50 YEARS OF Vintage Days
EST 1975
Building on Campus Traditions

This edition of Fresno State Magazine holds particular significance as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of Vintage Days, a beloved and fun tradition that embodies the very essence of our campus community and Valley. Over the past five decades, this event has served as a vital fundraising platform for our student clubs and organizations and as a key driver in fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie that defines our institution and the community.

As we reflect on the rich tapestry of our university’s history, it is essential to recognize the invaluable contributions of those who came before us. Their dedication and resilience have paved the way for the remarkable achievements and impact on our communities we celebrate today.

Now more than ever, it is imperative that we become aware of the critical role that Fresno State serves to produce leaders who elevate the region, and contribute to the overall quality of life in our Valley. By embracing the pivotal role that Fresno State plays in inspiring a sense of community, we can build upon the foundation laid by our predecessors and propel our university to even greater heights.

Together, we will write the next chapter in our university’s storied and impactful history, as we collectively advocate for all that is possible in Fresno State’s future.

Go ‘Dogs!
Fresno State’s 48th annual Chicano/Latino Commencement went viral on May 18 when numerous videos of a grad dance party were posted to social media, including a TikTok video from alumnus Dr. Saul Salinas, Clovis Unified School District’s community relations coordinator. Salinas’ video generated over 5.5 million views, and gained national headlines from ABC, Telemundo, Univision and CNN. The video shows graduates, faculty and Fresno State President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval dancing on the floor of a packed Save Mart Center at the nation’s largest commencement ceremony of its kind. The U.S. Marine Band from San Diego was playing “Toro Mambo.”
City to State Pathway

Fresno City College students will soon be able to transfer more easily to Fresno State to continue their higher education journey with the launch of the City-to-State Transfer Program. The presidents of Fresno State and Fresno City College signed a memorandum of understanding, committing to increasing the number of transfer students.

“Fresno City College is a key educational partner in elevating the quality of life in our region; I am very pleased to partner with President Robert Pimentel on this significant collaboration,” says Fresno State President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval. “This MOU will streamline the transfer process between Fresno City and Fresno State, helping remove barriers to Fresno City College students, as we are a university with unparalleled value, rankings and a supportive community.”

Through this partnership, the two institutions seek to accomplish the following:

- Reduce matriculation barriers.
- Hire a jointly-funded, dedicated Fresno City College transfer counselor who will focus on this pathway.
- Create a summer transfer experience event, including undergraduate research projects, to take place at Fresno State.
- Continue strategic outreach programs.
- Increase Fresno State transfer programs.
- Increase Fresno State transfer experience to the university.
- Develop strategic programs.

900 Fresno City College students transfer to Fresno State each year with plans to increase that number to 1,200+

A Boost to Mobile Health

The College of Health and Human Services at Fresno State unveiled two new, state-of-the-art mobile health units on April 5.

In partnership with Fresno City College, we look forward to designing programs that cater to the needs of future transfer students,” says Phong Yang, associate vice president for strategic enrollment management. “The City-To-State pathway increases access for future Fresno State transfer students to advising and support at a convenient location for them. We look forward to creating a more seamless transfer experience to the university.”

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Fresno State Pros on Netflix

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“History professor Dr. Lori Clune is featured as a historian and expert on the Cold War. As a historian of modern U.S. history, I firmly believe that there are many lessons we can learn from the fascinating and disturbing history of the Cold War. I was proud to be interviewed for this thought-provoking documentary,” Clune says.

Hanayo Oya from Fresno State’s Department of Media, Communications and Journalism worked as a co-producer on the documentary, developing content and structure, researching, securing interviews, coordinating filming schedules and overseeing editing and post-production.

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Partisan Effects on Election Officials fortify democracy. Bryant's winning why society has become so polarized, research seeks to understand how and related to political polarization. Bryant's stipends of $200,000 each for research Carnegie Fellows who will receive Dr. Lisa Bryant (science professor Polarization Research Political AROUND THE FOUNTAIN

Research Political Polarization Fresno State political science professor Dr. Liz Bryant (right) is one of 28 Andrew Carnegie Fellows who will receive stipends of $200,000 each for research related to political polarization. Bryant's research seeks to understand how and why society has become so polarized, and how strengthened cohesion can fortify democracy. Bryant's winning project is titled “Polarizing the Process: Partisan Effects on Election Officials and Trust in Elections.”

