

# PACIFIC



FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY | MAY 2024 | VOL. 37, NO. 1

## ELEVATE

Stories of how an FPU education lifts the quality of life for graduates, families and communities.



president's message

## FRESNO PACIFIC ELEVATES STUDENTS

**“Our alumni are indeed rising to the challenges in their communities...”**

— André Stephens, Ph.D.

In this spring's edition of *Pacific* magazine, we celebrate the theme “Elevated,” highlighting the transformative impact Fresno Pacific University has had on individuals' lives. This month's commencement at Selland Arena in downtown Fresno celebrated the culmination of another group of students' educational journeys. This ceremony is a highlight for me, knowing that our students have engaged with faculty and staff in meaningful and distinctly Christian ways that not only prepare them for their chosen vocation, but have made them better people.

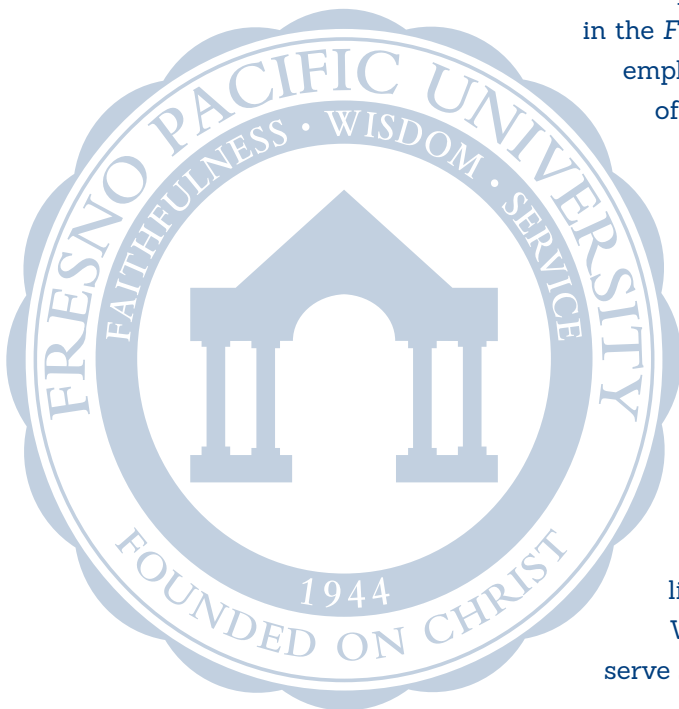
At Fresno Pacific, our educational philosophy, rooted in the *Fresno Pacific Idea*, emphasizes a journey of profound learning and spiritual growth through engagement with Christ and the world. We are dedicated to equipping students to elevate themselves and everyone whose lives they touch.

While we primarily serve students from

the Central Valley of California, a region marked by unique challenges including lower college-going rates and reduced family incomes, we take pride in serving a diverse student body. With many of our students being first-generation and our status as a proud Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), we embrace our role as an institution committed to supporting and elevating the underserved populations in higher education.

Despite these challenges, Fresno Pacific continues to excel nationally, as recognized by *The Wall Street Journal's* recent ranking placing us among the top colleges in the nation. Our commitment to social and economic mobility, evidenced by our high graduation rates and impactful education, underscores our mission to empower/elevate every student to fulfill their God-given potential.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers. I remain hopeful as our community seeks to live into the core Anabaptist values: Jesus at the center of our faith; Community at the center of our lives; Reconciliation at the center of our work. 🏠



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at [news.fresno.edu](https://news.fresno.edu)

- ▲ FPU signs transfer pact with West Hills Firebaugh
- ▲ Sunbirds break ground on new field of dreams

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Fresno Pacific University develops students for leadership and service through excellence in Christian higher education.



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*Pacific* is sent to alumni and friends of Fresno Pacific University.

## CARLOS HUERTA WINS \$50,000 2024 LOCKE INNOVATIVE LEADER AWARD

**Carlos Huerta (MBA '19, BA '13)**, executive director of the Center for Community Transformation, is one of five winners nationally of the 2024 Locke Innovative Leader Awards, sponsored by Wesleyan Impact Partners. The CCT offers programs in social entrepreneurship, financial literacy, ministry leadership training and soft-skills job training.

“Huerta embodies loving your neighbor as yourself and is dedicated to teaching financial literacy and entrepreneurship courses through a theological lens in Spanish,” according to the January 23, 2024, announcement.

Each award honoree receives a \$50,000 stipend and becomes part of a learning community to nurture their spirit and mission. To date, Wesleyan Impact Partners has invested nearly \$1 million in Locke Innovative Leaders.

“These five spiritual innovators are creating new ways to transform lives and neighborhoods through asset-based community development, creative partnerships, social entrepreneurship, and capacity building,” the award announcement said. The group describes itself as “a national nonprofit dedicated to investing in growing the church’s impact and nourishing the communities it serves.”

“The Locke Innovative Leader Award was created to honor and embolden innovators across the Wesleyan ecosystem who create new practices and ministries that help more people experience God’s love,” said Rev. Lisa Greenwood, president and CEO of Wesleyan Impact Partners. “This year’s honorees deeply embody that innovative spirit, demonstrating what it means to engage

our neighborhoods and change systems at the grassroots level.”

### About Wesleyan Impact Partners

For more than 55 years, Austin-based Wesleyan Impact Partners has made loans to empower churches and lift up courageous spiritual entrepreneurs.



PHOTO: Carlos Huerta, right, at Reedley LaunchPad Pitch Fest, an activity for young entrepreneurs sponsored by FPU’s Center for Community Transformation. At left is CCT Associate Director Bryan Feil. (FPU photo by Carolina Mueller)

# FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY WELCOMES BRAD BARKER AS CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

An accomplished leader with deep knowledge of higher education and the local area has been appointed chief information officer at Fresno Pacific University.

Brad Barker brings over 40 years of expertise in management, programming and implementation to his cabinet-level position. He has spent the last three decades at Fresno State, starting as a programmer/database administrator and most recently serving as senior director of cloud technologies, infrastructure and technology support. Here Barker oversaw several technology groups relating to academic applications, systems administration and end-user support. He is currently interested in identifying and empowering new leaders and re-equipping current employees with updated technology skills.

“I’m excited to welcome Brad Barker as FPU’s new chief information officer in continued partnership with CampusWorks,” said FPU President André Stephens, Ph.D. “His collaborative style and depth of project experience will be an asset to FPU.”

Barker began work December 1, 2023. He and wife Jamie have between them six adult

children and three grandchildren. He loves travel, fishing, hiking, backpacking and spending time with family at their cabin in the Sierra Nevada. He serves on the boards of Phi Kappa Phi and University of California Master Gardeners. Barker has a B.S. in Business Administration, Quantitative Analysis, from Fresno State.



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## CORRECTION

In the article “Tiny Seeds, Bountiful Harvest” on page 36 of the November 2023 issue of *Pacific* (Vol. 36, No 2), a former faculty member was misidentified. “Albert Pauls” should have been “David Pauls.” We apologize for this error.



**READ MORE**

Go to [fpu.edu/news](https://fpu.edu/news) or scan the QR code.

## COLLEGE RANKINGS NAME FPU A LEADER IN STUDENT VALUE, SOCIAL MOBILITY

**Continued success across major college rankings for 2023-2024 highlights FPU's value.**

*The Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Monthly*, *U.S. News & World Report* and *Money* all ranked FPU highly, particularly among best-values and schools that help graduates succeed, both primary goals of the university. "We are pleased the rankings recognize that Fresno Pacific University delivers the transformational benefits of a Christian university education to our students across all program levels," said Brad Camilleri, vice president of enrollment management. "Whether traditional undergraduates right out of high school, working adults finishing their bachelor's degree or professionals increasing their impact with a master's degree, our students improve their own lives and those of their families and communities."

### THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

*The Wall Street Journal* places FPU at number 78 in the United States on its

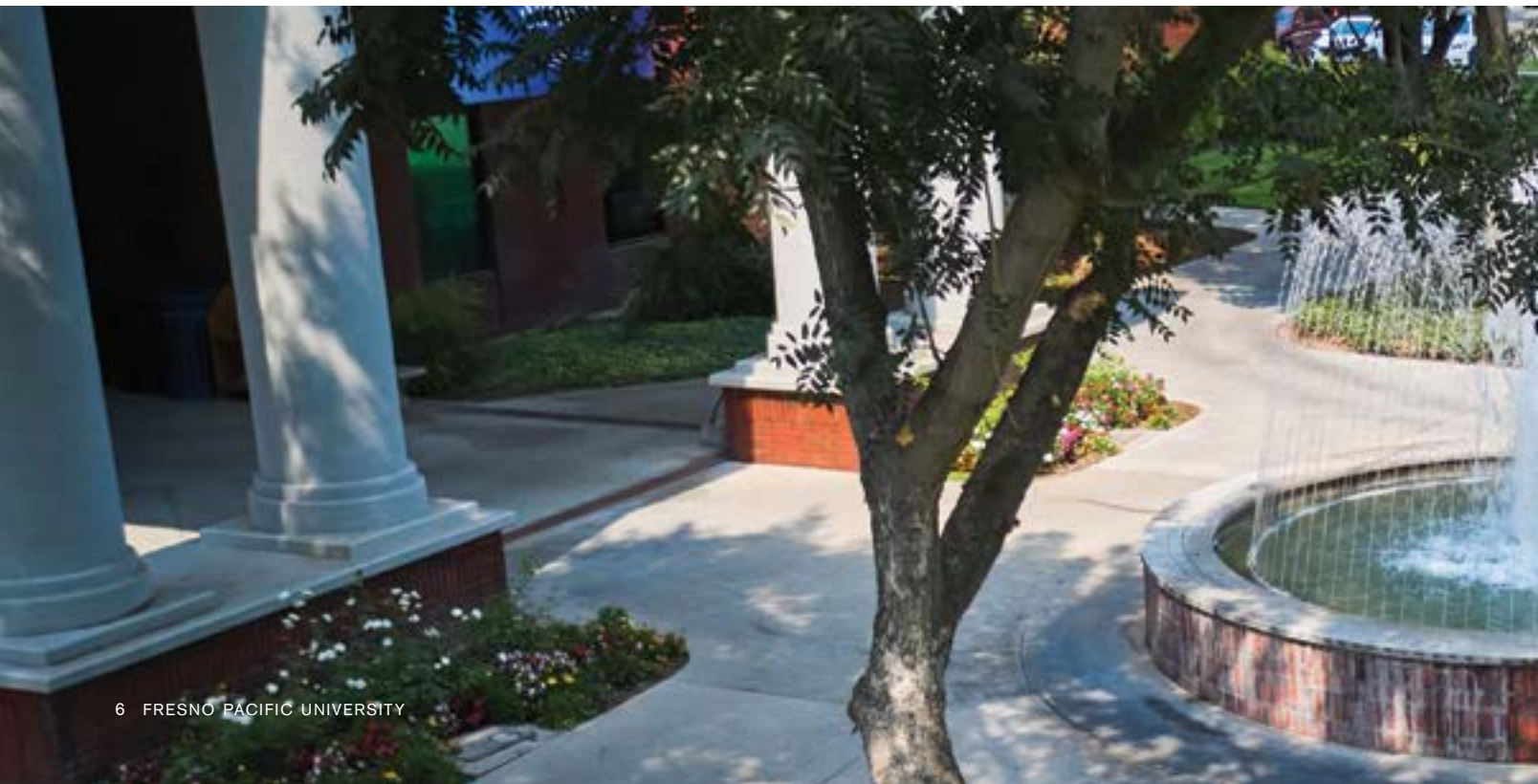
**list of 400 colleges and universities.** WSJ puts student outcomes ahead of institutional wealth and reputation, instead highlighting "the value a school provides to its students," according to its website. *The Journal* breaks its overall score into four subcategories:

- **Social Mobility—FPU number 4**

Colleges that accept a high proportion of students from lower-income families, maintain high graduation rates and minimize attendance costs.

- **Student Experience—FPU number 42**

According to surveys of students and graduates.



- **Salary Impact—FPU number 128**

Schools are listed by their affect on graduates' salaries related to the actual cost of attending.

## WASHINGTON MONTHLY

**Washington Monthly ranks FPU number 48 nationally in its Master's University category and number 18 in its Western category as a Best Bang for the Buck school.** WM ranks 600 colleges and universities according to their contribution to the public good in social mobility, research and community and national service. The Best Bang for the Buck list ranks schools that "help non-wealthy students obtain marketable degrees at affordable prices," according to its website.

## U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

**U.S. News & World Report places FPU number 41 overall in the Master's Universities—West category.** Among these schools FPU is fourth in social mobility and number 12 among best values.

FPU has frequently been in the top five in social mobility since *U.S. News* created the category.

## MONEY

**Money gave FPU 4.5 stars out of a possible five.** Money rates 736 of more than 2,400 four-year public and private nonprofit colleges in the country by quality, affordability and student outcomes in three general categories:

- **Quality of education**—including graduation rates and instructor access
- **Affordability**—including net price of a degree and ability to repay debt
- **Outcomes**—including earnings 10 years after college entry



### READ MORE

Go to [fpu.edu/rankings](https://fpu.edu/rankings) or scan the QR code.



## RETIREES SERVED THE SEMINARY

### Mark Baker, Ph.D. (1999)

*J.B. Toews Chair  
Professor of Mission and Theology*

Mark Baker's 25 years teaching seminary have been years of gratitude—his. "I just stood out on my office porch this morning and thanked God for the privilege," he told a visitor.

While Baker was "totally uninterested in theology" when he graduated with his bachelor's from Wheaton College, teaching social studies in Honduras taught him something. "Many people I encountered saw God as a distant, angry figure," he says. "I wanted to be involved in shaping how Bible teachers and pastors teach about God."

Honduras looms large in Baker's life. His first stint was four years, returning after three years with InterVarsity in upstate New York and getting married. After earning his doctorate and becoming a Mennonite, Baker served again under Eastern Mennonite Missions until he came to the seminary.

While Baker admits his first attraction to Honduras was its mountains, its people drew him back. "God developed a calling in me," he says.

Since Baker and wife Lynn are natives of the Northeast, he came to what was then Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary assuming he would soon seek a job "back East." He stayed because of his seminary colleagues. "I appreciated working in a context where faculty, staff and administration respected and trusted each other," he says.



### Lynn Jost, Ph.D. (2006)

*Professor of Old Testament/Preaching  
Seminary President  
Director, Center for Anabaptist Studies*

A call to ministry led Lynn Jost to preaching, teaching and administration.


Growing up the son of a Mennonite Brethren pastor in Kansas and South Dakota, ministry seemed a natural fit. "I sensed a call to pastor in the MB church," he says.

After eight years pastoring Hesston (KS) MB Church, Jost taught Bible and Christian ministry at Tabor College, his alma mater, for 13 years. He came to the then-Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in 2006 as academic dean and professor of Old Testament, but a solely classroom career was not to be.

Tapped as acting seminary president in 2008, Jost received a full appointment in 2009. The next year, barely having settled into his new office on the second floor of the Seminary Building, he led the merger with Fresno Pacific University.

Though the campuses are contiguous, and the seminary began in 1955 as part of the university—then Pacific Bible Institute—there were still complex issues around joining the organizations. "I have great satisfaction at being able to give leadership to the merger," Jost says.

So 2013's return to teaching may have seemed a reward. "Heading to the classroom is like going on vacation," Jost says.

Jost and wife Donna are active at Willow Avenue Church, Fresno. 







# CONGRATULATIONS OUTSTANDING GRADUATES 2023-2024

## School of Graduate and Professional Studies

**Adam Hendrix**

M.A. in Ministry, Leadership and Culture

**Bobbi Evans**

M.A. in School Psychology

**Adrienne Barraza**

M.S. in Nursing

**Jasmine Rodriguez**

B.A. in Social Work

**Daniel Devore**

B.A. in Business Administration – Marketing

**Elizabeth Naranjo**

B.S. in Kinesiology – Pre-Physical Therapy/  
Occupational Therapy

## School of Arts and Sciences

**Paola Guadalupe Gonzalez Mendes**

B.S. in Applied Mathematics

**Ceceli Guzman Vega**

B.S. in Nursing

**Elizabeth Munoz**

B.A. in Liberal Studies – English

**Mark Smith**

B.S. in Biology – Human Health

**Natalie Kisling**

B.A. in Liberal Studies – Math





# Rooted

## in Resilience

*By Amy D. Fienen*

**Veronica Mendez Garcia** (BA '22) almost didn't go to college. Once she started, she wondered if she should continue, and there were moments when dropping out seemed like the logical alternative. She spent hours sobbing in her bedroom questioning her choices and wondering if the future could possibly hold anything better than what she'd always known. Could a life beyond picking fruit actually exist for her?

