

# FRESNO STATE

MAGAZINE

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

## A Land of Opportunity

THE FRESNO STATE FARM

Introducing the new  
**UNIVERSITY  
PRESIDENT**

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# On the Rise

New University President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval says he's committed to leading Fresno State to the next level of excellence

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**Cover:** Agricultural education student Jonathan Moules, who works on the sheep unit, was one of about 80 ag students who continued working on the 1,000-acre University farm — caring for animals, tending to crops and putting products on shelves — throughout the pandemic. Photo by Cary Edmondson

**Left:** Reflecting the beauty of the region it represents, the Fresno State campus features a living laboratory, including vast vineyards and various other crops and animal units that serve as training ground for the next generation of agriculture professionals. Photo by Domenick Satterberg

### SPRING/SUMMER 2021

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*Fresno State serves the richly diverse region of Central California. We are proud to have the U.S. Department of Education designate our University as both a Hispanic-Serving Institution and an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution.*

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## Let the Celebration Commence

Photo by Cary Edmondson

Wearing masks and sitting six feet apart didn't stop Fresno State graduates, their families and friends from celebrating with cheers, waves, signs, decorated caps — and a few tears.

The University's 109th/110th Commencement was an emotional celebration for the classes of 2020 and 2021, which in the past 14 months had largely been absent from campus and taking classes virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since there was no in-person ceremony this past year, 2020 graduates were invited to join in this year's festivities.

It was the first Fresno State commencement held at Bulldog Stadium since the Save Mart Center opened in 2003. Over the span of three days, the stadium hosted six ceremonies recognizing all eight schools and colleges on campus. Graduates seated on the football field were surrounded by family and friends who were socially distanced in the stands.

The Class of 2021 had over 6,200 graduates, joining 6,400 who completed their studies in 2020. The Class of 2021 included over 1,000 students who earned master's degrees and 73 completed doctoral degrees.

 See video and more photos at [stories.fresnostate.edu](https://stories.fresnostate.edu)





## FRESNO STATE **NEWS** BRIEFS

### The Economic Engine That Could

Salvador Solorio-Ruiz grew up in Delano, a small Central Valley town where 22% of residents live in poverty, according to the U.S. Census. The son of immigrants, however, was bound for something different when he became the first in his family to graduate from college — Fresno State. He returned to his hometown, started working and won a seat on the Delano City Council.

“Fresno State not only prepared me for my career as a community engagement coordinator with a nonprofit (California Health Collaborative) but as a city councilmember,” he says. Solorio-Ruiz is one of the thousands of Fresno State graduates now working and contributing to the Valley economy.

A new report from the California State University system underscores the magnitude of the economic impact of Fresno State. For every dollar that California invests in Fresno State, \$7.35 in statewide spending is generated.

When alumni economic activity is considered, the \$1 investment rises to \$32.29 in return. In 2018-19, the state’s investment in Fresno State (operating and average capital appropriations) totaled \$190.1 million.

In the 2018-19 academic year, Fresno State-related activity supported 11,142 jobs, \$438.9 million in labor income and \$1.3 billion in industry activity, and contributed \$81.2 million in state and local tax revenue, according to the report, “The Impact of the California State University.”

“This report underscores the important connection that Fresno State has with our region,” says University President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval. “We are pleased to be a major contributor to the economic well-being of the Valley, as we have been for over a century.

“A Fresno State education improves the trajectory of the lives of students and their families, and elevates the quality of life in our region.”

**For every \$1 California invests in Fresno State, \$7.35 in statewide spending is generated.**

#### Fresno State-related activity supported:

- 11,142 jobs
- \$438.9 million in labor income
- \$1.3 billion in industry activity
- \$81.2 million in state and local tax revenue

**BOLD  
gives  
BACK**



### Food for Thought

Lou and Jane Amendola have empathy for college students experiencing food insecurity.

“All students, I think, face food insecurity from time to time,” says Lou, owner and CEO of Valley Wide Beverage. “It’s nice to have someplace where students can go to grab something or make something, which puts a little less pressure on them, so they can do well in school.”

A generous gift of \$1.5 million from the Amendola family will help to alleviate food insecurity for generations of students at Fresno State. Their endowment will ensure the financial sustainability of the Student Cupboard’s operations in perpetuity.

In recognition of their gift, the cupboard will be renamed The Amendola Family Student Cupboard.

“The positive impact of the Amendolas’ transformational gift on our students, the future leaders of our region, is immeasurable,” says University President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval. “We deeply appreciate Lou and Jane’s generosity in helping to remove barriers to our students’ success in their academic endeavors.”

The student cupboard provides Fresno State students who are experiencing food insecurity with free, fresh and nonperishable food items and personal care products.

When Jane heard about the student cupboard, she says, “I was just genuinely excited. I didn’t even know that kind of service would exist on a campus. To think that any future students, when they learn that the cupboard exists, will think ‘they care about us if we have a down day or a rough time.’ I think it’s a win-win for the students and the University.”

Since the student cupboard opened its doors in November 2014, it has had nearly 250,000 visits, serving 28,000 students. More than 43% of Fresno State students surveyed said they had experienced some level of food insecurity in the past year, according to a 2017 California State University study. During the 2019-20 academic year, 5,991 students visited the cupboard, totaling 40,670 visits.

“Our students can focus more fully on their studies if they aren’t worried about basic needs such as their next meal,” says Dr. Carolyn Coon, dean of students and acting vice president for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Fresno State. “We want to give all of our students every opportunity to succeed. We couldn’t do that without support from University supporters like the Amendola family.”

For more information on how to support the basic needs of students, call 559.278.5052.

—Lisa Boyles Bell

### A New Way for Former Students to Finish Degrees



**Guy Barnes**, 30, was one class away from earning his bachelor’s degree in voice performance in 2013 when a dream job

opportunity arose: Move to Washington D.C. to play in a military band for heads of state and elected officials around the world. He jumped at the chance.



**Edith Magallon**, 35, was alone in the U.S., her mother and five younger siblings were in Mexico, where her uncle was helping

the family since her father’s death in 2004. In 2017, her uncle died, and she put her education dream on hold to take care of her family.

Barnes and Magallon left Fresno State before finishing their degrees — and have now returned as part of an inaugural cohort of 15 students who will complete a liberal arts degree.

The new program, nicknamed “Reconnect,” launched in August through the Division of Continuing and Global Education to support the development of flexible class offerings to improve student success, engagement and learning in an online modality. The program offers working professionals a second chance to complete their degree, regardless of the major they were originally pursuing.

The liberal arts degree allows students who have completed at least 70 units (*at least 12 at Fresno State*) and their lower division general education requirements (*and left the University in good standing*) to take classes in eight-week sessions. Classes will delve into California politics, literature and public health, plus a project or research to address a community problem.

—Michelle Deininger



Geoff Thurner

## Former Classmates Leave Future Legacy

Alumnus Ron Samuel (*pictured above*) was born in Los Banos into a large ranching operation and thought that would be his career path. However, the wide variety of opportunities at Fresno State, including the Alpha Gamma Rho agricultural fraternity, opened new doors. That included his first job with a grocery wholesaler, which led to several other related positions.

He later helped start Pacific West Produce, then sold the company more than 20 years ago. Today as an Ameriprise financial adviser, he proudly serves numerous agricultural clients.

"Agriculture is so great because you're always surrounded by such hard-working, trustworthy people," Samuel says. "Likewise, the campus farm and the agricultural programs and students have that same feel, and are so vital to the campus and the community."

That same feeling is shared by John Gorter, Samuel's classmate and fraternity brother, and his wife Carol Maughn Gorter (*pictured right*). Both also received agricultural economics degrees after growing up on Sacramento-area farms.



John applied his plant science concentration locally for 45 years as a senior pest control adviser for GAR Bennett and as Reedley College farm manager before he retired in October. Carol serves as a Bank of America senior vice president and is the risk executive for its food and agriculture portfolio in the Western United States.

"From our first visit to Fresno State (as Consumnes River College livestock judging team members), we knew it was the complete package of practical and theoretical learning, just like it is today," John Gorter says.

They have reconnected to campus through the Ag One Foundation board of directors. Now, those ties have led them to support a new generation of Jordan College students by joining the Heritage Society, which honors alumni and friends who have included Fresno State in their will or made a planned gift.

"One big difference today is the cost of college," Carol Gorter says. "This is a special opportunity for us to take a little burden off of students. They're the future leaders of agriculture, which makes this a wise investment."

For more information on planned giving opportunities, contact Liz Garvin at 559.278.4038 or [egarvin@csufresno.edu](mailto:egarvin@csufresno.edu).

## AROUND THE FOUNTAIN



### 600 Club

Fresno State became the first college baseball program in NCAA history to have three straight coaches reach 600 wins at the school. Coach Mike Batesole reached his 600th win on April 10, following Bob Bennett and Pete Beiden. The Bulldogs have had just three coaches since 1948.



### This is "Jeopardy!"

Dr. Frederick Nelson, professor and chair of the Department of Liberal Studies, appeared on two of the late host Alex Trebek's final "Jeopardy!" airings in December on ABC. Nelson won \$20,001 in his first appearance.



### White House Connection

Fun fact: the Cesar Chavez bust that now sits in the Oval Office was cast from the same model as the statue located in Fresno State's Peace Garden. It's one of 25 busts that were made when the Fresno State statue was commissioned.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### Introducing the New Student-body President

Senior D'Aungillique Jackson, who was recently elected as Associated Students, Inc. president for the 2021-22 school year, earned the 2020 John D. Welty Award for Excellence in Community Service, which includes a \$2,500 scholarship. The award is given each year to a student who exemplifies the commitment to service that Welty championed during his 22 years as president at Fresno State.

