmentally disabled students by giving them the tools to land technology jobs. You will be introduced to leaders of law enforcement who are using the community engagement skills honed at the university to serve and protect those around them. You will also learn about a rock star whose passion for lifelong learning brought him back to college to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration. In this edition, we are also featuring our "125 Notable Leos for Life."

As the University of La Verne celebrates its 125th anniversary, we thank you for making us proud, and we commend you for the positive impact you have on the world around you. This edition of VOICE is for you.

*Melissa Pinion*

Melissa Pinion  
Editor

COVER IMAGE: Seann Nicols '16 splits his time between rocking out with 1980s band Ratt and pursuing his MBA at the University of La Verne.



UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE MAGAZINE

# VOICE

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



This is the year of the Leo Community; one that honors our illustrious past and guides us toward an even brighter future.

**T**his year, the University of La Verne is celebrating its 125th anniversary. Festivities began in August and will continue throughout the academic year. Since its founding in 1891, the University of La Verne has served its students by providing a distinctive and relevant education grounded in core values. At the heart of this mission is a community of proud Leos, all of whom strongly believe in this extraordinary institution.

With approximately 74,000 alumni and countless other members of our university community, we have a Leo population that is 125 years strong. As part of our anniversary celebration, we announced in the fall a list of “125 Influential Individuals.” In this issue of VOICE magazine, we are excited to highlight the “125 Notable Leos for Life.” These individuals include alumni, trustees, and friends of the university. Every person on this prestigious list has made a significant impact in his or her professional field, in the community, and at the University of La Verne. We will honor them throughout this year and beyond.

As we continue with our 2020 Strategic Vision and campus master plan, we are committed to sustaining the quality of our academic programs, living our core values, and shaping the future of our region.

I encourage all of our Leos for Life – alumni, students, and their families – to participate in 125th anniversary activities and events taking place at the La Verne campus, the regional campuses, and the international alumni chapters. Look for these on our website.

We are celebrating a most memorable year. This is the year of the Leo Community; one that honors our illustrious past and guides us toward an even brighter future.

Devorah Lieberman, Ph.D.  
President



## WHAT'S NEW

# FAST FACTS WITH DAVID SMITH, DEAN OF REGIONAL AND ONLINE CAMPUSES (ROC)



### Q How large of an area do the Regional and Online Campuses encompass?

Regional campuses stretch across Southern California, from Irvine to Bakersfield and Victorville to Vandenberg Air Force Base, with dozens of community college and corporate locations in between. In all, there are six regional campuses, two military bases, and one online virtual campus.

### Q What kinds of students are served by Regional and Online Campuses?

We serve a diverse population of adult learners. Parents raising children have the convenience of pursuing degrees from their home computers. Working professionals have access to our programs on campus, off campus, and online. We also have more than 100 partnerships with corporations and municipalities, holding classes in the workplace to provide easier access to education. In 2016, we enrolled nearly 3,500 ROC students.

### Q How did ROC come into existence?

Providing a quality college education for adults has been a priority at the University of La Verne for decades. The program initiated as a partnership with the United States Navy to provide instruction to sailors and dependents at Naval Air Station Point Mugu near Oxnard. Its name has evolved over the years from Field Studies in the late 1960s, to the School of Continuing Education, Regional Campus Administration, and ultimately, Regional and Online Campuses in 2015.

### Q Why is ROC important in today's higher education landscape?

The Lumina Foundation recently published data showing that 38 percent of undergraduate college students are more than 25 years old, 58 percent work while enrolled in college, and 26 percent are raising children while pursuing a degree. These students make tremendous sacrifices to go back to college to advance in their careers and provide a better life for their families. It is imperative we give these students convenient pathways to achieve their goals.

Learn more at  
[laverne.edu/locations](http://laverne.edu/locations)

## LEO ON THE STREET



**Mariela Martinez**  
Senior Political Science Major

A recent *Time Magazine* cover referred to America as the "Divided States of America." What can college students do to help bring unity back to this country?

I believe the answer is for students to stop contributing to the divisive dialogue we see and hear on the news. We must start setting an example for the country for how we can work together to find common ground. At the University of La Verne, we support a thriving community of interfaith leaders who build bridges across religious, spiritual, and philosophical divides. The community encourages people with fundamentally different views about the world to work together; to focus on the values that we share rather than arguing over the topics upon which we clash.

## SAVE THE DATE

**MAY 27, 2017**

### SPRING COMMENCEMENT

CITIZENS BANK ARENA,  
ONTARIO

Join the University of La Verne in celebrating the newest additions to the Leo Family.

**AUGUST 26, 2017**

### FLEX AND NEW STUDENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DAY

First Year La Verne Experience students will join faculty and staff in various service projects from feeding the homeless to planting and harvesting food at community gardens.

**SEPTEMBER 25, 2017**

### 2017 GOLF TOURNAMENT

GLENDORA COUNTRY CLUB

Find fun, fellowship, and purpose at University of La Verne's annual golf tournament. Funds raised directly benefit athletic programs or the student scholarship fund.

**OCTOBER 27-29, 2017**

### HOMECOMING WEEKEND

Come back to the university you love. Join us for homecoming, which will include a celebratory dinner for distinguished alumni and professor honorees and other activities throughout the weekend.



## MY PERSPECTIVE

### KEVIN MARSHALL

**I AM ENCOURAGED AND COMFORTED EACH DAY** as I stroll about our diverse, yet integrated landscapes of academic life at the University of La Verne. Each week reminds me that the work we do is important and relevant to the future. For this, I am blessed. It is inspiring to witness our students share and live our mission. When we live and breathe our underlying values of life-long learning, ethical reasoning and decision-making, diversity and inclusivity, and community and civic engagement, we create experiences vibrating with educational magic and growth. These vibrations fuel an impactful La Verne Experience that makes lasting transformational differences.

I have witnessed this as a professor of law, economics, and statistics; as a co-director of the La Verne Experience; and now as an associate dean. And while I could share with you pages of anecdotes, let me share one of my most recent observations that has impressed me with optimism and hope.

Despite the polarization that is plaguing the public discourse and haunting our communities, our students and faculty have found ways of building bridges that nurture the many core values for which our university stands. Twelve College of Law students took the OneJustice Bus to Bakersfield, Calif. on March 7.

The OneJustice program, which has been around for more than 30 years, brings attorneys and law student volunteers to rural and isolated areas to set up free legal clinics for low-income Californians. It helps veterans, senior citizens,



disabled children, immigrants, and more. OneJustice shares our mission in that it builds champions of social justice.