New Minor Makes Waves Fresno State is introducing a new minor, in collaboration with the California Water Institute, focusing on multiple facets of the water industry. This new water minor is designed for students who want to learn more about water systems in California, as well as those interested in water-related careers after graduation. The minor is open to all disciplines at Fresno State and allows students of any study background to learn more about the water management challenges that impact a reliable water supply.

1 million visits For the first time since the pandemic, the Fresno State Library welcomed more than 1 million patrons during the 2023-24 academic year. In the fall 2023 semester, there were 512,948 visits, surpassing the number of visits for all of the 2021-22 academic year (443,606). Before 2020, the Fresno State Library gate counts were routinely over 1 million for each academic year.

FRESNO STATE NEWS BRIEFS

Retired Jerseys and Coaching Honors Amanda Scott Four-time All-American pitcher Amanda Scott had her No. 36 jersey retired on March 23 at Margie Wright Diamond. Scott was named the Most Outstanding Player after leading Fresno State to a 1998 national championship at the Women’s College World Series. She was three-time WAC Pitcher of the Year with a career record of 106-18 in the pitching circle from 1997-2000. The Bulldogs were 226-49 with four NCAA tournament berths, three WCWS appearances and three WAC championships in that span.

Donna Pickel Donna Pickel, the inaugural coach of Fresno State softball who led the program to its first eight NCAA tournament appearances and two Women’s College World Series, was honored with her name displayed alongside the retired jerseys at Margie Wright Diamond on March 24. Pickel led the Bulldogs to a national-runner up finish in 1982 and a record of 306-146-7 in her eight seasons. She earned five conference Coach of the Year honors and also served as the women’s basketball coach.

Rod Higgins Rod Higgins, the only Fresno State men’s basketball player to twice be recognized as an Associated Press All-American, had his No. 22 jersey retired on Feb. 24 at the Save Mart Center. He led the Bulldogs to back to back NCAA Tournament appearances in 1981 and 1982 under coach Boyd Grant, including a Sweet 16 appearance in 1982 when Fresno State ranked No. 11 in the nation. Higgins was selected No. 31 overall by the Chicago Bulls in the 1982 NBA Draft and enjoyed a 13-year NBA career with seven franchises, including the Bulls and Golden State Warriors. He has worked as an NBA executive for 20-plus years, most recently as vice president of basketball operations for the Atlanta Hawks.

Mike Batesole Mike Batesole, who led Fresno State to its first College World Series championship in 2008, had his No. 44 jersey retired in ceremonies on Nov. 18 and 19. Batesole was the third consecutive Bulldogs coach to surpass 600 wins – following Bob Bennett and Pete Beiden – a feat no other college baseball program has ever accomplished. The two-time National Coach of the Year coached 89 Bulldogs who were selected in the MLB Draft in his 20 years, including five first-round picks. His Diamond ‘Dogs won seven straight conference titles during his tenure.

Aaron Judge New York Yankees star Aaron Judge, the 2022 American League MVP who broke the all-time single-season AL home run record with 62, had his No. 29 Fresno State jersey retired in ceremonies on Nov. 18 and 19. Judge, who made the No. 99 famous in pinstripes, starred for the Bulldogs from 2011-13 before being drafted in the first round by the Yankees. He went on to win AL Rookie of the Year and become the first rookie to win the Home Run Derby in 2017. At Fresno State, Judge owned a .345 career batting average with 18 home runs and 109 RBI.

Scan the QR code or visit fresnostate.edu/magazine for a behind-the-scenes, documentary-style video on Aaron Judge and Mike Batesole.

DONOR IMPACT

$500,000 Gift Supports Transfer Students Greg Tcherkoyan grew up in Fresno where he attended Roosevelt High School and Fresno City College with hopes of finishing his degree at Fresno State. But he met his wife, Seta, who was a student at the University of California, Berkeley, and their love story led them to marriage at an early age and the start of their life in Oakland. Largely self-educated, Tcherkoyan earned certificates in real estate and securities law and led a successful career in the industry.