Inspired by her own initiative and deep investment in dismantling racism, Jackson, who is majoring in sociology and is also president of the campus chapter of the NAACP, has dedicated over 350 hours of service to the community during the past academic year.

"As an organizer, community service has always been a passion of mine," Jackson says. "In times of need it's important that we come together to support one another, and this is something I will continue to practice. I'm so thankful and honored to have received this award."

— Talyan Parker



*"In times of need it's important that we come together to support one another, and this is something I will continue to practice. I'm so thankful and honored to have received this award."*

**D'AUNGILLIQUE JACKSON**



## To Top it Off

Fresno State celebrated a significant construction milestone on the Lynda and Stewart Resnick Student Union with a ceremonial "topping off" event. Members of the campus community including students, donors, faculty and staff signed the last beam at the construction site before it was raised into the building's highest position on March 26.

"We look forward to the completion of the Resnick Student Union next year, and the vibrant energy it will generate to support our talented students," says University President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval.

The 84,000-square-foot Lynda and Stewart Resnick Student Union will include dynamic and flexible meeting spaces, dedicated spaces for clubs and organizations and a Town Center that opens directly to the outdoor landscaped spaces surrounding the building.

The Resnick Student Union is located east of the University Center and south of the Kennel Bookstore and will become the welcome center for campus visitors.

A \$10 million investment from philanthropists and entrepreneurs Lynda and Stewart Resnick, owners of The Wonderful Company, is helping to support the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the new \$60 million building. Students voted in 2018 to approve a fee increase that supports the construction and operation of the new facility.

— Lisa Boyles Bell



### A Jolly, Good Fellowship

Geography and city and regional planning professor Dr. Mohan Dangi was one of 14 selected nationwide for the Jefferson Science Fellowship. He will spend a year in Washington, D.C., advising government officials on topics of science that have bearing on U.S. foreign policy.



### Passport Place

Passport services have now reopened on campus, by appointment only, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays in the Kremen Education building (Room 140). Visit [fresnopassports.com](http://fresnopassports.com) for more information.



Cary Edmondson

## Introducing the new UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval says he's been preparing for this opportunity during his two decades on campus

By Eddie Hughes

**D**r. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval is known for speaking several languages, playing the piano and zooming across campus on a scooter. He has a love for food — recreating recipes that have meaning to him and his family but also indulging in the richness of the history and culture behind every dish.

And he has a passion for the Valley and the power of Fresno State — which is just part of what led to his selection in May as the ninth president in the University's 110-year history.

In January, after Joseph I. Castro became chancellor of the 23-campus California State University system, Jiménez-Sandoval began serving as interim president of the University following 20 years in a number of progressive positions including professor, department chair, dean of the College of Arts and Humanities and most recently provost and vice president of Academic Affairs.

Jiménez-Sandoval grew up on a Fowler farm after his family immigrated from Mexico to the Central Valley when he was a child. He is married to Dr. Mariana Anagnostopoulos, a professor in the Department of Philosophy, and they have two sons, Arion and Leo.

Jiménez-Sandoval sat down for an exclusive Q&A to give Fresno State Magazine readers a taste of his vision for the future.

**FSMag:** How did you learn you were selected as Fresno State's new president?

**Jiménez-Sandoval:** I was at home, and Chancellor Castro called me at 7:50 p.m. We had just finished dinner, and Mariana, Ari, Leo and I were all at the table talking. After receiving the news, I cried for joy and hugged my family. I felt excited, relieved and in awe of this opportunity and responsibility.

**How has your role as interim prepared you to tackle this responsibility?**

It seems that I have been preparing for this role for more than 20 years. My time in the classroom has given me a deep appreciation for the unlimited talent of our students, while the roles of dean of the College of Arts and Humanities and provost and vice president for Academic Affairs gave me a clear understanding of the breadth and scope of our faculty's research and creative activities, and their dedication to our students. As interim president, I was able to see our profound and multifaceted impact on our region — from athletics' impressive following in the greater region and its ability to unite us all, to the ways our alumni power every sector of Valley life and influence California and the world. My time as interim president also gave me the insight necessary to formulate a vision for our University in which, together, we will chart the next level of excellence.



▲ Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, son Leo, wife Dr. Mariana Anagnostopoulos, son Arion.

**What would surprise people most about you?**

I'm a foodie, and love trying food from all parts of the world. I'm a good cook (I have a great crêpe recipe). And I'm a good handyman — I put in 23 double-pane windows in my home, added custom molding on every window, installed my sprinkler system and installed pavers to make a new patio area. I also prune my fruit trees at home.

**What makes you the right person for the job?**

I have a passion for Fresno State, integrated with years of experience building relationships, both within the University and in our community. I have personal insight on agriculture, see the impressive potential of our engineering, business and STEM fields to innovate our economy in the creation of new jobs, and know first-hand the transcendental value of teaching, the social sciences, the arts and the humanities in furthering dialogue that promotes human bonds and well-being.

**What are your priorities for ensuring that Fresno State continues to rise both academically and athletically?**

Fresno State is a clear leader in the fifth-largest city in California. Athletics has the unique power to bring us all together; it's an incredible unifier, and we all gather to cheer for our Bulldogs and become one big Red Wave. Just as we intend to build on our widely recognized brand in sports, we also intend to promote and showcase the transformative energy of our academics, the importance of our alumni in the region and the incredible and palpable impact of state investment and private philanthropic support on sustaining and uplifting this most productive Central Valley that feeds the world.

**What do you want alumni and supporters of the University to know about you?**

With the full support of my family, I'm wholly committed to taking our University to the next level of excellence, and to showcasing the impressive leadership we have in uplifting the quality of life for everyone in the Valley. I admire our diversity and marvel at living in the ninth most diverse city in the United States. We come from different parts of the world and espouse different cultures and beliefs, yet we have all made this fertile Valley of ours our home. I love that about Fresno, as it fosters a tightly-woven community. 🐾

— Eddie Hughes is senior editor for Fresno State Magazine. BoNhia Lee contributed to this story.

# ON THE FRONTLINES

## Nursing students assist with vaccination efforts

By Melissa Tav

**T**he line wrapping around the Orange Cove Community Center increases by the hour as the morning dew starts to dissipate. Among those present are some of the Central Valley's most vulnerable communities — farmworkers and individuals ages 65 and up.

They are among the first group in the region who will receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

Inside the center, Fresno State nursing student Danielle Pacheco prepares to administer the first dose of the Moderna vaccine to a migrant worker who appears to be in his 60s. He rolls up his sleeve slowly and Pacheco inserts the needle with careful precision. He lets out a hesitant, but hopeful sigh. For many of the migrant workers here, this day brings renewed optimism for their health and livelihood.

Since February, these pop-up vaccine clinics have been made possible through a partnership between the Fresno State School of Nursing and local community organizations and government agencies, including the Fresno County Department of Public Health, Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula, Saint Agnes Medical Center and Cultiva La Salud.

The clinics have visited rural communities where access to health care — and the vaccine — are not readily available. Over 60 nursing students have helped to administer over 3,700 vaccinations.

“Not a lot of people getting vaccinated here today would necessarily leave their community to get the vaccine,” says Pacheco, who is in her fifth semester of the nursing program. “So, in that sense, it’s been so rewarding to be able to come



Cary Edmondson

### DANIELLE PACHECO

▲ Danielle Pacheco and about 60 other Fresno State nursing students have served at pop-up vaccine clinics in rural areas since February — administering over 3,700 vaccinations to the Central Valley's most vulnerable communities, where access to health care is not readily available.

out to these rural communities and to be able to give back in this way. Seeing where they're from makes it so much more impactful.”

Before students can volunteer at the clinics, they must each complete a comprehensive, two-hour COVID-19 vaccine training course, as required by Fresno State's School of Nursing.

“We couldn't meet this pandemic head on if it were not for the partnerships that we've established and by our community leaning on and supporting each other,” Arambula, a physician, says. “I believe that the work we are doing allows us to be one step closer to getting back to life as we know it. It is an honor to work alongside these nursing students who are out here on the frontlines doing the hard work to help us to become a safer community.”

Students volunteer for a variety of roles, including client intake and screening, preparation of vaccines, administration of the vaccinations and the observation station.

*“While they are gaining experience in assessing, instituting an intervention and monitoring the effect, the students are gaining compassion and giving back to the community.”*

— DR. SYLVIA MILLER

School of Nursing, Fresno State

“While they are gaining experience in assessing, instituting an intervention and monitoring the effect, the students are gaining compassion and giving back to the community,” says Dr. Sylvia Miller, chair of the School of Nursing at Fresno State.

### SERVING WITH GRATITUDE

A few blocks south of the Fresno Fairgrounds lies the unincorporated community of Calwa. The beginning of the spring season is evident as the sun shines down on a group of community members awaiting their vaccines. Fifth-semester nursing student Joshua Hinson has been at the clinic since it opened four hours earlier. Despite the long hours, Hinson is optimistic and excited to be there helping his hometown.

“Every single person I've come across has been very thankful,” Hinson says. “You can tell how much they genuinely appreciate you being out here, and the feeling is mutual.”

For Hinson, the battle to beat COVID-19 hits home. His grandfather passed away from the disease in January. He says that being on the other end, helping to stop the spread, is gratifying.