Our students helped more than 20 disenfranchised residents who sought revisions to their criminal records under California Proposition 47, which reduced non-violent crimes to misdemeanors. The students returned transformed and empowered. Their shared experience was real and raw. It demonstrated that the rule of law has important implications and consequences; that it can both positively and negatively impact the lives of our fellow citizens; that it can serve and protect; and that it can marginalize and oppress.

Our students came home realizing that the law indeed matters, and within our system of justice, all of our dreams and aspirations are at stake. Perhaps most importantly, they realized that they have the potential and responsibility to make a meaningful difference.

At the University of La Verne, difference making is our legacy. And I am happy to be a part of it.



# 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 [voice.laverne.edu](http://voice.laverne.edu)

 Read More Online

## TWITTER WALL

Like a story or have a comment to share? Tweet to us @ULaVerne using hashtag #ULaVerne

 [laverne.edu/twitter](https://twitter.com/laverne.edu/twitter)



Marching in support of our Muslim friends & neighbors! #NoBanNoWall @UCCClaremont @ABC7 #abc7eyewitness @ULaVerne @resist\_riseCD31

@CHRISTOPHERD11



Students from @ULaVerne visit MWD's Weymouth Water Treatment Plant to learn about their water supply #think20 #CAwater

@WDH20



A young activist thanking me for inspiring him w/my story after my keynote #ULaVerneLEAD #DREAMer #HereToStay @ULaVerne @latinorebels

@MRAFAELAGUSTIN

@Serrano\_OMSD 8th graders are already learning what successful people do. Thanks @ULaVerne for the #college tour! #supportPSdreams

@ONTMONTPS

## MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

We want to hear from you! Submit comments on VOICE at [voice.laverne.edu](http://voice.laverne.edu). 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

“ The last issue of the VOICE was packed with history, well known and little known. My own connection with La Verne dates from 1891. David and Henry Kuns were two of the founders and their sister, Barbara Kuns Heckman, was my great-great grandmother. Thanks for keeping bits of the history of ULV in front of people. ”

MARLIN HECKMAN '58



“ It was exciting to open VOICE and see a portrait I made of Professor Gary Colby in the 1980s when I was an undergrad. I obtained

my photography foundation at the university and have gone on to photograph U.S. presidents, Academy Awards, pro sports, and three decades of University of La Verne events. ”

NANCY NEWMAN '89

## 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).



**Dr. Issam Ghazzawi**, professor of management, poses with a copy of VOICE Magazine during a trip in **Wuhan, China**.





What do I own, where  
is it, and whom do I  
**wish to benefit?**

Who will care for my  
**dependent children**  
if I pass away?

Who will manage my  
**healthcare decisions**  
if I can't?

*Have you made these  
important decisions yet?*

Few things are more important  
than planning for your future,  
especially when you do not know  
what tomorrow could bring. While  
you may have already created a  
will or trust, you might want to  
review it to make sure everything  
is up-to-date and nothing has  
fallen through the cracks.

**Our FREE and comprehensive  
wills guide can help.  
Request your copy today!**

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## NEWS & NOTES



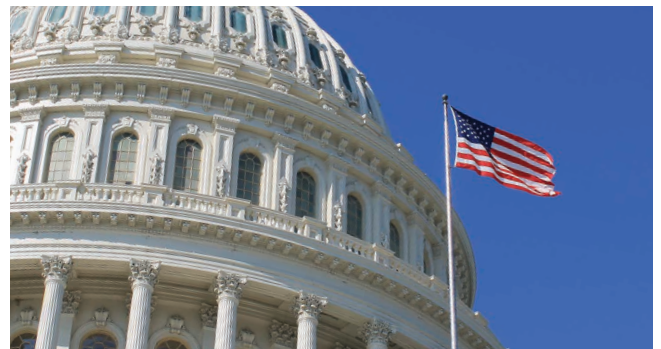
### INTEGRATED BUSINESS STUDENTS RAISE \$20,000 FOR CHARITY

Eighty students from the College of Business and Public Management developed business plans to market and sell various products on and off campus, with all proceeds donated to charities such as the American Cancer Society, the National Veterans Foundation, and the Thirst Project. The students presented checks to nine organizations in January. The Integrated Business Curriculum program has donated about \$110,000 to charities in the last five years.



### SHERRI MYLOTT NAMED VP OF ADVANCEMENT

Sherri Mylott, an experienced fundraiser and higher education leader, became the University of La Verne's new vice president of University Advancement in February. Mylott comes from Mary Baldwin University in Staunton, Virginia, where she served as vice president of University Advancement since 2013. Prior to that, she was the assistant vice president of development for University Programs at Virginia Tech and vice president for Institutional Advancement at Emerson College. The university selected Mylott following a national search.



### U.S. DEPT. OF EDUCATION AWARDS \$6 MILLION STEM GRANT

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded the University of La Verne a \$6 million grant to increase the number of Latinos graduating with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) degrees. It is the largest government grant the university has received in its 125-year history. The five-year grant for Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) will fund new course development, faculty training, classroom technology, advising, and career support. It will also facilitate partnerships to give community college students throughout the region support in pursuing STEM majors at the university.





## JOHN BARTELT AMONG HIGHEST RANKED PROFESSORS

The website Rate My Professors ranked Professor of Education Dr. John Bartelt 23rd on its 2015-16 list of Highest Rated University Professors, a list compiled based on ratings from students. Rate My Professors includes ratings for more than 1.6 million professors from colleges and universities across the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom. Bartelt teaches diversity; foundations in education and education technology for graduate students; First Year La Verne Experience (FLEX) classes; and he co-teaches human sexuality with his wife, Linda.

## HONDA, LA VERNE LAUNCH CORPORATE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

The University of La Verne has partnered with American Honda Motor Co., Inc. to provide a Master of Science in Leadership and Management degree program to Honda employees, with the first group of students starting this year. University of La Verne President Devorah Lieberman and Honda Executive Vice President John Mendel signed the agreement in late November in the Presidents Dining Room. The university provides on-site education through various organizations to make it more convenient for working adults to pursue a college degree.



## UNIVERSITY GUARANTEES ADMISSION, AID FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The University of La Verne has partnered with nearly two dozen Southern California school districts, one private high school, and a community organization in one of the region's single-largest initiatives to ensure that students have access to high-quality, affordable college education. The Partnership for Access to College Education (PACE) launched on Jan. 19, with school districts that encompass more than 50 high schools and serve more than 226,000 students per year, and has since nearly doubled in size. The program promises qualified students from the districts access to college preparatory courses, guaranteed college admission, institutional aid of at least \$10,000 per year, and more.

# GREAT DEBATE

Robert Ruiz '05, '08 has a singular voice and he is using it to inspire a generation of award-winning debaters at the University of La Verne.