An exemplary student, Mendez Garcia was elected FPU's student body president for the 2021-22 school year, yet she couldn't help but think that none of it would matter. As an undocumented immigrant, she feared she wouldn't be able to work anywhere but in the fields regardless of her academic accomplishments.

Anchored by the newfound faith in Jesus she discovered at FPU, Mendez Garcia pressed on despite numerous uncertainties. She remained steadfast on the path the Lord set before her when she made her first campus visit as a high school senior. "I knew the minute I visited FPU that it's where I wanted to be," she says. "It felt like home."

Mendez Garcia had already known several different homes. She was born in Oaxaca, Mexico, where she lived until her family immigrated to Florida when she was 4. Her family moved to Madera, where there is a large Oaxacan community, when she was 9. She was only 12 when she started working alongside her mom in the fields, picking blueberries in the spring and grapes in the fall. Her five older brothers also worked in the fields, and she was the only one of her siblings who continued attending school.

## A PLACE TO BELONG

When Mendez Garcia graduated from Madera High School in 2018, she became her family's first high school graduate. She was accepted to several state universities, but their size overwhelmed her. The fact that FPU is a Christian university meant nothing to her at the time, but she was drawn to the sense of community and acceptance she found. Sixty percent of traditional undergraduates at FPU are first-generation students and 59% of students across all programs are Hispanic, allowing Mendez Garcia to feel that she belonged. "FPU helped me break out of my shell," she says.

"It was my safe place where I could be myself."

Financial aid from both the government and the university made it possible for Mendez Garcia to attend. This year, *The Wall Street Journal* gave FPU the highest social mobility score of Christian schools nationwide. The social mobility score is awarded to universities that enhance their graduates' lives by accepting a high proportion of students from low-income families, maintaining high graduation rates and minimizing attendance costs. "I think Latinos and other nationalities are well-represented at FPU," Mendez Garcia says.



Mendez Garcia eventually landed on social work as a major when she felt God calling her to a career in which she could help people. While double majoring in social work and history and minoring in sociology, Mendez Garcia commuted to campus from Madera and continued working in the fields with her mom as her school schedule allowed. She wasn't documented to work anywhere else, and the thought of leaving her mom's side stirred feelings of guilt.

While she excelled academically, Mendez Garcia admits to feeling spiritually lost during her early days at FPU. She was raised Roman Catholic

and worried the beliefs she'd grown up with wouldn't be accepted by her professors and peers. Despite her misgivings, she kept her mind open. With the love and guidance of her professors, she learned

to hold space in her heart for both her childhood religion and a burgeoning personal faith in Jesus Christ, to whom she fully committed her life while at FPU. "I have a better understanding of the Roman Catholic church and the other branches of Christianity," she says. "I'm still spiritually growing, and I can go back and talk to my professors when I have doubts and fears."

### **LEANING INTO THE FUTURE**

When she graduated from FPU in 2022, in addition to being student body president, Mendez Garcia was the recipient of numerous academic awards. She ran for president to show other students in her position what was possible for those willing to work hard. "I wanted to represent

**“Going to FPU helped me find my purpose”**

*– Veronica Mendez Garcia*

students as a Hispanic, first-generation female student, and I thought other students would feel comfortable with me,” she says.

She went on to earn her master’s degree in social work from California Baptist University, graduating the following year. During her internship at Focus Forward, where she worked as a mentor for incarcerated youth in Fresno County, she discovered a heart for serving that population. “When I started my master’s degree I had no idea that what I want to do is therapy,” she says.

Now an associate clinical social worker at A Mind Above in Clovis, Mendez Garcia provides counseling to a diverse clientele. She’s working toward the 3,000 hours needed to become a licensed clinical social worker and hopes to eventually return to working with incarcerated teens or those in the foster care system. “I feel like I’m called to that population,” she says. “That’s where my heart is.”


Part of her heart, anyway. The rest remains with the mother and big brothers who supported her educational journey. She continues living with her family in Madera, and dreams of buying them a

home. She hopes to inspire her nieces and nephews to follow in her footsteps and attend college.

Having attained the status to live and work in the U.S., Mendez Garcia will be eligible to apply for residency this year and can apply for citizenship in three years.

Mendez Garcia says that had she not taken the chance on college despite feeling the odds stacked against her, she would likely still be working in the fields. She credits FPU with changing her life, as it has those of many other students from minority and low-income families. “I’m very thankful,” Mendez Garcia

says. “I’m already helping support my family in ways I wouldn’t be able to if I was still working in the fields.”

Outside the professional and financial stability her degree will help provide, Mendez Garcia is grateful for the personal and spiritual growth she experienced at FPU, crediting her time here with helping her develop into the woman of God she is today. “Going to FPU helped me find my purpose and I don’t know if that would have happened at another school,” she says. “I don’t think I would have had such a spiritual journey anyplace else.” 

**“I’m already helping support my family in ways I wouldn’t be able to if I was still working in the fields.”**  
– Veronica Mendez Garcia



# JOIN US FOR HOMECOMING '24!



October 3-5, 2024  
Fresno Pacific University Main Campus

Experience the excitement as we connect meaningfully with our alumni and community!

Enjoy:

- ▶ Alumni Hub and reunions
- ▶ Food and family fun
- ▶ Fall choral concert
- ▶ ArtHop
- ▶ Athletic team reunions and home volleyball game

We look forward to seeing you there!

[FPU.EDU / HOMECOMING](https://www.fpu.edu/homecoming)



# An Examined Life

Journals made John Selph  
a pastor with a mission

*By Cyndee Fontana-Ott*



As a two-time seminary student, **John Selph (SEM '98)** was required to keep a journal.

What began as an assignment flourished into a lifelong practice, as John filled dozens of books through a decade of missionary service in South America and decades of local, national and international work with Youth For Christ.

Over the years John had read and reflected upon those reams of pages. “You can tell by your handwriting how you were doing emotionally—if you were feeling good or feeling angry or upset or something. What it tells me is more of what I call monuments to prayer—where God pulled me through something,” he says.

For John, now 75, the journals are woven into his 55 years in ministry. He was a student at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary—now Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary—in the 1980s as preparation for missionary work and again in the 1990s, when he completed his master’s degree in missions and evangelism.

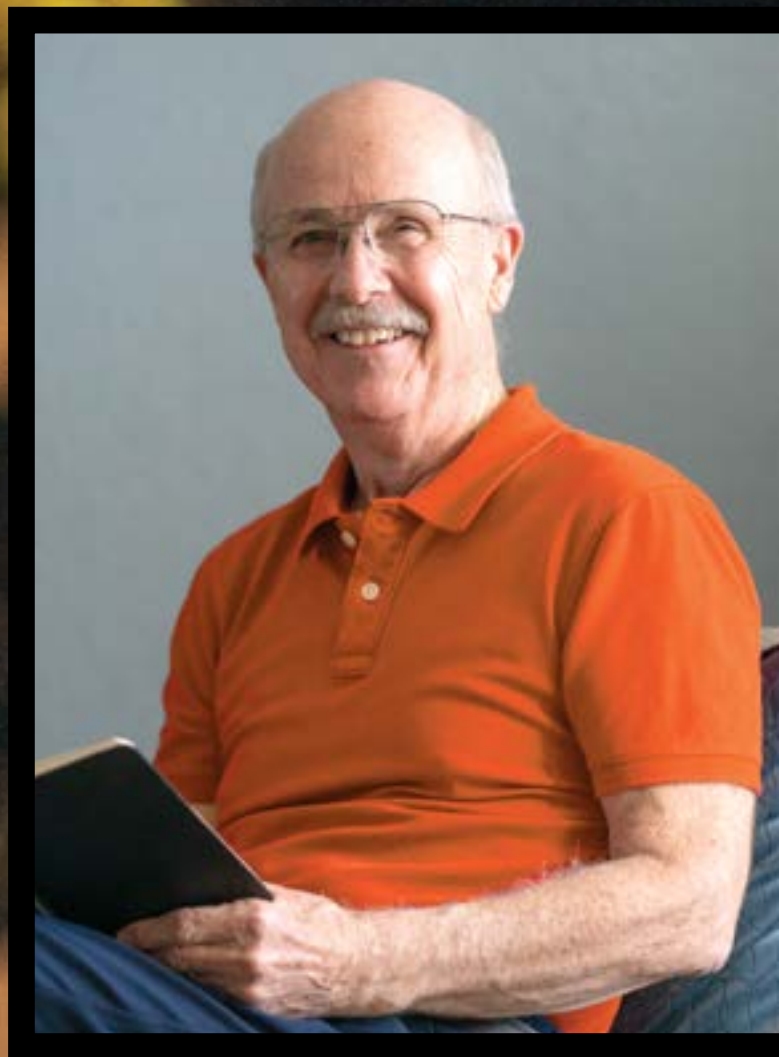
“It clearly helped me theologically—and that carries through,” he says of the seminary influence. “It helped reinforce spiritual formation, and having the privilege of doing it in two shifts...exposed me to some different professors and different classes.”