Like thousands of others in Fresno County, many of the students have been personally impacted by COVID or know someone who has. Since the pandemic hit the region over a year ago, Fresno has seen over 100,000 cases.

“Every student is volunteering their time and some have come out two or three times already,” says Dr. Kathleen Rindahl, faculty coordinator of the mobile health unit in the School of Nursing. “They've come to the realization that, as nurses, we have a responsibility to help in these kinds of situations and they are just rolling up their sleeves to do it.”

*Continued*

## ON THE FRONTLINES



**HOLLY VU**

Holly Vu returned to school, after 10 years working in the IT field, to pursue a career in nursing. She says she is humbled to be a part of the solution to the pandemic, as she is passionate about doing work that protects the community, particularly the elderly population.

Cary Edmondson

## GIVING BACK TO THE VALLEY

In Cantua Creek, a remote community about an hour southwest of Fresno at the border of San Joaquin and Tranquility, nursing student Holly Vu prepares to administer her first dose of the vaccine. Although she previously volunteered at other sites, administering the shot was new to her.

“It is a humbling experience to be a part of the solution to this pandemic,” Vu says. For many of the individuals receiving vaccinations, feelings of uncertainty and fear still linger, but Vu says being able to educate them on the vaccine has been meaningful.

After 10 years of working in the IT field, she returned to school a few years ago to pursue her bachelor’s degree in nursing. Now in her fourth semester of the five-semester program, Vu says she is ready to take on the challenges of the profession at the peak of the pandemic.

“I remember from personal experience, my mom — a single mom of five — taking us to free health care clinics just like these when I was growing up,” Vu says. “It is so important for me to give back now as a health care provider because my community has given so much to me. With the prevalence of COVID, I want to be a part of the work that protects our elderly population, and our community. This is why I chose to be a nurse.”



— Melissa Tav is a communications specialist in the College of Health and Human Services at Fresno State.

# Poverello House: more than meals



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# VIRTUALLY ~~IMPOSSIBLE~~

How one professor transitioned a physical therapy cadaver lab to online in the span of a week

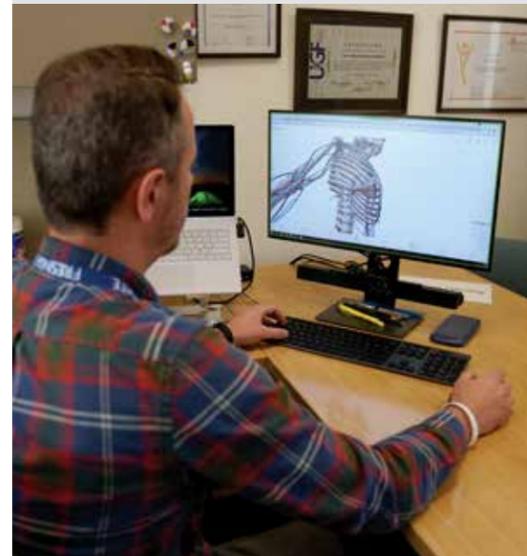
By BoNhia Lee



*“Even though it was a very unusual time, and I had to use a methodology that I wasn’t aware of, or familiar to me, in the end, it worked.”*

– DR. CAIO SARMENTO  
physical therapy professor

▲ In March 2020, physical therapy professor Dr. Caio Sarmento had to convert his cadaver dissection lab into a virtual class in the span of one week. He turned to an app called Visible Body (right, below) that allows students to access interactive 3D modules, animations and augmented reality.



Cary Edmondson

Sarmento’s  
**34 students**  
passed with  
high grades



## Faculty across campus adjust

Through the Center for Faculty Excellence, and with help from the California State University and other faculty development offices systemwide, hundreds of Fresno State faculty completed online training over the past year to transition their courses for virtual learning to better engage students.

Biology professor Dr. Emily Walter took summer training to prepare for the fall 2020 semester. She is an education researcher who designs her courses, which include general education biology, to be interactive, allowing students to talk to each other about what they are learning and how it relates to their lives.

“As professors, we’re taught our content, but unlike K-12 teachers, there’s not a lot of teaching training and so people have to fall back on their experiences as learners and maybe running into the right sort of workshops to be able to make changes (in their teaching),” says Walter, who also received a Provost’s Award for Extraordinary Teaching in Extraordinary Times.

Walter felt something was missing in her syllabus this year. There needed to be something to connect students to science because so many already feel like they are not good at it, she says. She expanded her assignments to include new mini project “quests.” Students pick three from a list of more than 20 experiences that involve finding science in their everyday lives. Then, they create something using their own talents to show how it made them feel.

For example, sit out in nature and observe, do nothing for a minute, then write a poem or draw a picture. Or review and read aloud a children’s book with a female scientist or person of color. Bake an earth layer cake or a vegetarian meal.

“Students were saying how much happier they were, how much it helped them mitigate their stress,” Walter says. “I wasn’t expecting to be so personally moved by reading the students’ reflections. I don’t think I’ve ever felt that way about an assignment before.”

– BoNhia Lee is a writer in University Communications at Fresno State. Melissa Tav, communications specialist, also contributed to this story.

# A Water RECHARGE

Longtime engineer develops a system to replenish depleted groundwater aquifer

By Rebecca Wass

**O**n a one-acre parcel of land where rows of 20-year-old almond trees once stood on Fresno State's farm, a transformation is underway. And, while it may not look like much from the surface, those involved hope it will address a water shortage that plagues much of the state and its fertile farmland.

In October, an underground pipe system was laid for what is the beginning of the University's only subsurface artificial groundwater recharge system.

"This pipe system will transport any runoff water or excess surface water and facilitate the percolation of water right into the groundwater aquifer," says Cordie Qualle (pictured), Fresno State civil engineering faculty fellow and interim director of the California Water Institute.



It is estimated that around 125 million acre-feet of water has been taken out of Central Valley groundwater aquifers in the past century, Qualle says. Within the past decade, an estimated 20 million acre-feet has been withdrawn.

Groundwater recharge means using rain or sources of surface water to gradually filter deep into the ground where it is stored in the aquifer below the water table. Groundwater recharge sources can be found in various forms throughout the Valley such as rivers, lakes and manmade ponds that are persistent sources of water.

"Recharge is a common practice, however, using agricultural land for

recharging groundwater aquifers is something new," Qualle says. "This project will allow us to research how feasible it is for farmers to implement recharge systems within their fields that do not impact their farming operations."

Qualle says the depletion of groundwater aquifers, affecting water quality, was one of the many effects of the 2012-16 California drought. "In the context of agriculture, many farmers had no other choice than to use groundwater to compensate for the loss of surface water that they would normally use for irrigation uses."

**"We truly hope that this research contributes toward mitigation efforts to sustainably manage our groundwater aquifers while continuing to support our agricultural community."**



**GABRIELA BONILLA**  
Fresno State civil engineering graduate student

His proposed solution is to recharge groundwater aquifers that have been critically overdrafted and develop management plans to prevent similar issues.

He enlisted the help of civil engineering graduate student Gabriela Bonilla, who was working in the water sector and heard about Qualle's vision.

Bonilla then introduced Qualle to Greg Wegis, of Wegis and Young Property Management, who had developed a similar groundwater recharge system for his farm.

The research team also partnered with LIDCO, INC, CalWest Rain, Grundfos Pumps Corporation, Red-Trac, City of Clovis, Moore-Twining Associates Inc., Davis Instruments, Fresno State Farm, the Agriculture Research Institute and other donors on various aspects of the project.

Qualle joined the Lyles College of Engineering at Fresno State as a full-time faculty member in 2017 after nearly 40 years in the private civil engineering sector.

"That same year we had a huge rainfall and the Valley's water infrastructure could not keep up," he says. "We had a lot of excess water and a lot of it

CANAL

SUBSURFACE RECHARGE PERFORATED PIPELINE

PERCOLATING RECHARGE WATER

**ABOUT 125 MILLION ACRE-FEET OF WATER HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT OF CENTRAL VALLEY GROUNDWATER AQUIFERS IN THE PAST CENTURY**

AQUIFER



Geoff Thurner

► Fresno State almond orchard groundwater recharge pipe installation, October 2020.

was lost. If the water is not captured, it leaves the Valley in several ways, primarily through the San Joaquin River or the Kings River to the Delta and San Francisco Bay. It occurred to me as I watched all that water go down the river there ought to be some way we can capture that water."

Starting this summer, students from the Lyles College, like Bonilla, will work

to analyze the impact on groundwater aquifers and determine the economic effects of the recharge system. Students will collect data to determine soil properties, analyze energy consumption and conduct water quality analysis.

"Water is vital, and we must find a way to take care of it," says Bonilla, who graduated in May. "Since starting

this program, water has become a passion of mine. We truly hope that this research contributes toward mitigation efforts to sustainably manage our groundwater aquifers while continuing to support our agricultural community."



— Rebecca Wass is a communications specialist for the Lyles College of Engineering at Fresno State.



# A Land of Opportunity

A 1,000-acre living lab offers a one-of-a-kind college experience for ag students

By Eddie Hughes

▲ Agricultural education student Jonathan Moules typically starts his work day at Fresno State's sheep unit at 7 a.m. He feeds the animals, performs health checks for 100-plus sheep and keeps the pens tidy.

Cary Edmondson

For some college students, their campus becomes a home away from home. For agricultural education student Jonathan Moules, school, work and home all blended together.

Moules moved into his new home on the University farm in August, smack dab in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic that turned campus into a ghost town.

While the majority of students, faculty and staff adjusted to working remotely during the 2020-21 school year, about 80 ag students continued to work on the 1,000-acre University farm — caring for animals, tending to crops and putting products on the shelves of the Gibson Farm Market and other local retailers.