BY **MATT HUTAFF**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JEANINE HILL**





### **ROBERT RUIZ '05, '08 WAS IN**

Cambridge, England to make a case about Israeli West Bank security issues. His argument was sound. His facts were undeniable. There was only one problem: he was lost.

Ruiz and his friends on the University of La Verne Debate Team were so focused on the task at hand they had become turned around on their way to the 2003 Cambridge Universities Debating Championships. Ten minutes later, embarrassed and anxious, they arrived to face down some of the strongest competition in the world – the men and women of Middle Temple, Oxford, and the London School of Economics. David, meet Goliaths.

“I felt as if I didn’t belong,” Ruiz said.

But he overcame his nerves, presented his evidence with a calm and cool befitting a seasoned debater, and helped his team to triumph. Of the four teams in the tournament, only Middle Temple could be more persuasive. (Middle Temple went on to win the World Universities Debating Championships later that year.)

“Middle Temple was impressed with how much we knew until they found out we were from the University of La Verne,” Ruiz said. “Our reputation preceded us.”

In the arena of college debate, few U.S. teams are as well-regarded as the University of La Verne’s. With numerous championships under its belt and consistent rankings in national and world competitions, it is seen as one of the university’s preeminent points of pride.

After earning a bachelor’s in political science and a master’s in education at the university, Ruiz returned in 2011 to teach in the College of Arts and Sciences. He quickly took up the position of debate team adviser and has worked since with students to improve their skills and promote the university.

In March, Ruiz welcomed the Pan American Universities Debating Championships, a bilingual tournament with representatives from North, South, and Central America and the Caribbean competing for top honors.

“Because La Verne is a Hispanic-Serving Institution, it’s significant because there are two divisions – English and Spanish,” Ruiz said. “The topics are the same and the teams interact together throughout the tournament.”

La Verne debaters Kandin Maraquin and Tanner Long, both seniors, took out Yale in the semifinals to earn a finals spot in the English language division. Ultimately, more than 75 colleges and universities came to La Verne to hone their debate skills and foster community with peoples from across the western hemisphere.

“The positive and comforting feedback we received from the participants was overwhelming,” Ruiz said. “It reminds me why the University of La Verne works hard to host such prestigious tournaments.”

“They keep me young, they keep me on my toes, and they keep me wanting to know more. I love each group I coach and it’s rough seeing them graduate.”



Robert Ruiz works with members of the debate team.

Ruiz adores his students and is quick to recognize the impact his teams have on him. “They have influenced me in the greatest ways,” he said. “They keep me young, they keep me on my toes, and they keep me wanting to know more. I love each group I coach – and it’s rough seeing them graduate.”

Ruiz is especially proud of his recruitment policy. Rather than offer scholarships or graduate positions to potential students, he draws on current students with a passion for debate.

“I refuse to bring in ‘ringers,’” he said. “We find individuals with a story to be told, from a background that is unique, who don’t know they have the potential to beat Yale or Harvard. All they have to do is bring their narrative and a desire to change the world.”

Ruiz is working on his dissertation – the role of women and leadership in debate – and he is also eager to bring new voices into the fold. They just have to be prepared to make their case.



**Winner**  
2007 National Championships









# LAU'S ARMY

By Barbara Goen  
Photography by William Vasta

Alumna and Trustee Wendy Lau is committed to giving back to both the university and community of La Verne, crediting the school with putting her on the path to personal and professional success.









# I've heard students at other schools say they chose law because they can make a lot of money. A University of La Verne student says 'I can make a difference.'

**W**endy Lau is building an army. The alumna and trustee says the University of La Verne put her on the path to success. She is committed to giving back, and she is not going at it alone.

She is assembling an ever-growing circle of caring people to help with the mission, and inspiring a new generation to follow her lead. Besides serving as a trustee for six years, Lau, an attorney, is a newly-named partner at Wood Smith Henning & Berman LLP, where she has focused on construction defect and employment law. She is an international board member of her beloved Phi Sigma Sigma Sorority, a member of the City of La Verne's Planning Commission, and a cherished friend and mentor to the students and alumni who swell the ranks of her army.

"You need to go back, you need to guide," she said. "Your legacy is what you leave behind and how you carry on your work."

One recruit of Lau's army is Mary Anne Mendoza '14, who gained the board of trustees' support in hosting a women's leadership conference.

"(Lau's) desire to bring more good into the world is infectious," Mendoza said. "It's this commitment to making sure that you not only do good in the present, but that you plan ahead for the future by ensuring that you mentor people to take your place and go farther."

Lau extols the leadership of President Devorah Lieberman and her team in supporting underserved and first-generation students and families. She applauds Assistant Professor Adonay Montes, whose Migrant Education Summer Institute has helped migrant workers' children develop the skills to move them towards college.

"We are doing amazing things," she said. "Students with humble and even tragic backgrounds are given the opportunity to shine."

Many of the stories bring her to tears.

Lau talks about Armando, a first-generation student with ambitions to be a doctor.

"He helps support a single mom and a sibling. And all he wants to do is help other people," she said.

She recalls a university student who was once a victim of human trafficking and drug abuse; though the student struggled, the university's safety net was always there.

"I don't know many institutions where faculty will take kids out for a meal if they need it," she said.

Lau shares her own compelling La Verne experience with the students she meets. She transferred to the university from UC Irvine where "I was just a number," she said.

At La Verne, "all my professors cared. It was always 'How are you? How was class?' And because I felt like a person and not a number, I started to get really involved. I joined my sorority and got involved in debate."

Lau's University of La Verne tenure deeply influenced her career choice.

"I've heard students at other schools say they chose law because they can make a lot of money," she said. "A University of La Verne student says 'I can make a difference.' That makes me so proud of my school and makes me want to give back."

It is that pride and commitment for giving that powers Lau's army. And her troops are on the move.



# WENDY'S WORLD

she bungee jumped once and decided to never do it again.



Favorite quote:

“Love wins. Love *always wins.*”

From Mitch Albom's  
“Tuesdays with Morrie”



Officiated  
more than a  
dozen weddings



Member of  
La Verne's Planning  
Commission

International  
board member  
of Phi Sigma  
Sigma



Worked as a  
substitute teacher  
before becoming  
a lawyer

Met Supreme Court  
Justice Ruth Bader  
Ginsburg when she won  
third place for best  
petitioner brief in the  
Vincent S. Dalsimer  
Moot Court competition











BY MELISSA PINION  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEANINE HILL

Raw talent is not always enough to **survive in rock and roll**. That is why Seann Nicols '16 is pursuing a **Master of Business Administration** while working as a touring musician, including a stint as Quiet Riot's **lead singer** in early 2017. He is **seeking an edge** that will help his music career.