Today, John lives with his wife, Karen, in Clovis with their daughter Julie, grandsons Caleb and Noah and rescue dog Bailey. In retirement—make that semi-retirement for John—the

couple has settled for the third time in the Fresno area after traveling internationally and also living in places like San Jose; Montevideo, Uruguay; and Chicago.

## **A MINISTRY BEGINS**

Growing up in the San Fernando Valley, John met Karen as a teenager in a church group. He was introduced to Youth For Christ (YFC) in high school, and the call to ministry started at age 17.



He later earned a bachelor's degree in religion from Azusa Pacific University, where he also served in student government as first vice president and as a volunteer and part-time staff member with YFC.

Work with the group took the couple to San Jose through a mission call from Lincoln Glen MB Church and denominational leadership. Preparation for that service first brought the Selphs to Fresno.

"God spoke to us clearly," says John, who also taught adult Sunday school at Lincoln Glen. "So at 34, we made a major career shift. We left San Jose, where we had a beautiful home and two kids, and came to Fresno and lived in an apartment and went to seminary for a year and a half."

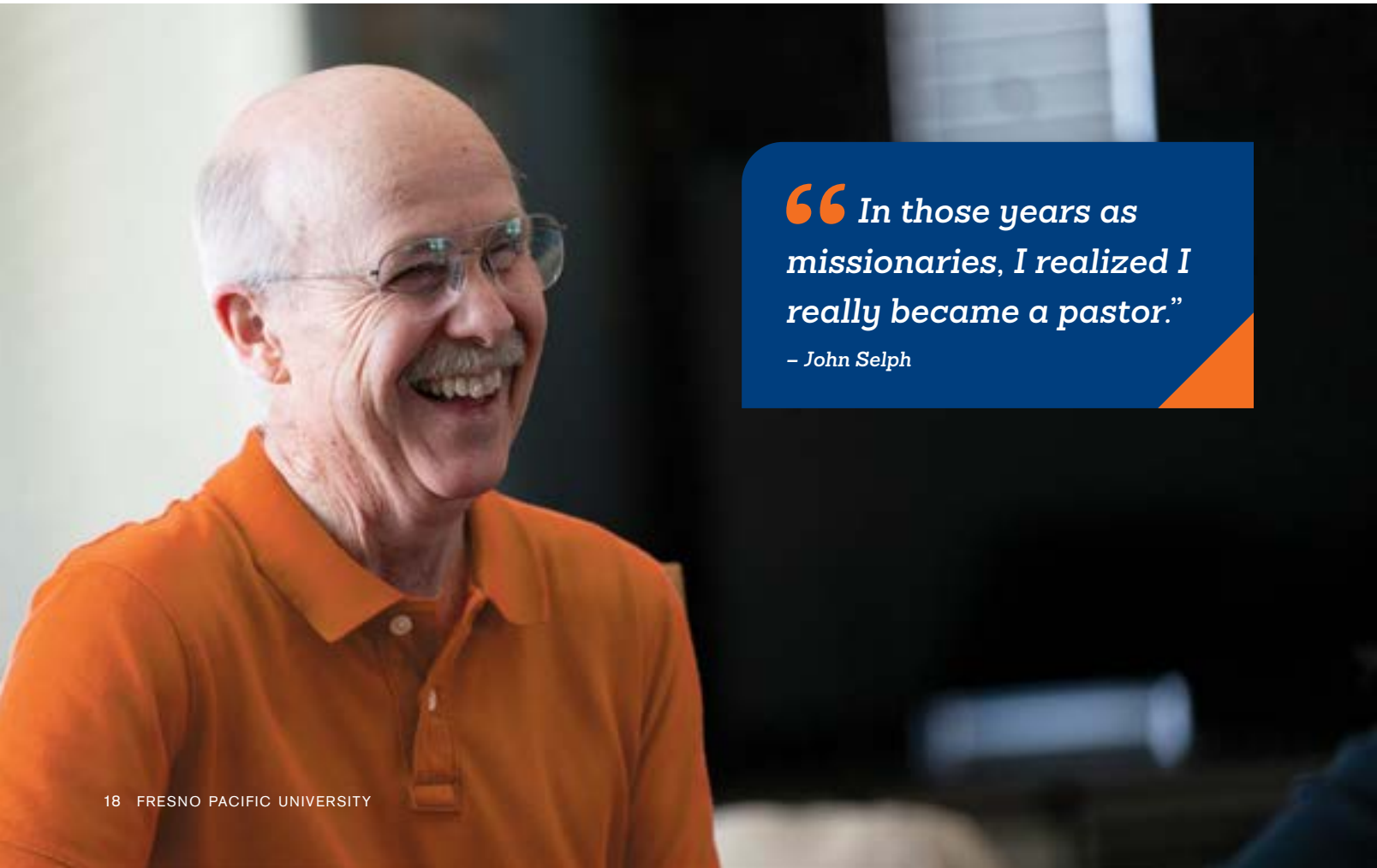
The couple and their two elementary-aged girls (son Kyle would be born in Uruguay), lived across the street from the main Fresno Pacific campus and he worked as a youth pastor at North Fresno Church.

The seminary experience "helped solidify my commitment to an Anabaptist biblical theology," John says. Courses in church ministry supplemented his lengthy experience as a youth pastor.

"It really put me in a good position," he says. "In those years as missionaries, I realized I really became a pastor."

While only John was formally enrolled at the seminary, Karen audited several classes. "I wanted that experience of having lectures that meant something and textbooks that I actually enjoyed reading," says Karen, who didn't enjoy her time at a public university. "I think it was just maturing in my Christian education. That part was really good for me."

She even excelled beyond her husband in a course on the history of Israel, they agree. She also says the seminary helped the transition from her nursing career and as a stay-at-home mom to missionary service.



*“In those years as missionaries, I realized I really became a pastor.”*

*– John Selph*



John in Uruguay

“Being able to be in that environment I think was preparation,” she says. “To go into that work where the situation of your heart and mind... You get up every day thinking you need to be in a certain place spiritually to even walk out your door.”

After John completed missionary training, the Selphs spent a year in Costa Rica to learn Spanish. In September 1985, they arrived in Montevideo, Uruguay, to work with the Mennonite Brethren conference there. In part, John ran the conference youth ministry and taught youth ministry in Bible school.

The family always was prepared to spend 10 years there in service. “My prayer was, ‘God, if we are going to do this—learn a language and go that far—can we do it for a decade,’” John says. “And that is exactly what he gave us.”

### **ANOTHER LANDING IN FRESNO**

When the family returned to the United States, they again landed in Fresno. Daughters **Julie (BA '99)** and **Janine (TC '97, BA '96) Jenista** enrolled at Fresno Pacific and John connected again with Youth For Christ. He jokes that YFC is like the mafia: “once you get in, you never get out.”

He also returned to the seminary to wrap up his master's degree. "I like finishing things. I also knew that in the future, if the Lord were to call me to a pastoral role, the seminary degree would be important," he says.

Not long after completing that degree, John was recruited to work with YFC in Chicago. The Selphs lived there for 20 years, where John first served as the organization's juvenile justice ministry director and was also a member of the DuPage County Juvenile Court Youth Commission and an auxiliary chaplain with the Cook County Sheriff's Department.