“The expression ‘rain or shine’ might as well be replaced with ‘rain, shine or COVID-19’ because our world will not simply stop eating for a day so that farmers can get away from the weather or even a pandemic,” says Moules, a senior from Delhi who graduated from Turlock High School and Modesto Junior College before transferring to Fresno State. “Being on campus during the pandemic reminds me of a deserted island. A minimal number of students, no events and online instruction has definitely been a change in my life but, at the same time, it has allowed me to focus more on my job at the sheep unit.”

Moules, or “Farmer Jonathan” if you will, has been around agriculture all his life. His parents began growing almonds after immigrating to Central California from the Azores Islands off the coast of Portugal.

But his role at the sheep unit is new to him. He lives on site and helps care for over 100 Hampshire-Suffolk sheep raised for livestock exhibitions and meat consumption. He says he was anxious at first about the opportunity, but he knew it would be an important part of his education as he prepares to be a high school agriculture teacher after graduation.

## FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY FARM

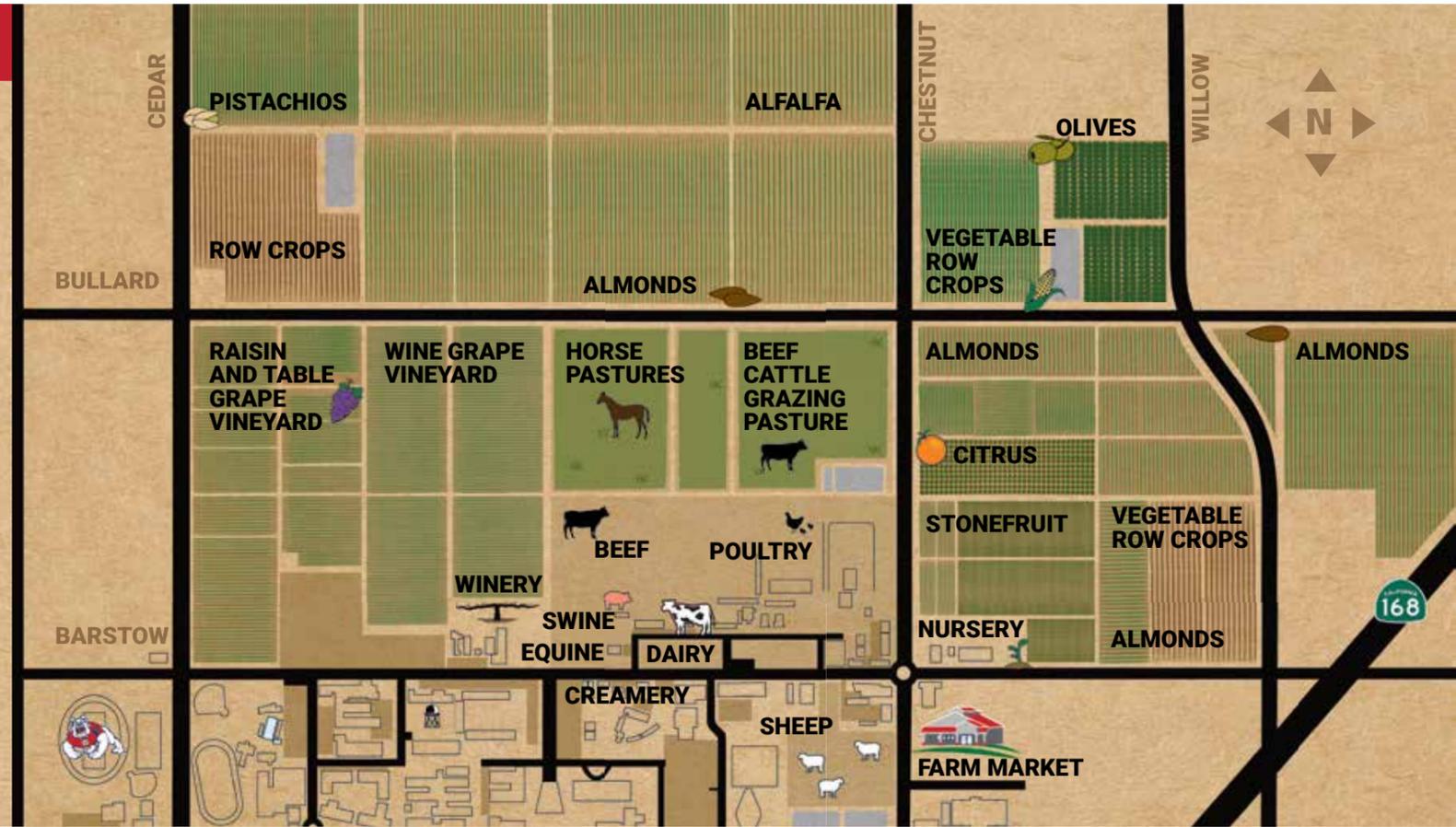
**1** Reallocate some land for higher valued crops like pistachios and almonds to support overall operations.



**2** Partner with Tree Fresno and others to develop a “green belt” around the perimeter of the farm that the community can enjoy.



**3** Encourage faculty to use the farm even more intensely in their teaching, research and outreach to industry partners.



## A FRUITFUL VISION

There are 23 different enterprises on the campus farm, ranging from the sheep unit to the dairy to the winery. Fresno State farm manager Mark Salwasser says units like the sheep and swine — while not the most profitable entities — are key to attracting young students who are introduced to ag through raising livestock for the fair.

Nestled in the heart of the most agriculturally rich region in the world, Fresno State has long celebrated its farming roots and expertise while priding itself as one of the top universities for future farmers.

“The University Agricultural Laboratory is a hallmark of a Fresno State education in agriculture,” says Dr. Dennis Nef, dean of the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and

Technology. “Our students can be in a classroom learning theory and, in minutes, cross the street and be in their lab where that theory becomes reality through hands-on applications. Few other campuses in the country have a similar situation.”

Fresno State is fiercely committed to maintaining and even expanding these types of unique and diverse learning experiences for students on the campus farm, Nef says.

To ensure this in the coming years, the University has a three-pronged plan in place that includes reallocating some land for higher valued crops like pistachios and almonds, partnering with Tree Fresno and others to develop a “green belt” around the perimeter of the farm that the community can enjoy, and encouraging faculty to use the farm even more intensely in their

*“Our students can be in a classroom learning theory and, in minutes, cross the street and be in their lab where that theory becomes reality through hands-on applications. Few other campuses in the country have a similar situation.”*



**DR. DENNIS NEF**  
Dean of the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology

## University Agricultural Laboratory

teaching, research and outreach to industry partners.

Given the diversity of enterprises on the farm, not all units can operate at the volume necessary to be self-sustaining. “Take the dairy, for example,” which milks about 140 head of cattle per day, Nef explains. “Given the scale that we can operate, we’re never going to be able to make money on the dairy — it requires a much larger dairy to do so — but we need to have a dairy for educational purposes. So we are reallocating some of the land to higher valued crops which can make a return that will allow the overall operation to be financially sustainable.”

The Jordan College converted 36 acres of cropland to almonds in 2020 and a similar number of acres to almonds and pistachios in 2021 — much of it thanks to the generosity of community partners like Ag Soil Works, H.M. Holloway, Gar Bennett, Wolf Farming, Landmark Irrigation, Mazzei Nursery and others who donated labor and materials to help offset costs and support student success.

“By 2025, we’ll have enough almonds and pistachios in the ground to support some of these units that are a really important educational component but, due to their size, can’t sustain themselves,” Salwasser says.

*Continued*

The Jordan College invites partnerships and private support to help advance the vineyard, dairy and quarter horse unit. The dairy will eventually be outfitted with robot milkers to help with efficiency.

Of course, the farm will also continue to provide the community favorites, including the wildly popular sweet corn that draws customers from all over the Valley to line up by the dozens outside the Gibson Farm Market before sunrise on opening day. This past year, over 34,000 ears of corn were sold on the first day it arrived at the market fresh from the University farm.

The award-winning Fresno State Winery, the first commercially bonded winery ever on a college campus, is another favorite among alumni and the community. For the first time, the Tailgate Series of red, white and rosé wines are now available in convenient cans for tailgating at a football game or enjoying at a picnic or barbecue.

Brenna Pratt, who graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in enology, established herself as a leader at the winery. Besides helping with canning, she also spent months filtering, finishing and bottling thousands of cases of wine.

"This job has taught me so much — not only about the physical and theoretical side of winemaking, but also how critical teamwork and communications is," says Pratt, who stayed and worked on campus throughout the pandemic.

There is also a new Alumni Vintners Wine Club that offers a variety of Fresno State wines as well as two featured selections from an alumni winery such as Chateau Montelena, Toca Madera and more to come.

Consumers can look forward to other new items at the Gibson Farm Market, including hot-selling strawberries and asparagus and flavored olive oils. The Jordan College olive orchard was also recently certified organic, allowing for production of organic olive oil.

## GIBSON FARM MARKET



Last year **OVER 34,000** ears of the popular sweet corn were sold on the first day of harvest

### NEW PRODUCTS

- Strawberries
- Asparagus
- Flavored olive oils

▼ Brenna Pratt is responsible for monitoring and executing the year-long process from start to finish, and although each year brings new milestones, she takes immense pride in the smaller moments and "day in, day out learning."