**S** EANN NICOLS WAS STRANDED, penniless, and more than 5,000 miles from home in the middle of a snowstorm in south Germany. That night in 2006, Nicols – a singer on a world rock tour – encountered one of the worst moments in his music career. His band leader fired him and other bandmates after they refused to take a drastic pay cut.

“I couldn’t believe something like that could actually happen,” Nicols said. “I was upset and angry.”

Nicols earned a business administration degree from the University of La Verne in 2016 and is now pursuing a Master of Business Administration from the university online to help him advance his music career. The early results are good. This year, he toured as lead singer of the iconic 1980s heavy metal band Quiet Riot. He has most recently been recruited as the lead singer for Ratt.

He is using his business knowledge to help avoid the pitfalls musicians often encounter in the entertainment industry. He believes business savvy can help any musician achieve greater success. He is not alone.

A December 2016 article in *Adweek* examined the marketing mastery of the rock band KISS. Band cofounder Gene Simmons spoke to MBA students in 2011 at London Business School, sharing his secrets to building a \$1 billion brand.

Twisted Sister singer Dee Snider went from reaping the success of his band’s Top 40 hit “We’re Not Gonna Take It” in the 1980s to declaring bankruptcy a decade later. He told *Canadian Business* magazine in 2015 that thinking like an entrepreneur has helped him reinvent himself, bringing in a six-figure income on voice-over work alone.

Dr. Janis Dietz, professor of business administration emerita at the University of La Verne, said musicians pursuing business degrees are common at the

university because they recognize the value of applying business concepts to their careers. Nicols was one of the most motivated students in her classes, she said.

“For any artist, understanding the costs of operating is what usually shocks them,” she said. “No matter how talented, they need to bring in more than they are spending. Accounting, profit and loss, and financial management are all important.”

Now pursuing his MBA online, Nicols continues to develop those skills. He uses a laptop to log in for classes while on tour.

## BORN TO ROCK

Nicols, born Sheldon Tarsha, is the son of former Hollywood record producer, Danny Tarsha, who recorded artists such as Van Halen, Rick James, and Ronnie James Dio in the 1980s. His father also led the rock band Tarsha, which performed around Hollywood and inspired the then teen-age members of Guns N’ Roses to become rock stars.

Nicols’ exposure to his father’s work inspired him to become a singer. His first performance was at Hollywood’s legendary Roxy club when he was 15 years old.

His career took him around the world, where he performed in front of thousands of people. Former Guns N’ Roses drummer Steven Adler hired him to sing for his band, Adler’s Appetite, and Nicols also formed a solo project called Tarsha.

But both ventures resulted in setbacks. Working with Adler’s Appetite, Nicols encountered canceled tours and financial woes. His solo project showed promise under a subsidiary of Columbia Records, but when the label was bought out, he was cut because he was not yet an established artist.

VH1 called Ratt’s “Round and Round” one of the greatest songs of the 80s.







## A NEW PURPOSE

Following a 20-city U.S. tour with Adler's Appetite, Nicols began to re-evaluate his life and singing career.

"At that point, I was 32-years-old, I had been going for 18 years straight, and I needed a break," he said.

He legally changed his name and started fresh. He enrolled in math classes at the College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, and later earned an associate's degree. He then enrolled full time in the University of La Verne business administration program.

"I wanted to learn about how the music business works," he said. "I wanted to understand why I had not been able to grow or to get more of a foothold in a business sense in my own career."

He learned a lot more than that.

Concepts such as critical thinking, organizational structure, ethics, and planning have already helped. He steps back to take a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat (SWOT) analysis within his various projects to determine how to proceed in situations such as booking, recording, promoting, and marketing music.

"Before I was just getting by on charisma. Now I have something worth saying and hearing."

"I'm able to key in on what creates value in any proposition," he said.

Nicols has also picked up communication skills that come in handy for interviews.

"Before I was just getting by on charisma," he said. "Now I have something worth saying and hearing."

After being hired by Quiet Riot, Nicols went on tour, involving once a month jaunts crisscrossing the U.S. for back-to-back concerts. He logs in for classes on his down time. It is a balance that has earned him praise within the University of La Verne community.

"Seann is very talented and motivated," Dietz said. "He is destined to be a fine contributor to his chosen field."



## Keeps her eye on the ball

**Lisa Calderon is always on the move.** A senior studying business administration, she routinely drives from her home in Corona to the University of La Verne, Don Antonio Lugo High School in Chino (where she is assistant coach for girls' soccer), and all points in between. It is not the commute that keeps her in motion, but her fascination with freestyle football.

Freestyle football is no gridiron game. It is next-level footwork, with balancing, precision kicks, and fast movement combined to create a kinetic sport that is gaining interest around the world. Calderon is a star in her own right. She has appeared in commercials for Nike and Powerade, performed during halftime shows for LA Galaxy, and traveled the world showing off her unique skillset to amazed onlookers.

"I make sure not a minute is wasted," she said. "Every minute is an opportunity to do something, to work toward being something, and to keep growing. I've learned life is best when you're willing to take a few risks along the way, and with this philosophy the past few years have been the best."

Calderon is up early every morning — usually around 6 a.m. Her breakfast of champions? "A choice between oatmeal with apples and peanut butter or Honey Bunches of Oats."

Then she is off to school. Essentials include school supplies and her freestyle gear — Match Ball, GoPro (for sharing clips on social media), and training shoes. Early morning business classes let out around lunchtime, which gives Calderon plenty of space and time to practice her moves in Sneaky Park.

"I'll turn on my music and GoPro and train for about an hour and a half," she said. "On campus, my style is more creative and I focus on flow. Off-campus, I concentrate on the technical aspects."

After training, Calderon is off to inspire the next generation of freestyle artists at Don Lugo.

"I enjoy showcasing my skills at work because it pushes the girls to get better and train harder," she said.

By now, the sun has set and she heads home to finish classwork and review footage shot that day. But what happens when freestyle football conflicts with college?

"I tell my professors ahead of time and get my homework," Calderon said.

"Our community is small but close. Every day is an opportunity for new adventure. Freestyle has definitely helped me see that," she said.