Neither finished their undergraduate degree. “That is something they both regretted their whole lives,” says Kathleen McShane, the oldest of their three daughters. “They really believed in the power of education to help make a good life, and they were very intentional about wanting a college education for each of their three daughters.”

McShane earned a degree in political science, went on to get a law degree and earned a master’s in divinity. Her sister, Patti Jamgotchian, earned a degree in consumer textiles while youngest sister, Kirsti Tcherkoyan, got her degree in psychology.

Now, Greg and Seta are making sure that dream of getting an education will be in reach for many more students with a $500,000 gift to establish the Tcherkoyan Family Trust Scholarship at Fresno State. The scholarship, which supports transfer students who begin their higher education journey at a community college, honors the lives and commitment of Greg Tcherkoyan, who died in October 2022, and Seta, who died this past October.

This gift is a full circle moment, a completion of what they have wanted their lives to be about, which is helping other people, McShane says. The first scholarship is expected to be awarded during the 2025-26 academic year.

The Tcherkoyans, whose families moved to California in the 1940s, were generous donors to the Armenian Church, to disaster relief funds and to an orphanage in Armenia. Fresno and Fresno State have always been close to the family’s heart because it’s where they grew up, McShane and Jamgotchian say. Many family members still live in Fresno and extended family members graduated from the university.

Jamgotchian says, “Fresno State is very near and dear to our family and our family especially wants to give this gift to enrich the lives of future generations.”

– BoNhia Lee

Image
From dance parties and air guitar to family-friendly attractions, spring festival connects campus and community

By Eddie Hughes ('05)
Grab the keys to your ‘75 Mercury Cougar convertible, start the engine, pop in that Doobie Brothers 8-track and get ready to cruise down Memory Lane while taking a swig of nostalgia.

It was spring of 1975. Gerald Ford was the United States president, and the country was entangled in the Vietnam War. Minimum wage in California was $2. A tank of gas was about 53 cents per gallon, a loaf of bread just 38 cents and — perhaps of interest to college students at the time — a six-pack of beer averaged $2.55.

The modern Fresno State campus that we know today, located at Cedar and Shaw avenues in Fresno, wasn’t quite 20 years old (though the university dates back to 1911 at its original location). In 1975, Dr. Norman A. Baxter was the university president and the campus was a hotbed of political activity.

Fresno’s population was 297,000 and Fresno State had an enrollment of 15,000 — about 63% of what it is today. And despite all the challenges of the times, some visionary staff and students came up with an idea and executed it — leading to 50 years of springtime memories and traditions that have helped define student life at the university.

That vision in 1975 became known as Vintage Days, a name paying homage to the lush vineyards on a campus known for its Viticulture and Enology Department. This past April, the university welcomed about 50,000 people to campus for the 50th edition of the springtime festival.

What a Vintage Idea

The man largely credited for creating Vintage Days is Gary Bongiovanni, who was hired as the assistant program director of the College Union at Fresno State in the mid-1970s after graduating from Chico State. It was there he became intimately familiar with Pioneer Days, a celebration for Chico State students, and he envisioned creating a similar vibe on Fresno State’s campus.

“I thought we should do something to liven up the social image of the school,” said Bongiovanni in a 2013 issue of The Collegian student newspaper. “I managed to talk the university into holding an open house. The combination of open house and a variety of activities ended up being called Vintage Days.”

Those early years of Vintage Days were a true party atmosphere, including concerts and movies in the amphitheater, food, drinks, games and quirky competitions amongst students — the type of things college traditions are made of.

“Our campus sometimes gets segmented by your college, school or major,” says Peter Robertson, director of alumni connections for the Fresno State Alumni Association. “When you go to Vintage Days, it’s more about student life. Those walls or categories disappear, and we’re all Fresno State Bulldogs for a weekend. Vintage Days is a place to embrace the student body outside of the classroom. Those are the memories — beyond dissecting a frog.”

Bongiovanni hired Riverside native Reggie Rush to work on lighting and sound for Vintage Days events. Soon after, they met another person who would become instrumental in the success of Vintage Days — student musician Mike King, then a drummer in a band called Union Pacific.

Rush set up the sound and lights for King’s band, and “we really hit it off and we became friends and the next thing you know I was out there running sound.”