The Selphs also began serving as a pastoral couple for Latin American Youth For Christ staff and missionaries, and ultimately John transitioned to member care director for Youth For Christ International. But as COVID pandemic shut down travel and confined interactions to a computer screen, the Selphs put their retirement plan—and a return to the Central Valley—into action.

John officially retired December 31, 2023—for the New Year holiday. On January 2, 2024, he began providing ministry staff care at the Fresno/Madera Youth For Christ. "It's part-time and I absolutely love it," he says.

Fresno/Madera YFC Executive Director **Jameson White (MA '14, BA '07)**, a fellow seminary alum, is grateful for the helping hand and expertise. White says Fresno Pacific is another strong connection.

"Any time you meet someone from FPU...you see the world in the same ways and share a formation history," he says. "Those are all great things."

At home, John still keeps a journal—a habit picked up during his time at the seminary. His collection was so vast that, when moving out of the couple's Chicago home, he decided to toss out the first 15 to 20 years.

But there's still a large box full of journals tucked under the bed along with a few other books stashed here and there. "It's just become a part of my devotional life," he says. 



## The Eighth Alumni and Friends Tour!

# Greece and Scandinavia

## Greece

September 21-October 7, 2024

- ▶ The Acropolis and Parthenon
- ▶ Delphi – home of the Oracle
- ▶ The Island of Corfu
- ▶ Olympia and the Temple of Zeus
- ▶ Paul's travels in Athens and Corinth
- ▶ The amphitheater and ruins at Epidaurus
- ▶ Optional extension to the Islands of Santorini



## Scandinavia

June 2025

- ▶ Historic Bergen
- ▶ Norway's fjords and Fram Museum
- ▶ Copenhagen's Nyhavn district
- ▶ Sites of writers including Andersen and Kierkegaard
- ▶ Stockholm's Old Town
- ▶ Finnish cooking class and Tempeliahaukio Church visit
- ▶ Optional excursions to Elsinore, Uppsala, Drottningholm and Tallinn in Estonia
- ▶ Possible Iceland extension!

More at [fpu.edu/alumnitour](https://fpu.edu/alumnitour)



**KIMBERLI CARROLL**  
(BA '98)

By Christopher L. Scott



**“I know that I would not be where I am today had I not attended Fresno Pacific”**

*-Kimberli Carroll*

Kimberli Carroll's dad often told her that food was a good business to be in because people are always going to eat. For Carroll that has turned into a 23-year career at Ruiz Foods, where she now serves as president and chief executive officer.

In her role Carroll says, “Like any CEO, my job is to communicate the vision for the business, ensure we hire and keep great people on our team with the right mindset and deliver optimal results for the owners and shareholders.”

Carroll is passionate about what she does and how she does it. “I love working with people. I love interacting with customers, industry peers and being a part of a community

# Ruiz CEO

## Puts People First

of professionals,” she says. “Even more, I love working with a team to develop a goal, cultivate a plan and work cross functionally to achieve it. I love working to solve problems, innovate new solutions and I really love helping to develop people to reach their full potential and gain the confidence that they can do and be anything or anyone they choose.”

But the food industry has its challenges, and those challenges drove Carroll to seek a B.A. in Organizational Development in the university's bachelor's degree completion program. “I chose

Fresno Pacific because of the reputation for a quality education and the flexibility of the course curriculum that allowed me to continue to work full time,” she says.

That degree was vital to helping her career in the food industry. She describes her experience at FPU this way, “The atmosphere was welcoming but fostered debate and challenged my critical thinking skills. It was not about teaching me what I need to know, but how to think, be creative and go beyond what is known.” That creative thinking has been important while working at Ruiz Foods.

She developed a creative way to use shipper data to create analytics for the Food Services Business Unit. This use of shipper data—which Carroll considers her greatest career accomplishment—has not only set Ruiz Foods



apart from its competitors but also has been a game changer for the entire industry.

This is an example of how Carroll sees herself as more than a boss or leader. “I endeavor to foster an environment where my team can truly be themselves,” she says. “I want to know them and cultivate an atmosphere of trust. I endeavor to be a coach, an advocate and advisor and sometimes I rely on them to provide that same support for me.” While she feels she is in the place God wants her to be, Carroll still has work to do.

As an advocate and advisor Carroll wants to help others. When asked to give advice to other students or recent graduates entering the field she says, “It is also really important that you believe that what you are doing has purpose for your company, your customers and your consumers.”

As Carroll looks at her career, she is reminded that FPU has been instrumental in her ability to make that difference in the lives of others. “I know that I would not be where I am today had I not attended Fresno Pacific,” she says. “Completing my undergraduate degree offered me

opportunities that I would not have been afforded otherwise and the whole experience helped to better prepare me for the challenges I would face professionally. I also really enjoyed my cohort of classmates, some of whom I have remained friends with to this day.” 🏠



# IN TOUCH WITH ALUMNI

## » GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Deserai Lee (BA '23)** has been promoted to Child Development Center director at a U.S. Naval installation.



**Janelle Solis (BA '19)** was the subject of a January 3, 2024, profile on ABC 30 (KFSN FRESNO TV) for her earring business JES CLAY.

**Ralph Anthony Alcazar Jr. (FS '21)** graduated from the California Highway Patrol Academy on November 3, 2023, and was assigned to Bakersfield.

**Ariana Avila (BA '21)** was appointed director of development for the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Athletics Department in September 2023. The former women's soccer player had been a development associate at Stanford University Athletics.



**Ngina Boswell (BA '21)** has started her role as a Tier 2 Intervention Specialist for Fresno Unified School District.



**Aaron Chambers (BA '18)** president & principal consultant of Impossible Services Group, Inc., is celebrating the second year of his Madera consulting firm and in October 2023 received the Certified Insolvency & Restructuring Advisor (CIRA) designation.

The CIRA program recognizes those who possess a high degree of specialized, professional, financial and operational expertise in the area of business bankruptcy and insolvency. Aaron serves on the board of directors for the California Tax Education Council and the Workforce Development Board of Madera County, as well as the executive committee for the Southern California Chapter of the Alliance of Merger & Acquisition Advisors.

**Bao Yang (MA '18)** became a licensed marriage and family therapist. The road to licensure includes graduating with a master's, completing 3,000 hours of clinical experience and passing two exams. She is on staff at On-Site Counseling Center on the main FPU campus.



## » GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONTINUED)

Former Sunbird standout **Carl Weigley (BA '17)**, now women's assistant swimming coach at UC Davis, will help coach Team USA at the World University Games, working under former FPU coach Peter Richardson, now associate head coach at USC.

**T.C. Fairfield (MA '16)** is pitching coach for the Kamloops (BC) NorthPaws in the West Coast League, a collegiate summer baseball league comprising teams from Washington, Oregon and British Columbia and Alberta, Canada. Teams operate similarly to professional minor-league teams, but only current college-eligible players participate.

**Taylor Poisall (BA '16)** and **Davy Vartanian (BA '16)** were among this year's recipients of the 40 Under 40 recognition, celebrating the Valley's top young professionals, honored by Business Street Media Group.

**Alyssa (Burnett, BA '15) Cross** was appointed alumni and donor relations manager at Bakersfield College Foundation.

**Matthew (BA '13)** and **Klara (BA '14) Gilbert** were appointed coach and assistant coach, respectively, of the swimming and diving teams at Midland University, Fremont, NB.

**Virgel Hammonds (MA '10)** has been appointed CEO of Aurora Institute, an education innovation and support organization.

**Yammilette "Yami" Rodríguez (MA '06)** was honored with the 2023 Ohtlí Award from the Consulate of México in Fresno on December 8, 2023. The Ohtlí—Nahuatl for "road" or "path"—is awarded to individuals who devote their work to the advancement of the Mexican community. Yami, now senior director of the Central Valley Youth

Leadership Institute, has been a district representative for Assemblymember Sarah Reyes and director of admissions at FPU. She is also a board member at the Vesper Society, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality advisory board and the Central Valley Latino Leaders Academy.

**Aaron Bryan (TC '04, BA '03)** was among the winners of the 38th Annual Horizon Awards, sponsored by the Fresno Arts Council for achievements and contributions to Fresno County's cultural arts community. Aaron, arts education department director for the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, was presented with the Ella Odorfer Educator Award on October 26, 2023, during the Inaugural State of the Arts Celebration.