Nellie Akalp Ta-Pei aka "Darby" Liu Douglas A. Fettel Margaret Sedenquist Theodore R. Vall Jr. Robert Yamate  
 Sarah Adams Christian Randy Kirner Margie Wheeler Arturo Delgado Paul NAVARRO  
 Christopher Northup Kenneth Little Frederick Terrell Jessica Dominguez June Pulcini  
 Steve Ortmyer Thomas Allison Leticia Aguilar EMANUEL SCROFANI Esther Funk  
 Michael M. Dest Peter Eckel Jeff Allred James Swift Romero Family  
 Peter H. Norell

# 125 Notable

# Leos for Life

Luz Villarreal Larry Kennan Mary Ann Melley  
 Bruce Hines Dennis E. Murray  
 Ray Skelton Alan Scott Pickwith Jean Pfeiffer Leonard Larry Rinehart  
 Justin Van Dyne Simon Bob Dyer Dianne Van Hook Joe Fengler  
 Richard Martinez Robert S. Drake Hafif Family Kelby Scharmann Galen Berry  
 Wendy Lau Dana Eaton John David Mazurek Stephen H. Ashworth Deana Porterfield  
 Teresa Bennett Darren Karinsky John Raffoul PETE BAUM  
 James Darrah David Krasnow Dena Maloney

125











# Lyceum @ La Verne

**THE UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE'S LYCEUM** series of performing and visual arts will feature exhibitions of student art, music, and writing throughout May.

The inaugural season of Lyceum @ La Verne was created in conjunction with the university's 125th anniversary celebration. Lyceum — the Greek term referring to public lectures and other entertainment — is becoming a distinguished performing and visual arts series for the entire community, with an eclectic lineup of exhibitions, concerts, and renowned guests.

From May 9 to 18, the work of student artists will be on display at Harris Art Gallery in an exhibition titled "Wow and Flutter," derived from the skipping and almost magical sounds made by reel-to-reel music tapes. Up to 20 student art projects will be featured, including 3D, photographic, and digital work of a variety of scale and types. Curated by students and faculty, the exhibition will not follow a theme, but rather spotlight what individual students choose to create and explore to document their unique experiences.

The "Best of La Verne" concert will be on May 14 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Morgan Auditorium. The event showcases the university's music students, but also features faculty and staff. Pianists, guitarists, and vocalists will be featured in solos, duets, and groups, performing diverse genres from chamber music to salsa.

The creative writing program will present a reading showcasing students' creative fiction on May 18 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Interfaith Chapel. Student authors will read their own short stories. The students spent this semester creating advanced work that reflects not only the skills they have developed, but also their individual ideas and passions as fiction writers.

A new series of Lyceum events will be announced in the fall.

**Anyone interested in supporting these and other public events can subscribe to Lyceum at [laverne.edu/lyceum](http://laverne.edu/lyceum) or call (909) 448-4188.**





# PROTECT & SERVE





# It is a tumultuous time to be a police chief, but four University of La Verne alumni see opportunity in the challenge

BY **ROD LEVEQUE**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JEANINE HILL**



Creating a culture of transparency and accountability is challenging, but when officers get it right, the impact can be profound.



John Curley '07  
Covina Police Chief

ON CHRISTMAS MORNING, Covina, California, Police Chief John Curley '07 woke up early, pulled on his blue uniform, and rolled out in a squad car to patrol his city's streets. As head of a law enforcement agency with a staff of more than 100 and a budget of about \$14 million, most of Curley's responsibilities take place behind a desk or in meetings. But occasionally, the University of La Verne alumnus returns to his roots to focus on what the job of police chief is really about.

"And that's the citizens in my community and the police officers who are out working on a holiday to keep them safe," he said.

It is a tumultuous time to be a police chief. High-profile encounters across the country involving officers using deadly force have put even the best departments under growing scrutiny from the public. Meanwhile, law enforcement strains to keep those same communities safe from increasingly sophisticated and violent threats.

Curley, who holds a master's degree in leadership and management, took charge of the Covina police department in October. And he's not alone; three other University of La Verne alumni have taken new jobs as police chiefs in the past year.

Art Acevedo '06, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in public administration, was sworn in as police chief of Houston, Texas, in November; Nick Paz '04, who earned his bachelor's degree in organizational management, became chief of the La Verne, California, police department in January; and Lisa Rosales '95, who has a master's degree in public administration, took over as the first female police chief in Glendora, California, in February.

They represent a new guard of top cops redefining the profession around pillars of trust, accountability, and transparency.





## Art Acevedo '06 Houston Police Chief

“Eventually, something is going to happen – or people will perceive that something happened – and we’re going to have to make a withdrawal from that bank,” she said. “Through community policing and partnerships, we’ll be able to make that withdrawal and still have a solid base.”

Equally important is transparency, the chiefs said. Each of their departments are active on social media and update the public daily on incidents under their jurisdiction. Acevedo, Curley, and Rosales all personally tweet. Social media outreach complements other initiatives to build bridges into the community, including citizens’ academies, open houses, and volunteer and reserve officer programs.

Paz, who was born in Mexico and came to the United States with his family at age six, started his police career at age 21 as a volunteer. He said

Acevedo, who immigrated to the United States from Cuba with his family at age four, says effective police leadership starts with admitting the history of American policing has sometimes been ugly, and that a disproportionate amount of that ugliness affects communities of color.

“For a lot of folks who live in our communities, those incidents aren’t things they read in a history book,” he said. “They’re things they lived. And that ugly history has been shared through generations of families.”

By acknowledging that history, individual police departments earn credibility among those communities.

Social media and 24-hour news cycles compound the challenge of building trust. The United States has about 18,000 police departments and 800,000 sworn officers; one bad act by just one officer in one small jurisdiction can quickly go viral and color public perception against the entire profession.

Rosales, who was drawn to police work after two childhood friends were slain by California’s notorious Hillside Strangler, said a community’s confidence in law enforcement is critical – and fragile. She asks officers to treat every interaction with a citizen like a deposit into a “bank of community trust.”

## Lisa Rosales '95 Glendora Police Chief



## Nick Paz '04 La Verne Police Chief

outreach programs allow the public to see the inner workings of the police while also helping police keep a pulse on the city.

"If you don't know what's going on, you won't be able to get ahead of issues and plan for them," Paz said.

But not every interaction can be positive or planned. Police work remains a fundamentally difficult and dangerous job. According to the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, 135 officers were killed in the line of duty in 2016, the highest level in five years. Officers must be prepared to respond to incidents of terrorism and mass violence, such as those that have occurred recently in San Bernardino, California and Orlando, Florida.

When Paz was a rookie officer 30 years ago, the only tools he had were a gun, club, and handcuffs.

"Today, you have computers, GPS systems, infrared cameras, license plate readers, video cameras, and other equipment officers use to perform their jobs," he said.

Curley's vetting process for new hires is rigorous; it includes a criminal history check, psychological evaluation, and financial review. He tells candidates from the start police work is not about the money, it is about serving the public.

"Planting that seed early on in a young officer's mind is essential because we want to make sure those we bring in to this profession are people of character," Curley said.

