

# OUR FIRST LADY

## Put Your Game Face On

By Mary Castro

The hustling pace of a new academic year is under way! Sidewalks are full of students, staff and faculty members winding their way through campus. The Bulldog Express is looping around buildings and connecting our students to Campus Point, various parking lots and most importantly, their classes. In the background you hear the Bulldog Marching Band practicing for their next performance.

New seasons are kicking off for many programs. "Just the Ticket to Build Our Community" is a new campaign that raises awareness about the relationship between academics, athletics and community participation in attending events (see the video at [www.GoBulldogs.com](http://www.GoBulldogs.com)). Purchasing tickets to football games is one example of how scholarships for student-athletes are funded. Student-athletes are part of the 80 percent of Fresno State graduates who remain in our area after graduation. In doing so, they strengthen our local economy.

Being in Bulldog Stadium on game day is a favorite activity for me. Joe and I dash to as many tailgates as possible before the coin toss. We see children playing catch and laughing. The smell of delicious barbecue is everywhere. Alumni proudly decorate their spaces with red, red and more red! Victor E. Bulldog III makes the rounds, visiting fans and posing for photos. It is a festive time of coming together as a community to support our campus and students.

Joe and I enjoy sharing the excitement of game day with upwards of 80 guests in the President's Skybox. It is an opportunity to engage and reconnect friends of Fresno State with members of the President's Cabinet and Deans from the various colleges. Guests of all ages light up when the Fresno State ice cream is served. We donate several game packages to local charities as auction items throughout the year.



Mary Castro with Victor E. Bulldog III.  
Photo courtesy of Fresno State

Game days tend to be quite long and fueled by adrenaline.

This is going to be the first year that Jess will join us for a few of the early kickoff games. His enthusiasm is contagious. We have started the countdown to his first game.

"How many more days until I can see the Bulldogs?" he asks. His jersey has been selected. Goals are eating popcorn and petting Victor E. Bulldog III.

The Castro family is ready to see some Fresno State Bulldog football! How about you?

*Mary Borges Castro is the First Lady of Fresno State. She and her husband, President Joseph I. Castro, returned to their Valley roots in August 2013. She is an active volunteer at Fresno State, host of First Lady's Focus on KFSR 90.7 FM and the mother of three children.* 