

Celebrating 60 YEARS of Distinguished alumni



Cal Poly Pomona alumni are difference makers, leaders, innovators, volunteers and thoughtful community members. For the past 60 years, the Alumni Association has honored individuals who have attained great success in their career, served their community and given back to the university.

To celebrate the award program's 60th anniversary, CPP Magazine caught up with six past awardees to hear about their career path and how they continue to make a difference.

—Melissa McCoy



Jack Kulp

'63, mechanical engineering

Awarded in 1973-74

Jack Kulp is an inventor, innovator and road safety expert who always wanted to be a salesman. Combine all that with some bad luck, and you get great success.

At 49 Kulp lost his job when his company sold the division he'd run for 13 years. "I felt sorry for myself for three, four days," he says, but negotiated a severance package.

With that money he started **TraFFix Devices**, which manufactures highway safety products. TraFFix has four factories, employs 350 people and expects to do \$120 million in sales this year. "It's very gratifying for me and all of our workers to do what we do. The stuff they're working on saves lives every day."



Dr. Sylvia Whitlock

'74, master's in education

Awarded in 1988

After a lifetime of service, and retirement as a school principal, one might expect **Dr. Sylvia Whitlock** to slow down a bit.

"I'm a lot busier now than when I worked." She became a therapist, helped establish an AIDS clinic in Jamaica, and supports a school in India by volunteering her time and teaching expertise.

Whitlock made history as the world's first female president of a Rotary Club and wrote a book about it called "Women Also Serve." She makes time to dote on her three grandchildren, but she still talks to 15 to 20 Rotarian groups a year and travels internationally.

"Rotary is all about service. Great goes both ways. You give it and you get it."



Steve Preston

'80, urban planning;
'84, master's in urban planning

Awarded in 1995

Steve Preston spent most of his career in the public sector, but he always made time to follow another passion – teaching. When he retired as city manager for San Gabriel in 2018, there was more time to travel and to volunteer with groups like Pasadena Heritage.

"I've gotten to do all these things I love." He's led many leadership seminars over the years, including for the Tournament of Roses queen and her court. He's been a lecturer at CPP and USC, and he'll keep teaching.

"Each new generation of students lights a fire in you. They don't always understand how much I'm getting from them."



Linda Amato

'74, foods and nutrition

Awarded in 2002

When Linda Amato started at Foodservice Sales, she worked for the national company with 200 salesmen. She was the only saleswoman.

"Talk about changing attitudes! I loved calling on customers and earned 'Man of the Year' my first year. What matters to me most now is that there are very few restrictions in today's workforce."

In 2007, Amato sold her own company, Buena Vista Food Products Inc., to a private equity firm. Even though she misses colleagues and customers, she had a long career she loved.

"My husband and I have traveled to 20 countries and experienced so many different cultures and met so many wonderful people. I would highly recommend it!"

Art Barajas

'92, hotel and restaurant management

Awarded in 2006

Art Barajas' climb up the career ladder – starting with an internship at Glendora Country Club followed by increasing responsibilities at other clubs over many years – led to a great job that he loves. In 2015 he was named chief operating officer at Glendora.

But what the recently remarried Barajas wants to discuss is balance. He says during his first marriage he focused so much on work that he didn't spend enough time at home with his then-wife and two daughters. That's changed.

"You have to learn a balance of life-work – home, family, religion, hobbies. There's a lot more self-fulfillment. It's another chapter in Art's life."



Dr. Una L. Morris

'70, zoology

Awarded in 2009

Una Morris has spent her entire life working hard. She's a three-time Olympian from Jamaica. She's a radiologist with her own practice in Pasadena, and until recently she owned a Jamaican restaurant in the city.

"I grew up where we said only the best is good enough. I worked hard, I sacrificed."

Dr. Morris has no intention of retiring. "I enjoy what I do. I enjoy my patients. Working makes me mentally fit. And I still exercise five days a week. I spend my time working a lot, but I have a second life now too. I help my daughter with her 6-month-old baby, and I'm having a ball."