**Donny Butkus (BA '99)** is a senior pastor in Fair Oaks, CA. He is married to **Roxanna (Sadler, BA '99) Butkus**.



**Bruce J. Evans (BA '99)**, was elected vice-president/president-elect of the Music Library Association. He began his service in March, and will serve one year as president-elect, two years as president and one year as past president. Bruce has been involved in MLA since

1997, and has been librarian at Baylor University in Waco, TX since 2003.

**Donna (Penner, BA '82) Clay** retired September 7, 2023, after 39 years with the Fresno Police Department. She says, "Finally holidays will be able to be celebrated on that day, instead of a week or even a month after the fact."

## » GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONTINUED)

**Joan Schoettler (MA '91)** published her debut middle-grade novel in August 2023. *The Honey Jar: An Armenian's Escape to Freedom* tells the story of a family fleeing the Armenian genocide. The novel, written in verse, was inspired by Kalem Kazarian's family story. A former faculty member at California State University Fresno, Joan has written three other books.

**Rodger (BA '79)** and **Debra "JB" (BA '79) Brayfindley** are retired and live in Williams, CA. Rod retired from pastoral ministry and now does guest speaking and teaches karate. JB retired from full-time teaching and is now a freelance photojournalist and works part-time as an adult ESL teacher. During the pandemic, JB created over 100 children's worship videos with more than 50 United Methodist churches throughout Northern California,

creating a series of puppet skits included in the worship featuring "Mort, The Snail." She received the Bishop Warner H. Brown Leadership Award for Excellence in Innovation and Collaboration at the California-Nevada Annual Conference in Sacramento, CA, in 2021.

**Michael Adam (BA '78)** has written his debut novel, *Murder in the Choir Loft*, a Christian murder mystery published by WestBow Press. The book blends suspense with small-town church life, choir politics and a touch of humor and grace. One review notes, "If you enjoy reading faith-filled suspense fiction that grips you from the first minute, then you will love this inspirational, fast-paced Christian mystery! *Murder in the Choir Loft* is a darker, American version of the Father Brown books and television series."

## » WEDDINGS



**Kelsey Nicole Lowrey (BA '20)** and **Samuel Christopher Delk (BA '19)** married on October 8, 2023, after meeting at FPU. Samuel is completing his Ph.D. in Molecular Toxicology at UCLA, while Kelsey is pursuing her Ph.D. in Mathematics at UCSB.



**Emily Klein (BA '15)** married Lt. Matthew Phillips on August 30, 2023, in San Francisco. The couple reside in Hanford, CA, with their piebald dachshund, Daisy May. Emily is an early childhood education consultant with Kings County Office of Education and Matthew is an FA-18 fighter pilot in the U.S. Navy.

## » BIRTHS

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**Mark (MA '22) and Kimberlie (Raulino, MA '22, TC '19, BA '17) Foster** welcomed Josiah Job on January 7, 2024. The couple met teaching mathematics at Sanger High School and completed their master's degrees together at FPU.



Gloria Hope Strube was born December 6, 2023, to **Karl (BA '06) and Heidi Strube**. She joins siblings Norah and William.



Aleiya Jefferson was born to **Kristy Sims-Jefferson (MA '23, BA '20) and Bernard Jefferson** on March 4, 2023. The parents call her a "miracle baby" because doctors believed Kristy would not be able to conceive due to her diagnosis with Hodgkin's lymphoma, which is now in remission. She joins sisters Kei'Arie, A'Rhya and Maleah. Bernard Jefferson serves as associate pastor at Saint Rest Baptist Church, Fresno.

## » DEATHS

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**Laurel L. Clark (BA '06)**, 76, of Aurora and Downers Grove, IL, died August 2, 2023. She was born February 5, 1947, in Waterloo, IA, attending high school in Riverside, CA. She enjoyed crafting and loved to enter homemade garments in the county fair. Survivors include husband Daniel; sons Mathew and Mark; siblings Richard, Becky and Michael (Lesli); one granddaughter; and one great-granddaughter.

**Daniel McDowell (BA '95)**, died August 15, 2023, after a brief illness. Daniel was an international student from Ireland and member of the Sunbird Men's Soccer Team from 1991-1995. He is survived by wife Chrissy and three children.

## » DEATHS (CONTINUED)

**Rev. Vyacheslav Tsvirinko (SEM '95)**, 74, Fresno, CA, died August 27, 2023. A native of Belarus, Vyacheslav (known affectionately as "VT") spent many years serving the bachelor's degree completion program in positions such as director of the Visalia Center (now campus). Survivors include wife Nina; sons David (Inna), **Michael (BA '01)** (Irina), **Benjamin (MA '12, BA '03)**, Daniel (Olga), Andrei and **John (BA '11) (Korina BA '12)**; sisters Zhanneta Tkachuk and Natalya Zhakevich; and 11 grandchildren.

**Diana Graziani (MA '90)**, 75, died October 6, 2023. A native of Elyria, OH, she spent most of her education career in California at the Exeter Union School District, retiring in 2011 as deputy superintendent. She was named Association of California School Administrators (ASCA) Pupil Personnel Administrator of the Year in 2011. Survivors include sons Dan (Maggie) and Tony (Liz); daughter Alissa Custer (John); sisters Marjorie, Mary, Rosemary and Jan; brother Jim (Kim); and five grandchildren.

**Carol Denise Vayda (MA '95)**, 73, of Madera, died August 10, 2023, in Clovis. A native of Bayonne, NJ, Carol's career as an educator spanned the country from New Jersey and New York to Yosemite High School in Oakhurst and 30 years at Madera and Madera South high schools. She was also a Spanish instructor at Madera Community College. Carol is survived by daughter Rebecca Anne Evans-Nadella (Gopi Juhani), brother David Thomas, one grandson and one step-grandson.

**Elvera (Langemann) Schmidt (SEM '00, BA '70)**, 83, died April 3, 2023, in Reedley. She was born July 25,

1939, in Coaldale, Alberta, Canada, marrying **Henry J. Schmidt (SEM '72, BA '70)**, Ph.D., on August 27, 1960. While supporting Henry's work during their 50-year marriage—including his 10 years as president and 15 years as a faculty member of the then-Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary—Elvera was a leader in her own right as a kindergarten teacher at Fresno's Lane Elementary School for over 20 years and active in Fig Garden Bible Church, North Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church and Palm Village Retirement Community. Survivors include daughters **Debra Schmidt Brady (BA '85) (Martin BA '83)**; Laura Schmidt Roberts (Mark); Ph.D., professor of biblical and theological studies; and five grandchildren.

**Luetta Reimer (BA '66)**, 79, died October 28, 2023. Born in Hillsboro, KS, she earned a B.A. from Fresno Pacific College and an M.A. in English from Purdue University, then taught English at FPU from 1968-2000. In 1969, she married Wilbert Reimer, math faculty. At Butler Church, she taught Sunday School and served on the church council. Survivors include husband Wil, daughter **Elaine Reimer-Pare (TC '98)** (Marc), son **Paul (MA '08)** (Candi), sister **Irene Pauls (PBI '54)**, brothers Gene and **Arly Feil (PBI '53)** and five grandchildren. Donations may be made to the Wilbert and Luetta Reimer Endowed Scholarship at FPU.

**Robert "Bob" Wayne Krause (MA '95)**, 83, died January 12, 2024. The Reedley native served in the U.S. Coast Guard and attended Bakersfield College, Pacific Western University and National University. Beginning his career as an accountant, he became a math teacher. He



### STAY IN TOUCH

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**ADVISE** & mentor students [fpu.edu/Sunbirds-Can](http://fpu.edu/Sunbirds-Can)

## » DEATHS (CONTINUED)

was a member of Congregational Bible Church, Shafter. Survivors include wife Marcia, daughter Kristian, son Michael (Emily) and two grandchildren.