Read more about Pratt at [stories.fresnostate.edu](https://stories.fresnostate.edu)

Cary Edmondson

## FARM GROWN

Salwasser can attest to the value of a Fresno State agricultural education. This past May marked his 30th year on the job at Fresno State. Long before he was farm manager, he graduated from Washington Union High School in Easton and opted to work on his dad's 140 acres of raisins rather than furthering his education.

"Mom kept telling me all summer, 'just go try school a little bit, go try it,'" Salwasser recalls. "OK, I'm going to shut mom up and go take two classes at Kings River College (now Reedley College)."

Lo and behold, he liked it and, after two years, transferred to Fresno State and began working in the vineyard with raisins and wine grapes. Thirty years later, he's leading the entire 1,000-acre farm.

The gratitude is palpable in Salwasser's voice as he reflects back to how his life changed based on his mother encouraging him to pursue his education.

"I've been wanting to share that story with my mom, and I haven't yet, so this is helping me do that," Salwasser says. "I'm sure she'll remember and probably cry or laugh — I'm not sure which."

*Continued*

► **Right, top to bottom:**

*In 2011, Mark Salwasser harvests olives for processing into olive oil. Photo by Cary Edmondson.*

*In 2015, Salwasser gathers water samples from campus wells for county nitrogen test. Photo by Geoff Thurner.*

*In January 2020, Salwasser and viticulture and enology faculty Dr. Sanliang Gu discuss vine pruning techniques in the introduction to viticulture class. Photo by Geoff Thurner.*



**STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES**

For students pursuing careers in the food and agriculture sectors, the University farm is a vast resource filled with possibilities. It's where students can find themselves, discover their passions and make connections that will last a lifetime.

Take it from Moules, the student working on the sheep unit. "Want to learn how to run a business? Jordan College teaches that. Want to learn how to diagnose health issues in plants and animals? Jordan College does that. Want to get involved in metalwork and build projects? Jordan College does that. Want to have a valuable experience that ensures a successful future? Jordan College does that, too."

Moules' typical day on the job begins with a 7 a.m. feeding, followed by health checks for all 100-plus sheep. Depending on the time of year, he checks if any ewes lambed throughout the day to ensure the health of the newborns and ewes during and after delivery. Newborns are vaccinated at a few days old to ensure a strong immune system. And then he cleans pens and sweeps up.

"Working at the sheep unit has prepared me just as much to enter the agriculture teaching profession as my academic coursework has," Moules says. "It allowed me to practice everything I've learned and discover what I have yet to master."

Also valuable are the relationships students develop with industry partners. Faculty frequently arrange field trips to farms or processing plants in normal school years and invite guest speakers to visit the University farm and speak to students in their respective units.



◀ Jonathan Moules says his Fresno State education, including working on the campus sheep unit, have helped prepare him for a career as a high school agriculture teacher.

Cary Edmondson

*"Want to learn how to run a business?"*

**Jordan College teaches that.**

*Want to learn how to diagnose health issues in plants and animals?"*

**Jordan College does that.**

*Want to get involved in metalwork and build projects?"*

**Jordan College does that.**

*Want to have a valuable experience that ensures a successful future?"*

**Jordan College does that, too."**

– **JONATHAN MOULES**  
Fresno State agricultural education student

"To take that a step further, these units grow table grapes and raisins, produce ice cream, milk or wine and then students sell the products to the community, whether it's the Gibson Farm Market or elsewhere, such as fulfilling table grape orders for Whole Foods or wine orders for Save Mart," Salwasser says. "The students get a taste of meeting the business public and learn how to communicate and make a sale."

These hands-on learning experiences are essential for students who don't grow up on a farm and may not otherwise be exposed to the industry.

"The farm is essential to our mission to educate students to be highly productive, innovative and dynamic leaders in the food and agriculture sectors, in their communities and in their families," Nef says.

As he puts it: "We are growing productive tomorrows."

That may be the most valuable crop of all.



See more photos at:  
[fresnostatemagazine.com](http://fresnostatemagazine.com)

# ROLLING WITH RIVERS

Ronnie Rivers opts to return to Fresno State with a championship and school records on his mind

By Eddie Hughes

**N**early three years after Ronnie Rivers ran “into the orange to win on the blue” turf at Boise State in the 2018 Mountain West championship game, he’s back home at Bulldog Stadium, sprinting up and down hundreds of stairs after practice as his teammates watch from field level.

Rivers didn’t have to be here — he chose to be. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree in finance in May, and he is already tied for the most touchdowns in school history (44). He could have declared for the NFL Draft and, presumably, started earning a paycheck just as his father did during a six-year NFL career in the ‘90s.

Instead, thanks to the NCAA granting student-athletes an extra year of eligibility after a COVID-shortened 2020 season — Fresno State played just six games last year — Rivers returns for a bonus senior season, poised to break records for a prolific Bulldogs offense.

“I definitely feel like I was ready to take the next step,” says Rivers, who talked with his parents and several coaches before making his decision to stay, “but it was a great opportunity for me to take another year to get better, prove that I can do what it takes to play at the next level and showcase everything that I have.”

So what’s the star player doing running stairs alone after practice while his teammates watch from below? He’s leading by example — showing he’s willing to do whatever his coaches ask of him.

On this day, Fresno State coach Kalen DeBoer chose to sit Rivers out during a

full-contact drill so younger teammates could gain experience. In turn, running backs coach Lee Marks assigned him some extra conditioning after practice — because even the star players have to put in the work on championship teams.

That’s the type of team the Bulldogs are trying to build under second-year head coach DeBoer.

“We have a lot of potential to be great. I’m getting those 2018 vibes, championship vibes, from this team right now,” Rivers says. “We’re really bonding as a team, and I feel like we have a lot of weapons. It’s going to take all of us.”

DeBoer, to state it simply, is glad Rivers will be an ingredient in the recipe for the 2021 season. “Special person and player who does special things! Excited to get one more year with you Ronnie!” DeBoer tweeted on Jan. 8.

In 2018, when DeBoer was Fresno State’s offensive coordinator, he called one of

## RUSHING TDS (CAREER)

1. Ryan Mathews, 2007-09 ..... 39
2. Robbie Rouse, 2009-12 ..... 37
3. Anthony Daigle, 1991-93 ..... 35
3. **Ronnie Rivers**, 2017-pres. .... 35
5. Bryson Sumlin, 2002-05 ..... 29
5. Michael Pittman, 1993-97 ..... 29
5. Dean Philpott, 1954-57 ..... 29
8. **Ron Rivers**, 1991-93 ..... 28
9. Wendell Mathis, 2004-05 ..... 27
9. Lorenzo Neal, 1990-92 ..... 27

## TOTAL TDS (CAREER)

1. Anthony Daigle, 1991-93 ..... 44
1. **Ronnie Rivers**, 2017-pres. .... 44
3. Robbie Rouse, 2009-12 ..... 42
4. Ryan Mathews, 2007-09 ..... 41
5. Davante Adams, 2012-13 ..... 38



► “Into the orange to win on the blue!” exclaimed ESPN’s Steve Levy as Fresno State running back Ronnie Rivers scored the game-winning touchdown in overtime in the 2018 Mountain West championship game on Boise State’s storied blue turf.

Justin Tarfoya  
NCAA Photos

the most memorable plays in Bulldogs history — the read option play on third-and-goal in overtime when Rivers took the pitch and scored in the snow to seal Fresno State’s 19-16 win over Boise State for the Mountain West title.

A couple weeks later, Rivers dominated Arizona State in a Las Vegas Bowl win, rushing for 212 yards and two touchdowns. That was his sophomore season.

He’s now just five rushing touchdowns from breaking Ryan Mathews’ all-time Fresno State record of 39. He’s seventh in career all-purpose yards (4,021), just 368 yards from passing Ron Rivers, his father, for fifth place. And he’s seventh in career rushing yards (2,629), needing 845 yards to pass his dad for second all-time.

The elder Rivers starred for the Bulldogs from 1991-93 under legendary coach

Jim Sweeney, before an NFL career spent mostly with the Detroit Lions.

“Growing up, I would always tell him, even since I was a little kid, that I was going to come here and break his records,” Ronnie says. “So having a chance to do that is a big deal. I joke around with him a lot — who’s better and who’s not — but it’s good to be able to come here and keep the legacy going.”

So what’s the scouting report on Ronnie vs. Ron?

“I would definitely say my hands are better,” Ronnie says. “He says he’s a little faster than me, but I don’t believe it. I feel like he ran a little more power. He’ll lower his shoulder more than me. I’m looking to make a guy miss and go score.”

Ronnie is actually the third in the family to be a star athlete at Fresno State. His sister, Malia Rivers, was

an all-conference softball player who graduated in 2017.

That Bulldogs family legacy is important to Ronnie — but there’s one stamp he wants to leave on the program. “I want to be known as a guy that my teammates could count on, and a guy that gave it everything he had.”

And he hopes he gets to show that in front of fans this season, starting with the Bulldogs opener against UConn on Aug. 28.

“That’s something that a lot of guys on the team are hoping for,” Rivers says. “That first game, we want a packed Bulldog Stadium, and I really feel like the **Red Wave** has that in them, if it’s allowed.”



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# NOBLE WORK, NOBEL PRIZE

World Food Programme earns Nobel Peace Prize with the help of an alumnus who is passionate about feeding the hungry

By Geoff Thurner



**Top:** Dr. Steven Were Omamo (far right) helps the World Food Programme provide food and support to an annual average of 8 million people in Ethiopia—an effort that led to the organization being awarded a 2020 Nobel Peace Prize.

