

UCSD Alumni Association to Recognize Outstanding Alumni and Faculty at Annual Awards for Excellence on June 5

Signature event occurs during second annual Alumni Weekend, June 3-6

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Malinda Danziger

The University of California, San Diego - celebrating its 50th anniversary this fall - has produced an enviable group of outstanding alumni, including those who will be honored June 5 for the annual Awards for Excellence, part of the UCSD Alumni Association's second annual Alumni Weekend.

The Awards for Excellence, honoring outstanding alumni and faculty who exemplify the commitment to leadership, advocacy, philanthropy and service to UC San Diego, will recognize the following alumni honorees:

Outstanding Alumna, Bun-Ching Lam, Ph.D. '81

The music of Bun-Ching Lam inspires audiences around the globe. Her orchestral compositions have been performed by the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, and the National Youth Orchestra of Holland, among others. In October 2009, Heidelberg University, Germany, presented a retrospective of her chamber music. She's the recipient of a Guggenheim fellowship, National Endowment of the Arts funding, and countless international prizes and commissions. Lam received a Ph.D. in music from UC San Diego.

Professional Achievement, LaVerne Ragster, Ph.D. '80

As a conservationist, research scientist and education administrator, LaVerne Ragster has not only transformed the Caribbean region, but has earned national and worldwide respect from leading climate change scientists and environmental leaders. The immediate past president of the University of the Virgin Islands, Ragster has pioneered sustainable development, and her work with Caribbean universities and non-governmental organizations has intensified interest in natural resource management. She received a Ph.D. in biology from UC San Diego.

Distinguished Service, Thom Sherman, '88

An executive vice president at The CW network, Thom Sherman started his career in drama like many others before him - as a student actor. Following graduation, he moved to Los Angeles and struggled as an actor before accepting a job in production. Since then, he has been a major creative force at two television networks. An early organizer of the UCSD Alumni Association's Entertainment Alliance, he is passionate about helping young people find jobs and mentors in the entertainment industry. Sherman received a bachelor of arts degree in theatre from UC San Diego's Warren College.

The event will also recognize:

Distinguished Teaching, Sam Popkin

A professor of political science at UC San Diego since 1975, Sam Popkin is a nationally recognized political analyst, public opinion expert and prolific author. An advisor to five presidential campaigns, his experiences have ranged from polling and strategy for the Clinton campaign, to playing Ronald Reagan during debate rehearsals for President Carter. A beloved mentor and faculty advisor, he has inspired legions of students and is one of the most frequently requested speakers for the Alumni Association's regional lecture series.

Proceeds from the Awards for Excellence, which is open to the public, will benefit Invent the Future: *the UC San Diego Student Support Campaign*. For award recipient and event details, please visit alumni.ucsd.edu/awards or call (858) 534-3900. Information about Alumni Weekend, June 3-6, can be accessed at alumni.ucsd.edu/alumniweekend.

The following sponsors have helped to underwrite this year's Awards for Excellence:

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