**Edwin Lee Nachtigall, 95**, died October 25, 2023. A Nebraska native, Ed coached basketball at Fresno Pacific in the late 1950s and early 60s and was inducted as an honorary member of the FPU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2014. He was also a teacher, coach and administrator in Fresno schools for 30 years and a well-known car broker. He belonged to Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church. Survivors include wife Bonnie Lou; sons **Kelly (FS '75) (Kathy FS '75)**, **Terry (BA '78)** (Jennifer) and **Gerald (FS '78)** (Sheryl); daughter Marcia Frank (Bill); eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

**Jane (Lautt) Dick, 83**, died October 22, 2023. Born in Harvey, ND, she graduated from Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS, where she met husband **Mervin Dick (SEM '96)**. Later in life she graduated from Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO, and was ordained. The couple moved to Fresno, where Mervin attended Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary and both served as dorm parents at Fresno Pacific. In 1979, the family returned to Fresno, where Mervin pastored and Jane was seminary financial aid coordinator. Survivors include son Kevin (Judy), daughter Kora (Les) Flaming, six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.



## WHAT'S GOING ON?

It's so easy to let your classmates and friends know what's happening in your life—job, marriage, children, new address and awards. **visit** [fpu.edu/alumniupdate](http://fpu.edu/alumniupdate)



## NEW MEMBERS OF THE FLOCK

Recently had a baby? Let us know—we'd love to send you one of our cute little Future Sunbird baby t-shirts, like Rowyn Henry is wearing, pictured here with dad **Brennen (BA '13)**.

**JOIN** the LinkedIn  
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LIFE



# Thankful for the journey so far, **VALDEZ** hopes for something even **BIGGER**

By Marina Gaytan

Big league baseball has been Andrew Valdez’s dream since possibly his first day of tee-ball. The 23-year-old Fresno Pacific University senior recalls that, at age 6, his mom told him he was going to be a Yankee.

“I remember the first day,” the kinesiology major says, “the coach was like, ‘who wants to play catcher?’ And I was, like, ‘I do.’ I sat behind the tee, and I had no purpose being there. I was in all the catcher’s gear, and it was just a funny moment.”

From tee-ball to community college all-star to Sunbirds outfielder. In the spring of 2023, Valdez slugged a single-season .669, second highest in FPU history, while leading the PacWest with a .414 conference batting average.

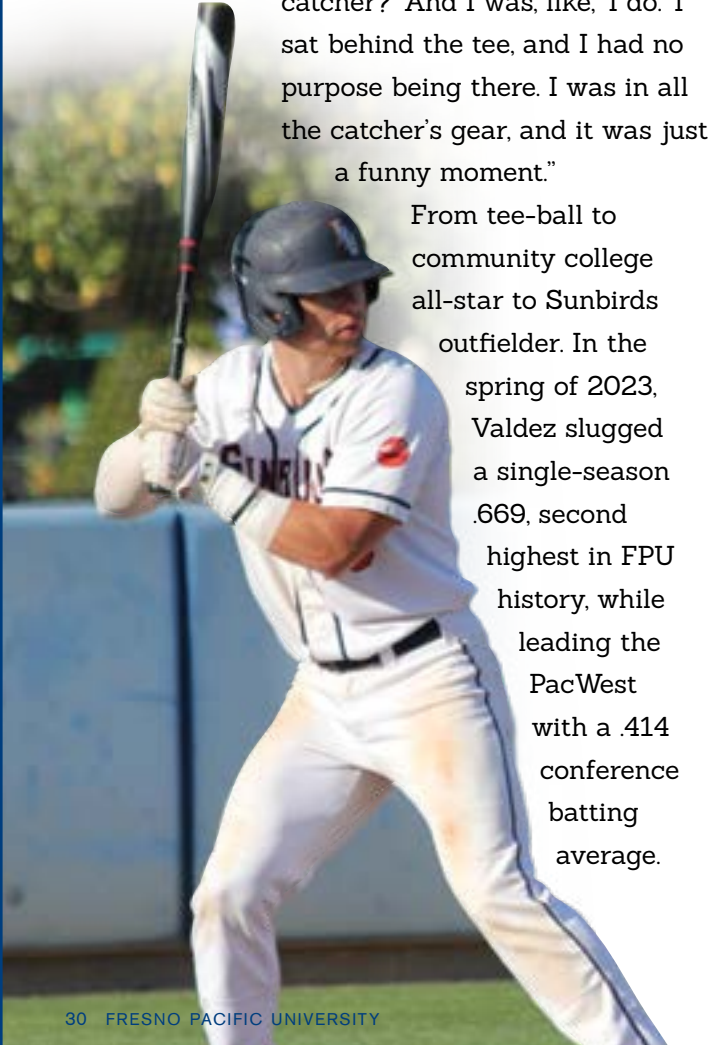
His dreams got a boost that summer, when Head Coach Oscar Hirschhorn helped Valdez earn a spot with the Bellingham (WA) Bells in a summer league for players hoping to go pro. He called playing 45 days straight in front of roughly 3,000 fans per game the experience of a lifetime. “This summer really taught me where I fit in with a lot of D1 players,” he says. “I know I’m a division two player, but I feel like I can compete.”

The road has been challenging. Valdez’s mom and stepfather moved him and his four siblings to Visalia when he was only 7. His stepfather—whom he calls “Pops”—helped raise five kids.

Valdez knew he could play college ball but wasn’t sure how he’d get there. His family didn’t have the money, but they gave him all the encouragement he needed.

“I knew my mom didn’t have finances to allow me to go to a big college,” he says, “and I knew scholarships wouldn’t cover everything.”

Enrolling at College of the Sequoias, Valdez played second base for the COS Giants. He was named MVP of the Junior College Central Valley Conference, won a conference championship, batted .415 and led California with a position-record 10 home runs.



In 2021 FPU offered Valdez a scholarship. The same year he became a Sunbird he became a father to son Dash Tiger. "I was scared," Valdez says. "Me having a son at a young age, 21, and still trying to pursue my dream of baseball. Probably for a whole year I was a little confused."

It was a lot. "Trying to balance being a dad, being a ball player, being a student...it was a big load," he says. "After I learned to adapt to [Dash] being in my life, it's been the greatest blessing ever."

Fall 2023 was Valdez's best semester academically, but his worst emotionally when cardiac arrest unexpectedly took Pops, shattering his stepson. "My soul felt crushed," he says.

At the same time, Valdez knew he had to pass 18 units to continue playing. He credits his FPU coaches and mentors who guided him academically and helped him grow in his faith.

"In the beginning, my faith wasn't as strong as it was before I attended this school," Valdez says. "Now I rely on my faith and God to keep me going forward."

Although Valdez had always known God, he never had a strong relationship with him until he became part of the FPU community. Today Valdez says he feels a responsibility to share his faith with his family, as well as graduate and get signed by a professional team.

"I've come a long way," he says. "I'm thankful for everything in my journey. Hopefully it's just the start and not the finish." 🏠



**“** After I learned to adapt to [Dash] being in my life, it's been the greatest blessing ever.”

– Andrew Valdez



**IN STEP WITH  
SUNBIRDS**

**fpuathletics.com**



# A NEW GENERATION BRINGS NEW ENERGY TO ADVANCEMENT

By Wayne Steffen

New people and new objectives are generating new energy for the Advancement Office.

“My goal is to connect with donors and alumni

so we can, through philanthropical giving, elevate student success and faculty resources,” said **Liz Garvin (MA '05)**, vice president for advancement and executive director of the FPU Foundation.

With these marching orders, the advancement staff is working to better

attract and serve donors who share FPU’s mission to “develop students for leadership and service through excellence in Christian higher education.” As a Christian university, FPU is also called to be a community of learners committed to learning

and service that is prophetic in its dialogue with contemporary culture.

Garvin came to FPU with more than 20 years of

fundraising and nonprofit management in Fresno, at the Foundation for Fresno Unified Schools, as senior director of planned and foundation giving at Fresno State

and as director of mediation at the Better Business Bureau Fresno Office and president/CEO of Samaritan Women (Rescue the Children). She is also an FPU alumna, with an M.A. in Christian Ministry.



**Liz Garvin**



**Juan Garza**



## BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Both Garvin's personal warmth and professional expertise compliment her ability to lead the advancement team in making connections with people, which is the key to success.

Communication about the current happenings at FPU is crucial to those connections. "People want to know what's going on at the university," she said.

While connection is the job of everyone in the Advancement Office, two new hires are on the front lines.

**Juan Garza (MA '10)** is director of strategic engagement for Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary. Garza recently moved to advancement from the post of community relations officer at FPU's Center for Community Transformation. He will focus on developing a new base of supporting churches, businesses and other donors, to raise funds for

additional financial aid to students pursuing ministry degrees.