According to Acevedo, when a department routinely has trouble with bad officers, the root of the problem

"We still have leaders who tolerate mediocrity," Acevedo said. "And when mediocrity can't be swept under the rug, and it's exposed, and the community knows we're tolerating it, that tears down the bridges of trust we depend on."



can almost always be traced to leadership. Too many police leaders turn a blind eye toward bad officers out of laziness or fear of losing their own jobs.

"We still have leaders who tolerate mediocrity," he said. "And when mediocrity can't be swept under the rug, and it's exposed, and the community knows we're tolerating it, that tears down the bridges of trust we depend on."

Creating a culture of transparency and accountability is challenging, but when officers get it right, the impact can be profound.

As she packed up her desk at the San Pablo, California, Police Department this winter to move to Glendora, Rosales found a card she had saved years earlier. It was from a young man she encountered as a police detective in the 1990s.

The man, now a filmmaker, wrote to thank Rosales for a talk she gave him. Her words had inspired him to turn his life around.

"I've had that happen on more than one occasion," she said. "As police officers, we can change the course for people. And for that reason alone, I cannot think of a better profession to be in."





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# FOSTER'S CARE

A family crisis turned into a life-changing opportunity for Beverly Foster '04, '06, who runs a training center for young adults with special needs in Kern County.

It is a site that will give her students a chance at technology careers, a cause so noble it convinced the White House to provide financial support.

BY MELISSA PINION  
PHOTOGRAPHY JEANINE HILL






Within the disability community, people with autism are among the least likely to be employed

■ Beverly Foster's husband and children stand by her side in her quest to help special needs adults find jobs.

Only 29% of unemployed young adults with autism spectrum disorders are reported to be actively looking for work





About 32% of young adults with autism spectrum disorders currently work for pay

Nearly 48% of youth with autism spectrum disorders were able to hold the same job for longer than 2 years.

#### THE PHONE CALL BEVERLY

Foster received in 2005 turned her life upside down.

One of her relatives had been incarcerated, and the man's four children were suddenly without a caregiver. Compelled to help, Foster took them in.

Foster, a Bakersfield financial consultant at the time, was already raising two boys, including one with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Three of her new

children also had special needs.

"I found myself with a house full of kids, each with a unique set of challenges, along with a second round of diapers and bottles," Foster said.

The newfound challenge of raising six children — four with special needs — inspired Foster to find her calling. She left the financial world to pursue a special education teaching degree from the University of La Verne's regional campus in Bakersfield, and spent the next nine years as a special education teacher.

After retiring from teaching in 2014, Foster opened a training center for young adults with special needs in Kern County. The Next Step Vocational and Transitional Center in Bakersfield now prepares students for technology careers, a cause so noble it prompted the White House to provide financial support.

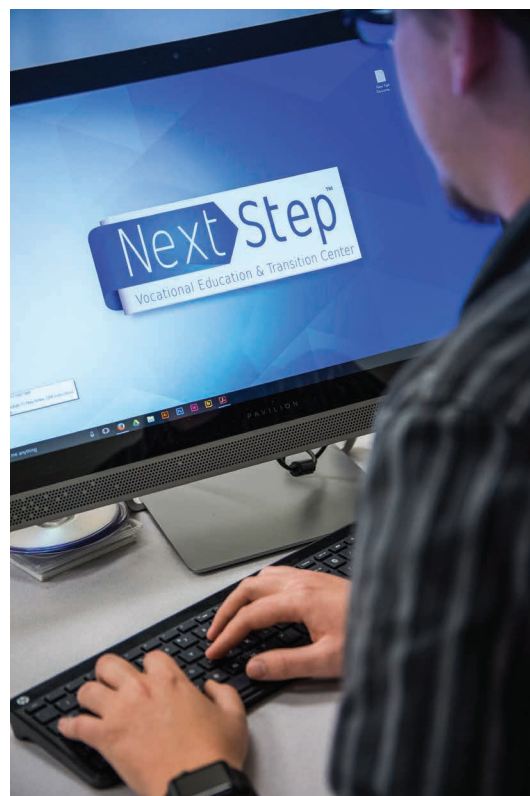
In 2016, then-Vice President Joe Biden awarded Next Step a \$4 million grant to help the organization expand its mission.

As administrative director for Next Step, Foster is making the most of the support. She has created partnerships with organizations such as Bakersfield Adult School to provide classes in graphic arts, 3D animation, and Information Technology for her students. This year, the University of La Verne agreed to provide classes for Next Step students on its Bakersfield campus.

"The University of La Verne has always been there for me," she said.



■ Dan Dandus, left, works on graphic arts project at Next Step.



## A NEW PURPOSE

Work on the California Aqueduct lured Foster's family from Kentucky to Bakersfield when she was 8 years old. Foster's career of choice was accounting, but she later discovered it was not her passion.

She began to think about working in special education when her son, Matthew, was diagnosed with ADHD.

"A day he did not have to be sent home from school was a good day," she said. "It was that bad."

The itch to change careers grew even stronger when she began parenting the four additional children. Three of them, who then ranged from 2 to 7-years-old, had ADHD, Asperger Syndrome, and autism. Foster initially took them under emergency foster care and adopted them a year later.

She wanted to change the way children like hers were being taught, so she obtained an emergency credential in 2005, and began working with high school children with mild to moderate disabilities.

She saw plenty of success stories in her students. But she also saw that many had a difficult time getting jobs after graduating from high school.

"They all have a diploma, but five or six years later, they're still sitting at home playing video games in their bedrooms," she said.

When the students saw Foster out in the community, they asked her the same question: "What's my next step?"

That question stuck with her, and when she retired from teaching in 2014, she set out to find an answer.

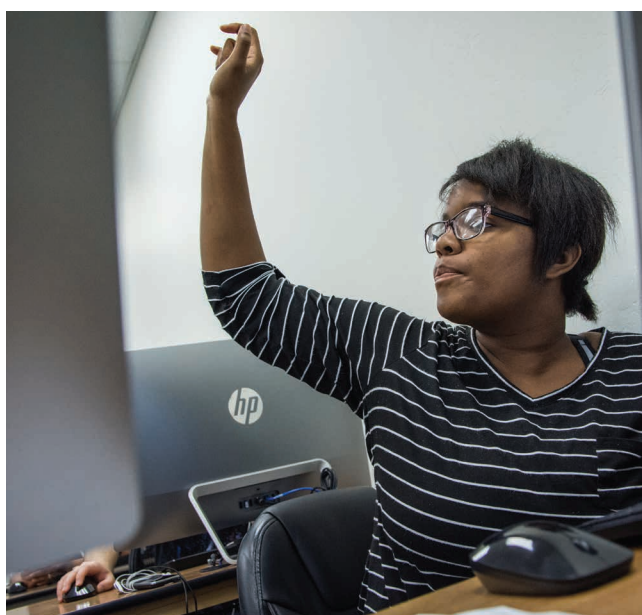
"Beverly always stood out from her peers as a passionate champion of the children she taught, with a bit of mama bear in her."

