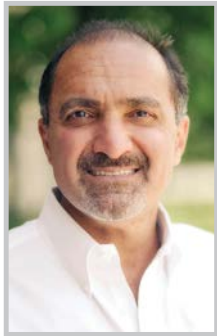




THE TOP DOG

# DARIUS ASSEMI

## A MODEL OF COMMUNITY BUILDING



Fresno-area developer, farmer and community leader **Darius Assemi** (1983) is the 2013 Top Dog Distinguished Alumnus Award winner – the highest honor presented at the Fresno State Alumni Association’s Top Dog Alumni Awards Gala each fall.

Assemi says he wants to improve the well-being of people in our community by promoting positive change, and he puts his money where his mission is.

Assemi and his family have been instrumental in residential, agricultural and commercial development since the 1970s after emigrating from Iran. The Assems are helping re-imagine and re-invigorate downtown Fresno and have set the wheels in motion to build a pharmacy college and other for-profit health care colleges on a campus near Fresno.

The Assemi family has made its mark on the community through its annual Home of Hope drawings that have raised millions benefitting Fresno State and other organizations. The Assemi-established Fresno Islamic Cultural Center is a model of interfaith understanding.

He has also been part of the American Overseas Relief effort that helped open a hospital in war-ravaged Afghanistan.

**Omel Nieves** (1983) **LIFE**, a lawyer in Southern California, and **Dennis R. Woods** (1969) **LIFE**, a banker in Fresno, are the 2013 co-winners of the Arthur Safstrom Service Award, honoring their volunteer leadership in the Campaign for Fresno State.

The efforts of Nieves and Woods, along with other volunteers and Advancement Division staff, helped the campaign take in more than \$214 million – exceeding the \$200 million goal to help sustain Fresno State’s mission now and in the future.

### Recognized as Outstanding Alumni at the 2013 Top Dog Alumni Awards Gala:

- **Ruben V. Castillo** (1994) (Kremen School of Education and Human Development), senior director for the Migrant Education Program, Region IV, Fresno County Office of Education.
- **Enrique E. Figueroa** (1973) (Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology) a former U.S. Agricultural Marketing Service administrator, now an animal science professor at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee and director of its Roberto Hernández Center.
- **Carole Goldsmith** (1991, '05) (Graduate Studies) president of West Hills College in Coalinga and a member of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.
- **Kirk D. Grimes** (1980) (Lyles College of Engineering) group president for supply chain at Fluor Corp., a professional services and project management corporation.
- **Nancy Hollingsworth** (1982) (College of Health and Human Services) the president and CEO of St. Agnes Medical Center.
- **H. Anthony Marquez** (1985) (College of Arts and Humanities) Los Angeles bureau chief of the Associated Press news organization.
- **Henry R. Perea** (1974) (College of Social Sciences) a longtime elected official who chairs the Fresno County Board of Supervisors.
- **Carissa Phelps** (2002) (Student Affairs) nominated for her work as an author and speaker focusing national attention on child trafficking.
- **Tim Rios** (1993) (Craig School of Business) an executive with Wells Fargo bank and member of the James Irvine Foundation board of directors.
- **Ken Schmidt** (1964) (College of Science and Mathematics) a hydrogeologist and recognized expert on water resources in the Sierras.
- **Sandra “Sandy” (Speers) Stubblefield** (Henry Madden Library) a longtime university benefactor.
- **Kevin Sweeney** (1987) **LIFE** (Athletics) a record-setting Bulldogs quarterback, National Football League player, now a Wells Fargo bank senior vice president.

An important part of any Top Dog Alumni Awards Gala is the \$125,000 in Alumni Association scholarships to students based on academic accomplishment, financial need and community service. Fresno State leads the 23-campus alumni associations in the California State University in student scholarship giving.