**Bottom:** A 1986 Fresno State agricultural business graduate, Dr. Steven Were Omamo (yellow vest) serves as the World Food Programme country director for Ethiopia, where he helps facilitate resources to address hunger, access to water and markets, natural disaster response and more.

Photos courtesy of WFP

**D**r. Steven Were Omamo was at his desk at the World Food Programme office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia this past October when he glanced at his phone and saw a message that his organization had been awarded the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize.

For Were, a 1986 Fresno State agricultural business graduate, it was a landmark moment in an already remarkable career. For most of the past 15 years, he has overseen a variety of areas for the global leader in food assistance that will help feed over 100 million people in 88 countries this year.

As the World Food Programme representative and country director for Ethiopia, he helps facilitate resources to address acute hunger or need related to emergencies, natural disasters, outbreaks and conflicts. He also leads efforts that focus on root causes of hunger, such as lack of access to water or markets.

“We were stunned, overjoyed and humbled,” Were says of the Nobel prize. “To have the world take notice of our work is so special given the communities we see in need every day. Even though conditions facing these communities can be shocking, there’s always deep resilience to be found. The human spirit is strong and can always be reaffirmed by help and generosity.”

He first learned about Fresno State as a senior at St. Mary’s High School in Nairobi, Kenya while searching an American university reference book for respected agricultural programs.

His father, William Odongo Omamo, recommended the Central Valley.

His father had seen California’s large-scale farming as a graduate agriculture student at Oregon State University in the 1960s and understood the potential

applications. One of Kenya’s most successful sugar growers, William and Were’s mother, Joyce Achola Omamo, built a diversified 3,000-acre farming operation in the fertile, highland region.

“My father used to say ‘you eat your sweat,’ and that mentality fueled him to expand his operations and achieve great things,” Were said. “Fourteen of my siblings went to university, and the other (sibling) also chose a post-secondary program.”

Were vividly remembers arriving in Fresno in the summer of 1982. An airport thermometer read 112 degrees. There to greet the 19-year-old at the terminal were Dr. John Shields, an agricultural economics faculty member, and his wife, Elizabeth Shields, a campus finance lecturer, who had kindly agreed to serve as his host family. Both were named at this year’s Top Dog Alumni Awards (next page).

World Food Programme will feed over  
**100 MILLION**  
people in  
**88 COUNTRIES**  
this year



WFP

Like many college students, Were explored multiple academic directions initially and took a variety of general education and science courses. However, he settled on agricultural business as a major as a junior after John, who died in 2018, returned from a stint in Washington D.C. with USAID, an international development and assistance organization.

“John and Liz were so generous to me,” Were said. “Besides John’s advising, they were always there to help me, whether to find my first apartment, inviting me to Thanksgiving celebrations or offering advice on graduate school. I didn’t go back to Kenya for four years, so Fresno State truly was my home. The Shields, and the large group of international students that were on campus, were like a family to me.”

International students were like family to the Shields, too, who met in Botswana, where both were teaching at the time. They arrived on the Fresno State campus in 1978, and eventually hosted other exchange students from Uganda and Botswana.

“John and Were really had a connection through ag economics,” Liz Shields says. “Were was part of a group of high-achieving students that John saw a lot of potential in, so he had them work on research papers and pre-graduate school curriculum. Were had an impressive poise and bearing even back then, and we felt like he had a lot ahead of him professionally, so John encouraged him to go as far as he could.”

That connection has endured for decades through emails, phone calls and occasional visits, no matter what continent Were was on.

Today, in the third year of Were’s current position, he oversees programs that work with a network of government agencies, suppliers, shipping and storage channels to provide food assistance and related support to an annual average of 8 million people in Ethiopia, 700,000 of whom are refugees from neighboring countries.

— Geoff Thurner is a communications specialist for the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology at Fresno State.



# Congratulations to the 2021 Top Dog Honorees

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS



**Marcello Monticelli**  
1969

## ARTHUR SAFSTROM SERVICE AWARD



**John and Elizabeth Shields**

## OUTSTANDING ALUMNI



**College of Arts and Humanities**  
**Barry Falke**  
2001



**College of Health and Human Services**  
**Lisa Casarez-Austin**  
1994, '00



**College of Science and Mathematics**  
**Rosemary Rockwell Waters**  
1966, '72



**College of Social Sciences**  
**Geri Yang-Johnson**  
2009



**Craig School of Business**  
**Deborah Adishian-Astone**  
1988, '94



**Department of Athletics**  
**Kelly Rodriques**  
1989



**Division of Research and Graduate Studies**  
**Robert G. Nelson**  
1996



**Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management**  
**Andy Souza**  
1981



**Henry Madden Library**  
**Frank J. Johnson, Sr.**  
1963



**Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology**  
**Walter Bentley**  
1969



**Kremen School of Education and Human Development**  
**Maria Maldonado**  
2000, '16



**Lyles College of Engineering**  
**Juanita Leal**  
1990, '95

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# CLASS NOTES

## 1960s

**Jerry Shinkle** (1962), a Central District School Board member in Dallas, OR, was quoted on vocational learning in a story in the Polk County Itemizer-Observer.

## 1970s

**Kurt Madden** (1976) is now CEO of Career Nexus, a local nonprofit focused on moving students into careers through internships and other work-based experience. He is the past president of the Fresno State Alumni Association board of directors.

**Mary T. McFadden** (1978) is now chief nursing officer at Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, ID.

**Paul Munter** (1974, '75) is now serving as acting chief accountant for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

**Susan O'Dwyer** (1979), retired in March 2020 after 13 years as director of corporate citizenship and community relations for Aprio, a CPA-led business advisory firm in Atlanta.

**Marilyn Shepherd** (1978, '79, '96), a 34-year educator and administrator, is now interim superintendent for Selma Unified School District.

**Gary Soto** (1974) has received the Andrew Carnegie Medal and fellowships from the California Arts Council, The Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

## 1980s

**Chris Chiames** (1981), chief communications officer for Carnival Cruise Line, was featured in a podcast by New York public relations and marketing firm Lippe Taylor. He discussed how Carnival kept in touch with its customer base during the pandemic.

**Ken Collum** (1983) is now Carson Valley district manager for the Bureau of Land Management.

**Jerry Dyer** (1984) is now mayor of Fresno after serving 18 years as Fresno police chief.

**David J. Eichhorn** (1988), a major general in the U.S. Air Force, is commander of the Operational Test and Evaluation Center at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico.

**Mark Gilkey** (1985), who spent about 30 years with the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District in Kings County, is now general manager of the newly formed Westside Water Authority.

**Blair King** (1979, '83), who served as city manager of Coronado since 2010, is now city manager of Bainbridge Island, WA.

**William McDonald** (1984) is now fire chief for the Alameda County Fire Department.

**Jim Schaad** (1987), who spent 18 years with the City of Fresno (two as assistant city manager), is now city manager of Marysville.

## 1990s

**Mark Borrecco** (1993) is now CEO of Great Western Bancorp, based in Sioux Falls, SD. With 20 years of banking experience, he served the past five years as CEO of Rabobank North America, based in Roseville.

**Tyrone Carter** (1997) is now head football coach and dean of student-athlete success at Bethany College in Lindsborg, KS.

**Cameron Frey** (1991), vice president of winemaking at Ramey Wine Cellars in Healdsburg, produced the 2017 Sonoma Coast Syrah that won wine of the week honors from The Press Democrat.

**Jennifer Greer** (1991) published her first novel, a crime thriller titled "A Desperate Place," and was a guest speaker at the Cannon Beach Public Library Northwest Authors Series in Oregon.

**Nefertitti Jackmon** (1994) is the first community displacement prevention officer in the City of Austin, Texas. She will develop and lead programming and outreach to prevent the displacement of vulnerable communities.

**Matt Lee** (1998) is now chef at Quail State, a downtown Fresno restaurant celebrating the flavors and cultures of the San Joaquin Valley and featuring Fresno's first rooftop bar on the second floor of the Pacific Southwest Building.

**Robin McGehee** (1998), an activist and communications professor at College of the Sequoias, was one of six alumni from 23 California State University campuses selected for the online project "How I Got Here." She received the Top Dog Alumna Award from the Fresno State Alumni Association in 2016 on behalf of the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. McGehee is also featured in the "Made in the CSU" series.

**Michele Meisch** (1997), client services director for JP Marketing in Fresno, launched the Rebuild Our Sierra fundraising campaign, backed by the Shaver Lake Visitors Bureau, to assist communities and families affected by the Creek Fire.

**Safiya Noble** (1995), who earned the Top Dog Distinguished Alumna Award in 2018, is collaborating with the Archewell Foundation, a nonprofit established by Prince Harry and Duchess Meghan, to establish a fund for the UCLA Center for Critical Internet Inquiry research

center, which champions racial and economic justice in the tech sector.

**Soma Norodom** (1993), a Cambodian princess who moved to the U.S. at age 5, was featured on ABC in the Bay Area. She spoke about walking away from her life as a royal, before returning to Cambodia in 2010 to fulfill her father's wish and claim her birthright as princess.

**Jane Olvera** (1990), the founder and president of JP Marketing, is now a board member for CVB Financial Corp., the holding company for Central Valley Business Bank.

**Char Perlas** (1997), is now acting president of College of the Siskiyous in Weed. She was previously the vice president for academic affairs.

**Tim Rios** (1993), a senior vice president who has been with Wells Fargo for over 23 years, transitioned to a new role as rural strategy leader.