**Patricia O'Connor** is director of annual giving. As part of her work to design and manage a comprehensive annual giving program, she is taking a fresh look at an old staple of support—the President's Circle.

Circle members provide

vital support by contributing at least \$1,000 a year; praying regularly for students, faculty and staff; encouraging students to attend and friends to support FPU; attending or hosting events; and serving on boards and committees.



**Patricia O'Connor**

"This is a whole new vision for the President's Circle," Garvin said of O'Connor's efforts. "Her new ideas will bring alumni back to campus with fun activities."

Over at the FPU Foundation, **Steven Redekop**, director of foundation development and legacy gifts, is expanding services. "He's focusing on offering alumni support in the areas of wills and trusts, including those who maybe didn't think they could benefit," Garvin said.

As director, Redekop works with the foundation board, supervises daily operations and cultivates prospects' interest in and comprehension of the university mission as well as creating and presenting potential donors with tailored charitable gift proposals. He is assisted by **Sarah Knight**, foundation office administrator, who is responsible for all aspects of foundation and planned giving activities.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Advancement is coming together as a team to move the entire university community forward—administration, faculty, staff and especially students. "Our purpose is to empower each team member to shine in their particular roles," Garvin said.

- ▶ **Kathy Herms (BA '18)** is assistant director of donor engagement—overseeing the cultivation of new donors as well as re-engaging lapsed donors. She coordinates activities for private scholarship donors and assists their donor relationship managers.
- ▶ **Matt Mazzoni (BA '12)** is assistant athletics director for external relations—overseeing athletics external relations and fundraising



by boosting the department's community presence, managing athletics marketing efforts, promoting major athletic events and serving on the athletics administrative leadership team.

- ▶ **Helen Bailey** is executive assistant to the vice president for advancement—assisting the vice president through enhancing her productivity and contributing to the overall effectiveness of the advancement team.



## LEARN MORE

About giving to FPU at  
[fpu.edu/departments/advancement/benefits-giving](https://fpu.edu/departments/advancement/benefits-giving)

- ▶ **Amy Millis** is executive director of advancement services—leading the recruitment, development, retention and stewardship of university donors and providing administrative support to the advancement team as well as managing the processing and reporting of all university and foundation donations.
- ▶ **Diana Martinez** is advancement services specialist—coordinating the daily workflow and maintaining donor records within the advancement services.
- ▶ **Miguel Bermudez Reynoso (BS '19)** is advancement services coordinator—engaging in ongoing professional growth and development focused on enhancing technical skills related to advancement services. 🏠

## A Faith Focused on Others

*By Christopher L. Scott*

Aryanna Guzman came to FPU as a Christian who did what she was told, not because of her relationship with Jesus Christ. She says, “I grew up Christian, however I grew up in a household where you weren’t supposed to question anything about the Bible.”

As a graduate of Monache High School in Porterville, Aryanna came to FPU to run cross country and track. In high school she regularly attended church with her family, but she has grown in her faith since attending FPU. She says, “God has spoken to me in so many ways I would have never imagined.”

While working with the Office of Spiritual Formation, Aryanna joined a small group called Alpha. At weekly meetings, students would watch a video, ask questions and discuss God and their faith. It was through this group that Aryanna says, “I learned that I love to teach others about Christ. And that I am a better learner when I become a teacher.”

Aryanna joined Alpha as a sophomore. In her junior year, facilitator Brandon Moreno approached her, “Brandon held the torch toward me and another student named Calvin.” Aryanna and Calvin together facilitated the group for a semester.

Being involved in small groups had transformed Aryanna’s faith from something she used to do (going to church) to something more personal (experiencing Christ in her life). She says, “When I started doing small groups with Brandon I gained a deeper connection with Jesus.”



### EDITOR'S NOTE

Do you know a student who has been transformed at FPU? Contact Wayne Steffen at [wayne.steffen@fresno.edu](mailto:wayne.steffen@fresno.edu)

These experiences led her to want to facilitate and teach more groups. “I’m going to find more small groups to grow my faith in Christ and help others grow their faith in Christ as well,” she says. Aryanna’s faith is no longer focused on herself; now her faith is focused on others. 🏠

# GRADUATE INVESTS IN FPU AS THE UNIVERSITY INVESTED IN HIM

By Marina Gaytan



“[FPU] taught me the concept of servant-leader.”

– Siro Altamirano

The saying “When one door closes, another door opens” couldn’t be truer for **Siro Altamirano (BA ’11)**. Altamirano was born in Mexico and came to Visalia with his parents at the age of 18 months. In sixth grade, he was placed in advanced learning classes and continued to thrive in high school. Tragically, in 2003, when he was 14 years old, his mother passed away, and Altamirano stepped up to help raise his two younger brothers.

“I went from being an older brother to being a parent,” the 35-year-old said. “I knew how to work

by that point. The work ethic had been instilled in me, so I was able to be successful in high school.”

Altamirano’s dream to study aerospace engineering at the University of California, San Diego, was crushed due to his being an undocumented immigrant. Knowing he wouldn’t get federal financial aid, he initially planned to attend College of the Sequoias, Visalia’s junior college. Then a high school counselor introduced Altamirano to FPU’s Samaritan Scholars, a privately funded aid program for students like him. He was awarded a full scholarship to become a Sunbird.

“It came out of left field,” he said. “It was a blessing from God that I ended up at FPU.”

A first-generation graduate with a love for

math, Altamirano earned a bachelor’s in accounting and finance. In 2018, he opened his own accounting practice, Apollo Accountancy Solutions. Originally

based out of Visalia, it went virtual due to the pandemic and now has 14 team members serving 600 households across the U.S.

This success led Altamirano to give a generous donation to FPU, saying that he’s in a position where he can give back to the organization that greatly invested in him.

“[FPU] taught me the concept of servant-leader,” he said. “And this is just one of the ways I can serve our FPU community.” 🏠





From  
the  
Archives...

# 1970-1980

*By Kevin Enns-Rempel, Director, Hiebert Library*

## ALUMNI HALL: THE ULTIMATE MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM

Most main campus buildings have been “multi-purpose” spaces, perhaps none more so than Alumni Hall. From its construction in 1964 until the 1990s, it was a dining hall, student lounge, student store, College Hour venue and performing arts auditorium, requiring continuous rearranging of the space to fit the needs of the moment.

Originally Alumni Hall’s primary purpose was as the cafeteria. But as the college’s roughly 200 students needed only about half the space, a divider in the middle of the room set off a student lounge on the building’s west side until growing enrollment required the entire area. Two additional small rooms on the south side served as a conference room and a student store.

The greatest competition for Alumni Hall’s space came from the Chapel/College Hour programs, which took place three times a week at first, and later twice a week. To switch the room from dining hall to auditorium, student workers would, after breakfast, fold up and move tables against the walls and rearrange chairs to face a temporary stage on the south side of the building. After College Hour, that staff would reverse the process to ready the room for lunch.

The juggling became more complicated during drama season. Stages were erected on the west end of Alumni Hall, requiring dining tables to be arranged on the stage for mealtimes. They were removed for rehearsals and performances and put back up for meals the next day. During performances, the rearranging of tables and chairs also took place after dinner so the room could accommodate an audience.

Opening the Special Events Center in 1981 and McDonald Hall in 1992 created new theater spaces and moving College Hour to Butler Church in 1993 effectively ended Alumni Hall’s multi-purpose era. Remodeled as a coffee shop, bookstore and mail center in 2005, today it’s difficult to imagine the many different functions that took place in this space several times each week. 🏠

Fresno Pacific University Foundation

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**For more information** on setting up your own gift annuity, charitable remainder trust or other planned giving strategy through Fresno Pacific University, contact Vice President/Executive Director Liz Garvin or Director of FPU Foundation Development and Legacy Gifts Steven Redekop:

[elizabeth.garvin@fresno.edu](mailto:elizabeth.garvin@fresno.edu) | 559-453-3485  
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**YOU PLAY** a pivotal role.  
**EMPOWER** students to achieve their dreams.



FPU helps students unleash untapped potential, providing a roadmap to professional, personal and spiritual growth. Our commitment to cultivating servant-leaders for church and society sets us apart.



Now through June 30, all donations to Fresno Pacific University (Excluding capital and endowment donations) will be matched dollar for dollar to the university's general fund up to \$1.5 Million, thanks to a generous match from Al and Dotty Warkentine.



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