New Mayor of Beverly Hills to Address Engineering Grads

Alumnus Jimmy Delshad, One of Nation’s Top Iranian-Born Officials, to Bring Message about America’s Promise

Jimmy Delshad, the newly elected mayor of Beverly Hills, has a powerful message of hope and fulfillment for the spring 2007 graduates of Cal State Northridge’s College of Engineering and Computer Science. As the alumni speaker for the college’s commencement ceremony, set for 4 p.m. May 31 in the University Club, Mayor Delshad will bring that message to them in person.

“The feeling I have is to try to convince them that anything their heart desires, this is the country in which they can accomplish it,” he said.

“When I graduated from CSUN, my biggest dream was to become a chief engineer at an electronics company,” said the engineering alumnus, who graduated from Northridge in 1964. “I didn’t even know there was a lot more, so much more I could accomplish.”

Mayor Delshad knows it now. In March, he made history with his election as the top official of Beverly Hills, instantly becoming one of the highest-ranking Iranian-born elected officials in the nation.

His path to political success led him straight through what was then San Fernando Valley State College.

As a 19-year-old, he and his two brothers—Mike (Manouchehr) and Fred (Freydou)—had left their homeland, they soon were putting on music shows at Northridge, “creating an intercultural exchange with others,” he said. “Through music, we wanted to create harmony.”

That harmony paid their way through college. As the Delshad Trio, they played an international mix of music at Christmas parties, weddings and musical shows at Northridge, “creating a melody with others,” he said.

The birth of his son, Jacob, interrupted his studies for a year and a half, but by 2005 he was back. Likewise, Debra—who also received a music degree—began her musical career at Valley College, and became antsy. Charity, then an art history major at Valley College, persuaded her mother to follow her lead and finish at Valley the associate arts degree she’d begun in the ’60s. In the meantime, Charity transferred to CSUN and became a history major. The birth of her son, Jacob, interrupted her studies for a year and a half, but by 2005 she was back.

The close relationship between mother and daughter— they connected with ideas, historical dates and factoids—nutritionally set them on the road to Natchez. Invited to join the 2006 research trip, Charity enlisted White Hayes, who paid her respects to Natchez.

That Delshad family moved from Northridge to Beverly Hills in 1990, and since all three had received musical training in their homeland, they soon were putting on music shows at Northridge, “creating an intercultural exchange with others,” he said. “Through music, we wanted to create harmony.”

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Images of Post-WWII China See Light of Day After Decades

CSUN Professor Harold Giedt's Photos 'Transport Us Through a Looking Glass into a Time Long Passed'

A photographer's evocative images of post-World War II life in Tientsin, China, shot with a vintage 1940s twin-lens reflex camera, have rested unseen and unappreciated for more than 60 years.

Not even the photographer, CSUN counseling services professor Emeritus Harold Giedt, had in all that time viewed more than a few enlargements of his work. Giedt attributes the "liberation" of the aging black and white images to the intervention of the Oviatt Library’s Old China Hands Archive director Robert Gohs tand, who recognized the photos' historical interest and urged Giedt to get the negatives scanned and printed.

About 30 images of daily life in Tientsin captured by Giedt—then a young Marine Corps infantry second lieutenant—can be viewed from April 30 through August 1 in "Faces of Tientsin, 1946," an exhibition presented by the Oviatt Library’s Old China Hands Archive. A program in the library’s Presentation Room at 11:30 a.m. Monday, April 30, will launch the exhibit. Following the launch, the exhibition will be on display on the library’s second floor.

The images "transport us through a looking glass into a time long passed, but are evocative of the empathy between the photographer and his subjects," said Robert Gohs tand. "Harold Giedt displayed a sensitivity and affection for the people he photographed, and it shows."

"An ‘Old China Hand,’ Harold Giedt displayed a sensitivity and affection for the people he photographed, and it shows."

His unit dealt with the repatriation of Japanese military and civilians, and helped Europeans and Americans who had been confined in POW camps. During the afternoons, however, he was "free to roam about, practice [his] Mandarin Chinese on the street and take interesting scenes of the people and their daily life activities."

When Giedt’s tour with the Marines ended, he returned to the U.S. and began the work of becoming a psychologist. Occasionally, he showed the color slides he had made with a Kodak Bantam 828, but the black and white negatives were tucked away for six decades.

An “Old China Hand” like Giedt, Gohs tand said the photographs are representative of the historical artifacts kept in the library’s Old China Hands Archive, established to preserve and publicize the heritage of people from other cultures who lived and worked in China from the 1840s until the communists came into power in 1949.

For more information about the exhibition, call (818) 677-2853. Visit http://library.csun.edu/oldchinahands/och.html for archive information.

New Beverly Hills Mayor...