She initially joined with the nonprofit Exceptional Family Center, headed by longtime friend, Grace Huerta. The center helps families of children with special-needs apply for Supplemental Security Income, provides free computer classes, and offers other services such as notary public and document transcription.

Foster and Huerta recognized the need for vocational training, and Next Step opened in October 2016.

She got instructors from Bakersfield Adult School to teach classes in topics ranging from technology to medical billing. She teamed up with the Valley Achievement Center, another organization that helps people with special needs, to teach classes in soft skills such as communication.





■ Next Step students learn elements of graphic arts with the goal of landing technology jobs.

Next Step now serves 19 high-functioning adults who are between 18 and 29-years-old. Foster hopes to increase that number to 70.

“I don’t want to turn anybody away,” she said. “I want to get them to work.”

Next Step’s partner, Valley Achievement Center, provides transportation to get the students to class. The students punch a time card upon arrival so they become accustomed to a work environment. All of them have received vocational assessment to determine what line of work they should pursue.

“They’re training me how to be professional for when I get a career in the future,” said Whitney West, 23, who wants to be an animator.

Faculty in the University of La Verne graduate program are proud of Foster. Teachers often become frustrated when they feel their students aren’t getting the opportunities they deserve outside of school. Foster’s style is to do something about it, said Dr. Patricia Taylor, associate professor of education.

“Beverly always stood out from her peers as a passionate champion of the children she taught, with a bit of mama bear in her,” Taylor said.

Nora Dominguez, director of the University of La Verne’s Kern County campus, praised Foster for making an impact in the community.

“Beverly’s compassion for people with disabilities compels her to work tirelessly finding opportunities and solutions to advance their quality of life,” Dominguez said.

■ Tynesha Murray, who has cerebral palsy, is working toward becoming certified in medical billing and coding through Next Step.

## A WHITE HOUSE GIFT



When the U.S. Department of Labor posted a grant opportunity called Tech Hire in 2016, Huerta suggested Foster pursue it. Nearly 29 percent of Kern County residents live with a disability, according to the California Health Interview Survey. That number is higher than the state average.

Foster doubted the center would receive the grant, mostly because she had no experience writing a grant proposal.

“I thought it was a long shot,” she said.

Former Vice President Biden announced in June he was awarding \$150 million in grants, and that Next Step was one of the recipients. But an e-mail from the White House fell through the cracks. Foster learned the good news when a newspaper reporter called for an interview.

The grant, she said, provides more than symbolic help for her students.

It will allow Tynesha Murray, a wheelchair-bound woman living with cerebral palsy, to become certified in medical billing and coding so she can get a better job.

It will help 20-year-old Christian Record, who has Asperger Syndrome, learn how to communicate with others so he can put his portfolio of computer coding to use.

“His computer skills are through the roof,” Foster said. “And he types 150 words per minute.”

It will help Patrick Dickey, 20, who lives with ADHD, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and Asperger and Tourette Syndromes. He dreams of earning a living as an animator and a YouTube gaming star. Next Step is helping.

“The environment and the teachers are all friendly and nice,” he said. “When you’re stuck, they do their best to help you.”

Foster’s next goal is to pair students with area employers. Next Step will continue coaching students even after they are hired to ensure they are adjusting to their new environment.

Foster believes technology giants like Google and Microsoft should hire more workers with special needs. Her students not only have the skills, but also a stellar work ethic, she said. They are known for clocking in 10 minutes early and clocking out 10 minutes after their shifts end.

“They come fully invested in giving it their all,” she said.

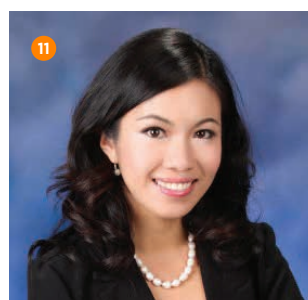
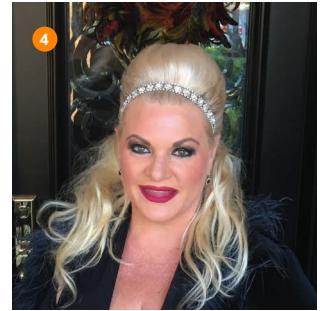
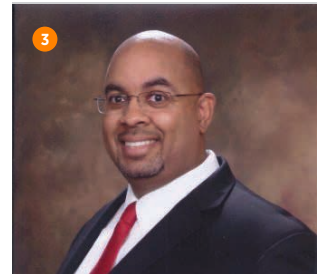
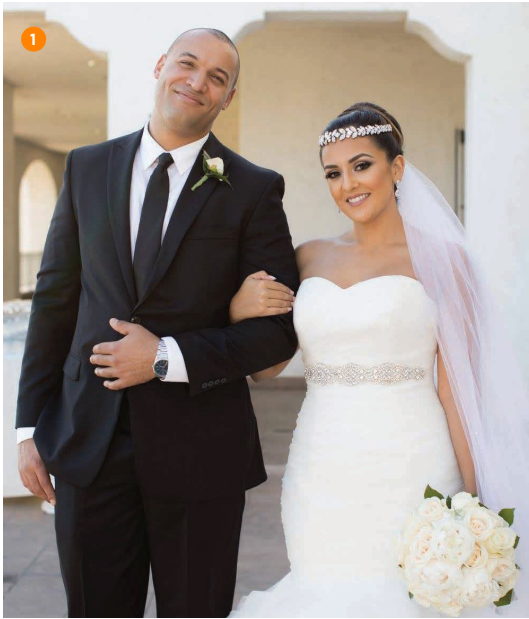








## WHAT'S NEW ALUMNI NOTES







**1 Benjamin Sankey '10** married alumna **Crystal Gonzalez '12** on Nov. 11, 2016. His is the third generation of his family to have relatives who met at the university and later married.

**6 Carol Yule '09** was recently honored as Most Inspirational Leader by the Victor Valley Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Yule received her BS in organizational management from the High Desert campus.

**9 Dr. Mary Barlow '10, '15**, two-time alumna, was appointed as the new Kern County Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Barlow received a master of education in 2010 and her doctor of education in 2015.

**Norair Jemjemian '04** was recently appointed as the senior vice president of Kaiser Permanente's Napa Solano service area.

The Humboldt County Board of Education appointed **Chris Hartley '06** as superintendent of schools. He was sworn into office in late March.