**Marc Schneider** (1992), is now chief of the Santa Maria Police Department, where he has served since 1995.

**Kathleen Scott** (1995) is now vice president for leadership development and partnerships for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in Washington, D.C. She previously served as director of organizational excellence and administrative operations at Fresno State.

## 2000s

**Clayton Allison** (2009), a pitcher who helped the Bulldogs win the 2008 College World Series, is now with the Fresno Fire Department.

**Julianne Averill** (2007, '09), is now chief financial officer for Alveo Technologies, a health tech company.

**Anthony Cody** (2004, '20) was one of five finalists for the National Book Award for Poetry for his book "Borderland Apocrypha."

**Paige Diggs** (2008), a former basketball standout for the Bulldogs, joined the West Virginia football program as director of its 5th Quarter program, which positions student-athletes for off-the-field success in life beyond graduation.

**Derek Elrod** (2008), a certified financial planner and partner at Bridgewealth Advisory Group, was featured in a segment about 401(k) investments on KMPH Fox 26.

**Elisha Henderson** (2002) received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Things that Matter Award from the Central California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce.

**Sherrie Holzer** (2006) is now a wine chemist sensory specialist at the Paso Robles-based Baker Wine & Grape Analysis.

**Lawrence F. Lihosit** (2003), former teacher and urban planner, announced the release of his 16th book, titled "Neighbors: Oral History from Madera, California, Volume 2." Like Volume 1, this book includes interviews with a diverse group of Maderans who describe their lives. Local newspaper publisher Chuck Doud called it "the best of its kind in print."

**Ben Maddox** (2002) is now western food, agriculture and wine executive for Bank of America.

**Scott Miller** (2005) was named interim CEO of the Fresno Chamber of Commerce. He is also the CEO of Gazebo Gardens, Inc., Miller-Clark Landscape & Nursery Co. and a partner to several local businesses. Miller serves on the board of directors for the Fresno State Alumni Association.

**Angie Nguyen**, (1996, '02) was named interim CEO of the Housing Authorities of the City and County of Fresno. She was previously the chief program officer.

**Bear Pascoe** (2008), a former Bulldogs tight end who played seven seasons in the NFL, is now a rancher in Morro Bay who competes in professional rodeo.

**Jeff Pisoni** (2002), winemaker for Pisoni Estate and Fort Ross Vineyard & Winery, was featured in a story on his family of winemakers in PaperCity Magazine.

**Mark Sanchez** (2004) is now superintendent/president of Southwestern College in Chula Vista.

**Randy Duran, Ryan Munoz** (2010) and **Ryan Thissen** (2008) launched a golf tips, analysis and entertainment podcast, "Sandy Pars."

**Lindsey Wander** (2004), owner of WorldWide Tutoring in Chicago, was interviewed as a part of this series called "How I Was Able To Pivot To A New Exciting Opportunity Because Of The Pandemic."

## 2010s

**Jonathan Cadiente** (2013) is now a nurse practitioner at Adventist Health Physicians Network Hanford.

**Guy Debbas** and **Max Debbas** (2010) have launched a national line of chocolate called A'cappella Chocolate.

**Ervin Hernandez** (2010), is now head football coach at Sweetwater High School in National City.

**Katelyn Jones** (2010), a pest control adviser and certified crop adviser, is now a technical sales manager for OHP.

**James D. Martinez** (2010) is now a trustee for the Fresno County Board of Education.

**Christopher McComb** (2012), assistant professor of engineering design at the Penn State School of Engineering Design, Technology and Professional Programs, received the James L. Henderson, Jr. Memorial Professorship.

**Elisa Navarro** (2018) is now a multimedia journalist for ABC 30 in Fresno.

**Lucca Petrucci** (2011) celebrated the second anniversary of his inspirational podcast about life's journey, "Living In Your Passion Place." To date, he has done 28 podcasts with listeners from 47 countries and over 12,000 downloads.

**Shawn Plummer** (2011), a former standout linebacker for the Bulldogs' football team, is now a detective for the Fresno County Sheriff's Office. He spent three weeks on the search and rescue team helping to evacuate people during the Creek Fire.

**Wilma Quan** (2013) is now Fowler's city manager. She previously served as Fresno's city manager.

 **Karmjot Grewal Randhawa** (2005-2009; 2009-2011) joined UC ANR in September 2019 as the UC Cooperative Extension director for Fresno, Madera, Kings and Tulare counties. As County Director, Karmjot Randhawa is responsible for the coordination and overall operations of Cooperative Extension programs in these Central Valley counties.

**Erica Stancliff** (2010) is the head winemaker at Pfendler Vineyards.

**Tian Tian** (2015) is now a viticulture adviser in Kern County.

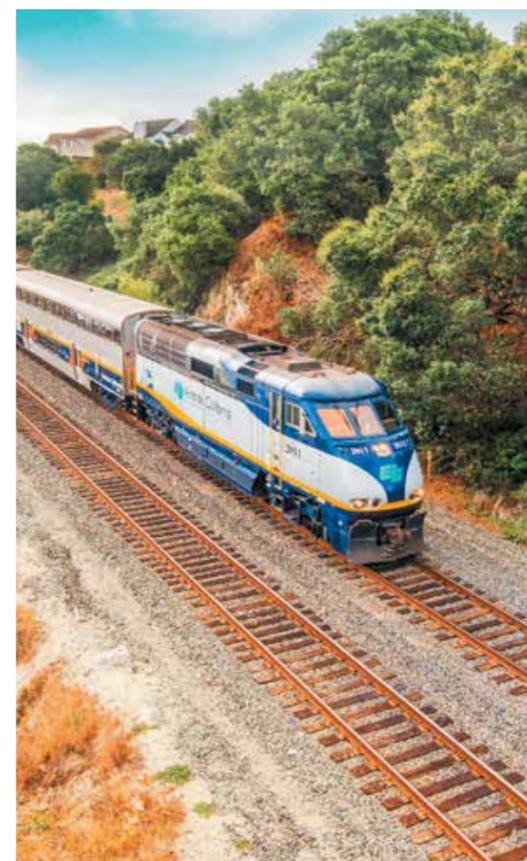
 **Mark Torres** (2008, '11) is now senior director and head of West coast operations for DSPolitical in San Francisco. He is enrolled in the executive program at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice.

**Kali (Conlon) Weaver** (2017), a former standout on the swim and dive team, had her photographs of the firefall at Yosemite National Park featured on CNN.



**Blake Zante** (2018) is now press secretary for California State Senator Andreas Borgeas. He formerly served as ASI student-body president, and is an alumnus of the Smittcamp Family Honors College. He serves on the board of directors for the Fresno State Alumni Association.

**Jennifer Zenovich** (2010, '13) is a lecturer in the Department of Communication at CSU East Bay.



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## The Pitch of a Lifetime

Matt Walsh and his business partner, Dax Holt, made an appearance on ABC's "Shark Tank," Season 12 Episode 9. Walsh, an alumnus of the Craig School of Business at Fresno State, had the experience of a lifetime when his company, TrophySmack, a customizable fantasy sports trophy company, made a deal with well-known entrepreneur and investor, Mark Cuban.

"They opened the doors, no music playing like on the show, and it was surreal," Walsh says. "Once we did our pitch and the questions started to flow in, I was in my element. All of the practice and repetition paid off. We spent 90 minutes with the sharks discussing our venture and ended up making a deal with Mark Cuban."

Cuban agreed to a \$600,000 investment for 17% equity in TrophySmack, which is based in Southern California.

Visit [fresnostate.edu/magazine](https://fresnostate.edu/magazine) for an exclusive Q&A with Walsh, who gives behind-the-scenes details of what it was like to quarantine with his business partner for eight days before their pitch on "Shark Tank."

# There's Nothing Like It In All Of California!

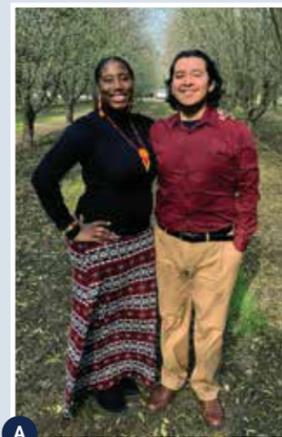


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## BULLDOG WED

- A** **Jasmine Atkins** (2018) married Nelson Sanchez on Jan. 1 in Merced.
- B** **Jessica Chadbourne** (2019) married **Mark Matoian** (2018) on Oct. 10.
- C** **Selena Farnesi** (2012) married Rob Nash on Oct. 10.
- D** **Bryan Felix** (2014) married Ken Casparias on Feb. 14 in Auburn.
- E** **Angie Iribe** (2015, '17) married José Magaña on Nov. 14 in Madera.
- F** **Morgan (McGuire) Ryan** (2018) married **Nick Ryan** (2017) on Nov. 14.
- G** **John Savage** (2016) married Breanna Tamayo on Oct. 10 in Fresno.
- H** **Megan Siefert** married **Patrick Hutcheson** Aug. 8 in Carmel.
- I** **Kali (Conlon) Weaver** (2017) married Sean Weaver on Sept. 28 in Walnut Creek.

## BULLDOG BORN

- A** **Blair Smittcamp Martin** and Nathan Martin welcomed their child, Theodore (Teddy) Sherwood Martin, on Feb. 15.
- B** **Erika Castanon** (2017, '20) and Raul Rodriguez welcomed their child, Luke Tomas Rodriguez, on March 25.