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and bar mitzvahs, with Jimmy on the santur—an ancient Persian instrument smaller than a dulcimer—Fred on accordion and Mike playing the violin.

But the Delshad brothers also knew how to study. Mayor Delshad recalls that Northridge had “great professors, in chemistry and fluid dynamics.” A member of Tau Beta Pi, The Engineering Honor Society, he tackled engineering with relish, frequently making the dean’s list.

American history, he recalled with humor, was another matter. “My first year at CSUN, I had a professor who was not very tolerant of people who don’t know American history,” he said. On the first exam, the professor posed a question about early American minister Cotton Mather. “I didn’t know that gentleman,” said Delshad, who gamely wrote an entire essay on “The Matter of Cotton,” covering in detail the importance of cotton to the South.

Facing the possibility of an “F”, Delshad dropped the class, re-took it later—when his English skills had matured—and earned “A’s” and “B’s.”

After graduation, Delshad went to work for the Amplex Corporation in Culver City and later started his own electronics company. He served two terms as the president of Sinai Temple in Woodland Hills, became involved with the nonprofit world and in March made headlines in the Beverly Hills election that broadcast his name around the world.

“Since then, many former Valley State students have gotten in touch and we’ve had wonderful reunions,” said the mayor. “Some even came to my inauguration.”

So Jimmy Delshad’s commencement message will come from the heart: “Only in America can you come from peeling potatoes to election as mayor. This country gave me the freedom to do it.”
Mother-Daughter Research Team...
Art and Exhibits

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Counseling services professor emeritus Harold Giedt’s photographs taken as a Marine lieutenant in Tientsin, end of World War II. Presented by the Oviatt Library’s Old China Hands Archive.

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In Brief

Atty. Edward Landry to Address CSUN Students

Edward Landry, a senior partner in the respected law firm of Musick, Peeler & Garrett, will share a wealth of expertise, insights and life experience with students in the College of Business and Economics on Thursday, April 26. Landry will visit the college as part of Cal State Northridge’s Executive Speakers Series, launched in 2004 to provide CSUN students with opportunities to learn directly from the distinguished executives who participate.

As a member of his firm’s probate and trust department, Landry has handled the estates of many prominent California decedents, including that of the late J. Paul Getty.

He will meet with students in “Business 102—The Gateway Course,” taught by accounting and information systems lecturer James Macklin and designed to give students the skills required to succeed in today’s business environment.

An executive committee co-chairman of the Imagine the Arts Campaign for a planned regional performing arts center at Cal State Northridge, Landry also is active with the Doheny Eye Institute, the Los Angeles Opera and an array of major foundations including the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology and the Foundation for Teaching Economics.

CSUN Debuts for “Cha Cha Feminist”

Chicana/o studies instructor Maria Elena Fernandez will present her autobiographical one-woman show, “Confessions of a Cha Cha Feminist,” at 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 23, in the Northridge Center of the University Student Union.

Fernandez has performed “Cha Cha Feminist” to critical acclaim in performances from Rhode Island to California, but the April 25 performance will mark its debut at CSUN.

A light-hearted account of how Fernandez broke free from the grip of her traditional Los Angeles immigrant family, the play contrasts her introduction to feminist theory at an Ivy League university with the culture of the cha cha, the ‘60s disco girls who were her childhood friends.

Fernandez, who teaches history in the Department of Chicana/o Studies, in fall 2006 was invited by a colleague in the Anthropology Department to present an excerpt from the play to a class on gender.

“It was a class of 100, and a hundred more showed up,” she said, “among them various student leaders. They loved the excerpt and wanted to produce the whole show on campus.”

Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o de Aztlan de CSUN (MECHA) and the Anthropology Student Association are co-producing “Confessions of a Cha Cha Feminist.”

Admission to the play is free, but seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, call Marvco Zamora of MECHA at (818) 677-2817.

CSUN’s Beta Alpha Psi Wins at Regional Meet

Two teams from Cal State Northridge’s chapter of Beta Alpha Psi, an honorary organization for accounting students, won top honors for their recent presentations at the group’s annual Western Regional Meeting in San Diego. The team, composed by the University of San Diego and the University of Hawaii chapters.

Competing in the “Best Practices” competition, one Northridge team won first place and will move on to compete against the other eight regional champions in August at the organization’s International Meeting in Chicago.

The first place win by graduate student Jonathan Cobin, senior Ping Yu and juniors Melissa Scalisi, Sharon Sinsakoyt and Jennifer Smith was for their presentation on the chapter’s sustained service to L.A. Cash for College, a program sponsored by the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and other community organizations. The program helps high school students and their parents find and apply for financial aid to attend college.

Juniors Kendra Turski, Juan Cantiero and Michelle Maltesyan won second place for a presentation called “Student Extreme Makeover,” about the chapter’s efforts to encourage student involvement in professional accounting organizations.

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