**Marilyn Watson '65** received a Family First award from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Temecula in September.

**Patrick Lee '08** was named a recipient of the 40 Under 40 awards by CPA Practice Advisor.

**Stephanie Patterson '06** received the "First Annual Under 40 Award" from the National Black Nurses Association in the fall of 2016 for commitment to community outreach activities in underserved communities and for her efforts to help reduce health disparities in diverse communities.

**David Edminister '02** is enjoying retirement in Coos Bay, Ore. after a 13-year teaching career.

**10 Pamela Bennett '00** works for the city of Los Angeles and volunteers for numerous organizations such as the city's dispute resolution program, diversity and inclusion advisory board, and San Antonio Community Hospital. She is also a tutor with Christian Tutors of America.

**4 Dawn Orlow Townsend '94** received a real estate license in the fall of 2016 and works at Tarbell Yorba Linda. She also runs a hair salon.

**Angelica Osorio '13** helped relaunch the organization Artistpalooza, which holds showcases featuring film, music, art, dance, and more.

**7 Richard Winn '02** serves as vice president of operations for the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, a post he accepted after a brief stint with retirement. He previously served 12 years with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, retiring as senior vice president in 2015.

**8 Ryan Vienna '14** opened Vienna Psychological Group, Inc. in August 2016 in San Dimas. He received a bachelor's degree in organizational management from the University of La Verne. In September 2016, he married Dr. Nicole Radford, who serves as executive clinical director and lead psychologist for the organization.

**2 Alex Lester '08, '11** has been named a member of the American Association of Premier DUI Attorneys due to his success in resolving and winning DUI cases.

**Tamara "Tammy" Kelly '07** was named manager of the California Water Service's Visalia District in February. Cal Water serves about 138,400 people through 38,300 service connections in Visalia.

**3 Ben Montgomery '12** became assistant city manager of Chino Hills in February. It is the third executive promotion he has received in two years.

The Rev. **Mark Whitlock '06** was included in the Orange County Register's 100 Most Influential People of Orange County for 2016. The list highlights people who are considered game changers in the county. Whitlock brought together faith organizations and law enforcement for the Solidarity March in August and helped launch the Orange County Sheriff's Department Interfaith Advisory Council.

**9 Maria-José Tennison '94** was named vice president of brand and production for Sight & Sound Theatres in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

**Bruce English '00** was appointed as fire chief by the Vernon City Council in January. He served 26 years with the Downey Fire Department, most recently as assistant fire chief and fire marshal.

**11 Elizabeth Yang '07** signed a publishing deal with CelebrityPress to co-author a book called "The Big Secret." Yang is an intellectual property, business, and family law attorney in Los Angeles.

**Dan Altenes '80** came out of retirement to work as a field engineer for the rebuilding of Salt Lake International Airport. He is working for his son, who is a project manager for Wadsworth Construction.

## Who do you have a spot for in your heart?



"My husband and I met the first week of the semester in my freshman year. We have been married over 10 years and have two little future Leos."

- Christy Ranells '04, '08 and James Ranells '02, '04

Share your Leo Love Story at  
[laverne.edu/leolovestory](http://laverne.edu/leolovestory)

## In Memoriam

Chief Warrant Officer 4 **Richard Earl Dickson '83** died in November 2016 in Anthem, Ariz. He was 68. A military memorial service took place on Jan. 30 at National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona.

**Frances Prince '80**, the first female mayor for Thousand Oaks, died on Feb. 6. She was 79. She began pursuing a legal education at the College of Law at 39 while raising three children.

U.S. Navy Lt. Commander **Charles A. Wenger '62** died in January. A memorial service was held in Ramona, Calif. on Jan. 21 and he received a military burial on Jan. 23.





# Rey Castillo

## Guarina Garcia



# NEW WAVE

## Water Polo Standouts Have a Fine First Year

**I**n the small world of college water polo, schools across the entire country—from USC to Harvard—battle each other not only in the pool, but also on the recruiting trail. This can be a big challenge for smaller schools like the University of La Verne.

So the university's water polo teams ventured into new territory—Puerto Rico—to find two of their most talented student-athletes.

Sophomore Guarina Garcia of the women's team and junior Rey Julian Castillo of the men's squad both hail from the islands. Both completed their inaugural season as Leopards in the past year. And they instantly emerged as two of the best players in the country.

Garcia led the women's team to its best season in program history as the Leopards came up just one game short of the NCAA National Championship tournament. She was named First Team All-America. Castillo helped the men's team to five SCIAC wins for the first time in 10 years and was tabbed Honorable Mention All-America.

The duo has also represented Puerto Rico at the national level.

Garcia and Castillo grew up playing for the same club, Gigantes de Carolina, under the same coach—Castillo's father, Rey Castillo, Sr. As teenagers, Castillo and Garcia were often the only ones getting in reps in the near-freezing pool at the Albergue Olímpico German Rieckehoff during Christmas breaks. The hard work created opportunities.

Both received offers from Division I schools. At first, the University of La Verne was not on their radar. The university's former coach, William "Willo" Rodriguez, also Puerto Rican, recruited the duo.

"My senior year, I got a call from Rey's dad telling me that a new coach for the University of La Verne was interested," Garcia recalled. "And I was like, 'University of La Verne? Where is that?'"

Garcia researched the university and with constant push from Rodriguez, who speaks fluent Spanish, decided to come.

"Willo is just really persistent as a recruiter," Castillo said. "It felt like La Verne was the only choice."

Soon after Garcia's first season and before Castillo even began his university career, Coach Rodriguez left to pursue another opportunity. But Castillo and Garcia decided to stay.

"La Verne makes you feel like you're a part of a family even though we all come from different places," Garcia said. "The school promotes inclusivity and diversity. We have so many students from all over the world and no one pushes anyone away."

"I also like how I am easily able to balance academics and water polo," Castillo said. "Division I programs practice year-round and it's hard to excel at both."

With Castillo and Garcia finding themselves in their new home, the sky's the limit for the Leopards water polo teams.



## HEART OF LA VERNE UNIQUELY LA VERNE

**MLK DAY OF SERVICE:** The Leo Community gardened, mentored children, and spent time with the elderly on Jan. 16 to honor the legacy of civil rights leader the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The annual event was organized by the Office of Civic and Community Engagement.





## WAY-BACK-WHEN TRIVIA

Speaking to a crowd on Armistice Day at La Verne College in 1919 is \_\_\_\_\_,  
who today has a building on campus named in his honor.







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**Sophomore Rudy Amaya speaks about the power of community at Scholarship Gala '17. Gala attracted over 1,000 guests and raised more than \$750,000 for scholarships, both all-time records for the event.**