## SHARE YOUR NEWS

Submit an alumni Class Note and high-resolution photo to:

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# 'For thee, our hopes and memories'

**Paul S. Accornero Sr.**,  
Oct. 21, Fresno.

**Tom Aney** (1950).

**Mary Apper**, Jan. 14,  
Fresno.

**Harold E. Avakian** (1971),  
Oct. 28, Fresno.

**Valerie J. Badvelian**  
(1965), Nov. 9, Fresno.

**Thomas F. Benzler** (1968,  
'69), Oct. 9, Fresno.

**Helge Kristian Bergan**  
(1969), Nov. 3, Rancho  
Palos Verdes.

**Jack L. Bolt** (1949),  
May 23, Madera.

**Charlotte Brown** (1943),  
Nov. 22, Santa Barbara.

**Maxine M. Brum** (1952),  
Oct. 15, Fresno.

**Weldon "Bud" A. Brumley**,  
April 4, Visalia.

**John B. Burns**, Sept. 16,  
Fresno.

**Richard G. Busch**, Oct. 11,  
Reedley.

**Santiago A. Campbell Jr.**  
(1957), Oct. 21, Sanger.

**John Carpenter**, Sep. 3,  
New Bern, NC.

**Theresa Carter**, Oct. 25,  
Clarksville, TN.

**Wayne Carter** (1959),  
Feb. 16.

**John Irvin Castor** (1951,  
'61), Jan. 19, Livermore.

**Carol Champion** (1970),  
Oct. 5, Fresno.

**Robert Charlton**, Dec. 7,  
Lovelady, TX.

**Barbara A. Christal** (1982),  
Jan. 15.

**Roy Christopher** (1957),  
Feb. 2.

**Kenneth G. Crabtree**  
(1970), Oct. 21, Fresno.

**Laurence Dami**, Sept. 11.

**Pamela Blackmun  
Degough-Wheeler**,  
Jan. 4, Livermore.

**Patti Dickinson** (1982),  
Jan. 26, Santa Maria.

**Susan L. Dowell** (1965),  
Sept. 4, Fresno.

**April D. Doyle**, Sept. 12,  
Visalia.

**Sally Jean DuBois** (1952),  
Oct. 25, West Sacramento.

**Stacy Dunningcliff** (1969, '70,  
'90), Dec. 7, Fresno.

**Jeffrey S. Ehmke** (1976,  
'68), Jan. 2, Fresno.

**David Gary Ennis** (1970),  
April 2, Ridgecrest.

**Gilbert Erickson** (1962),  
Dec. 14, Hickman.

**James I. Finley** (1974),  
Oct. 4, Carmichael.

**Vena Pauline Flint**, Nov. 25.

**Lorraine M. Garcia**,  
Oct. 16, Fresno.

**Sylvia B. Gomes**, Nov. 27,  
Fresno.

**Laura C. Gonzales** (1976),  
Jan. 28, Ventura County.

**Nora Janet Griffiths**,  
Dec. 3, Oakhurst.

**Jacqueline F. Hagglund**  
(1953), Dec. 26, Klamath  
Falls, OR.

**Judith A. Hammitt** (1939),  
Nov. 28, Sonoma, CA.

**Michael R. Harmon** (1944),  
Dec. 23, Redlands.

**Mari A. Helvey** (1944),  
Sept. 15, Fresno.

**James Helzer** (1960),  
Dec. 2, Modesto.

**David Alan Hendsch**  
(1935, '57)

**James J. Herman** (1974),  
Dec. 15, Fresno.

**Robert "Bobby" Herrera**,  
Jan. 31.

**Ramona Holland** (1962),  
Jan. 31, Mission Viejo.

**La Verne Horg** (1950),  
Oct. 16, Fresno.

**Marco J. Jacobo** (1999),  
Dec. 8, Fresno.

**Justin E. Jansen** (2005),  
Nov. 5, Fresno.

**Charles H. Johns**,  
April 25, Lompoc.

**Ron Johnson**, Jan. 26,  
Murfreesboro, TN.

**Martin H. Krikorian** (1952,  
'63), Nov. 28, Fresno.

**Don Landers** (1973),  
Oct. 12, Visalia.

**Edward Lane** (1958),  
Sept. 6, Sanger.

**Harley Edward Lewis Jr.**,  
Jan. 12, Cottage Grove, OR.

**Tom Lucas** (1977),  
Dec. 17, Clovis.

**Emma Ortigoza Mallorca**,  
Dec. 4, French Creek, WV.

**Scott Manda** (1987),  
Sept. 17, Bakersfield.

**Marilynn "Mimi" Mann**  
(1964), Jan. 19, Fresno.

**Darlene E. Mascarenas**  
(1970), Dec. 2, Fresno.

**James W. Mattes** (1991),  
July 17, O'Neals.

**Lucy Mirigian**, Feb. 12,  
San Francisco.

**Frank J. Muratore** (1957),  
Dec. 24, Merced.

**Wendy L. Murray**, Dec. 26.

**William C. Nielsen** (1959),  
Oct. 1, Exeter.

**Jerry O'Banion** (1969),  
Feb. 14, Merced.

**Gertrude O'Connor**,  
Jan. 26, Hanford.

**Robert O'Dell** (1957),  
Nov. 11, Clovis.

**Floyd Chalres Olsen**  
(1965), Dec. 30, Visalia.

**John Warren Paulsen**,  
Jan. 20, Prescott, AZ.

**Gene M. Phillips**,  
Sept. 9, Mariposa.

**John E. Plett** (1972),  
Jan. 10, Turlock.

**Quinton Morris Proctor**  
(1967), Dec. 30, Corcoran.

**Jack W. Putnam** (1962),  
Oct. 4, Fresno.

**Judith K. Riley**,  
Aug. 31, Redding.

**Leslie G. Robison** (1964),  
Aug. 12, Bakersfield.

**Celeste Rogers**,  
Feb. 1, Bridgeport.

**Doran Ross** (1971),  
Sept. 16, Los Angeles.

**Kathleen Ann Sarco**,  
Dec. 13, Hanford.

**Tony Munoz Sanchez**  
(1982), July 30, Hanford.

**Dennis Schanz** (1971),  
Dec. 23, Iona, ID.

**James R. Scroggin** (1969,  
'70), Sept. 29, Fresno.

**Mabelle Selland** (1972),  
Jan. 1, Fresno.

**Dolores J. Senna** (1971),  
Nov. 27, Fresno.

**Ricardo "Ricky" Simpson**,  
Jan. 26.

**Miguel A. Sosa Ojeda**,  
Sept. 8, Fresno.

**Steven Stearns** (2007),  
Oct. 12, Fresno.

**Geenia A. Stobbe** (1987),  
Sept. 15, Fresno.

**Paul Dan Summers** (1962),  
Jan. 5, Bakersfield.

**Buddy L. Tackett**,  
Dec. 26, Fitchburg, MA.

**Jeff Taylor** (1985),  
Dec. 29, Salinas.

**Alexander L. Teixeira**  
(1959), Dec. 5, Fresno.

**Robert B. Van Galder**  
(1959, '61), Jan. 11, Fresno.

**Peter D. Vasilovich**,  
Oct. 24.

**Cindy E. Veach** (1975),  
Aug. 30, Medford, OR.

**Donald James Veninga**  
(1962), Sept. 25,  
Wheatland.

**Clifford G. Wetzel** (1966),  
Oct. 19, Clovis.

**Don K. Wilkinson** (1971),  
March 31, Payette, ID.

**LaVera Williams**,  
Dec., Fresno.

**Muriel Lish Williams**,  
Dec. 31, Fresno.

**Capt. Robert E. Wolfe**  
(1955), Jan. 2, Emmett, ID.

**Zoyer Zendel** (2017, '21),  
Dec. 26, Fresno.

**Rita Zerlang**, Oct. 24,  
Fresno.

**Ernest "Ernie" Zuick**,  
March 25, Sacramento.

## FACULTY/STAFF

**Joyce Almeta Brandon**,  
Oct. 10, Fresno.

**Richard Dale Keyes Sr.**,  
Sept. 27, Fresno.

**Thomas Ray McCord**,  
Feb. 24, Fairview, TN.

**Paul V. Meer**, Sept. 26,  
Fresno.

**Mary L. Mott**, Dec. 26,  
Fresno.

## FRIENDS

**Ann Christine Chappell**,  
Sept. 17, Fresno.

**David Smith Dungan**,  
Nov. 25.

**Louis Herwaldt**,  
Dec. 23, Fresno.

**Elmer "Bud" Richter**,  
Jan. 28, Fresno.

**Bob Smittcamp** (1963),  
Feb. 25, Fresno.



## Dear Reader,

**We have always been a bold community of alumni and friends who takes care of each other.**

Reassuring students that some of their most basic needs can be met during this challenging time continues to be a high priority for Fresno State. Many of our students are experiencing hardships they never imagined, and our campus efforts are hyper-focused on ensuring pathways to success.

**Today, I am asking those of you who can to boldly donate to the Student Success Fund.**

Your gift will help strengthen student success by supporting initiatives such as food and hygiene items, hotspots to access virtual classes and campus resources (like health and counseling services) from home, and funding for unanticipated student emergencies.

**A generous donation from you will offer relief and peace of mind, enabling Fresno State students to stay focused on their academic achievements.**

This is an unparalleled moment for the greater Bulldog community to rally in support of our future leaders.

Join me to make a tangible impact on thousands of students' lives and demonstrate how Bulldogs boldly band together to care for one another.

**P.S.** Donating today will provide essential support to the Fresno State Student Success Fund, helping to remove barriers for students to achieve a college degree. **Thank you!**

Sincerely,

**Paula Castadio**  
Vice President for  
University Advancement

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