King says he was working at a local music store in 1975 when he met Bongiovanni and tried to sell sound equipment to Fresno State. “I didn’t sell the equipment, but they booked my band to play a noon job,” King recalls. “We played real well, and they liked us so they hired us for Vintage Days. I played the first Vintage Days.”

Rush and King created the College Union Sound System (CUSS), and went on to coordinate staging, lighting and sound for decades — an entrepreneurial effort that eventually led to their careers.
SPRING 12 classes and studying all the time and release of pressure from going to Go-Gos and Tom Petty.

In the early years, the beginning of Vintage Days was marked by a ceremonial parade where students from different clubs and organizations such as fraternities and sororities, made shirts showing off silly team names (such as the “V.D. Crabs”) and were judged for creativity. But perhaps the most well-known Vintage Days tradition of all — the one so many alumni from the ’80s and ’90s share memories of — is the air guitar competition, where people would come on stage and strum their hands and rock out as if they were actually playing an instrument.

A tradition so legendary (and so entertaining) that it was brought up by every alum interviewed for this story.

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Perhaps the most talked about Vintage Days tradition of all time, students fired up their rock-n-roll dreams in the air guitar competitions that have made for legendary stories and memories.

From tug of war to arm wrestling, tricycle races and frog jumping contests, Vintage Days has been beloved for unique and quirky traditions over the years.

Chris Miller, who first got involved with and parties at night,” says alumnus and memories.

Legendary stories have made for air guitar rock-n-roll dreams students lived out their traditions of all-time, about Vintage Days. Perhaps the most talked about Vintage Days tradition of all time, students fired up their rock-n-roll dreams in the air guitar competitions that have made for legendary stories and memories.

Evolution of Vintage Days

While Vintage Days began as a student-centered event, it has evolved over time to attract families and children from all over the Central Valley. On average, 30,000 to 50,000 people attend the event over three days each year.

In the early 2000s, several world-record attempts were made, including the largest water balloon fight, the largest game of musical statues, the largest video game controller.

Fresno State’s Student Involvement team, led by Dr. Amy Allen, Shawna Blair, Eddie Dominguez and a team of students, work year-round to plan Vintage Days. Their goal is to keep Vintage Days traditions alive while also mixing in some fun, modern wrinkles.

“It’s important to remember that Vintage Days is largely a student-planned event,” says Shawna Blair.

“Perhaps the most talked about Vintage Days tradition of all time, students fired up their rock-n-roll dreams in the air guitar competitions that have made for legendary stories and memories.”

The air guitar competition was a popular event at Vintage Days, with participants strumming their hands and rocking out as if they were playing an instrument.

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coordinator for major events and staff development at the Student Involvement Center. "For decades, students have gained valuable, hands-on experience in helping to plan and execute this large, community event, and our team is intentional about including students in every phase of planning." 

To celebrate the 50th birthday of the campus festival from April 19 through 21, Fresno State's Student Involvement team planned a birthday block party featuring concerts and the first-ever campus drone show, in which dozens of drones are choreographed to display colorful imagery and words in a nighttime celebration. 

Think of it as a modern fireworks show, but with neon-lit drones flying in formation, rather than pyrotechnics. 

Today's Vintage Days also features a kids' zone with inflatables and pony rides, a large craft fair with vendors offering everything from temporary tattoo art to jewelry, food and drink vendors and a beer and wine garden. One longstanding tradition is the food booths to raise money for campus clubs and Greek organizations. "I was in Sigma Nu and we had a food booth, a tri-tip booth," says Miller, the Cumulus Media marketing director who has been involved with Vintage Days in some capacity since he was a student in 1989. "We had a line at our booth for days. We made so much money. We couldn't buy enough tri-tip — we were running out of meat." 

Concerts remain a main attraction at Vintage Days, though they are no longer held in the amphitheater, a space that had not been utilized for decades and was remodeled as part of the new Lynda and Stewart Resnick Student Union constructed in 2022 to serve a growing student population. The building's architecture incorporates elements of the old amphitheater in an outdoor space that is used to host university events. 

In 2023 and 2024, with major infrastructure projects underway across campus on the lawn where Vintage Days is normally held, the festival has taken place on the lawn and parking lots surrounding the new Resnick Student Union. 

In 2020, an unparalleled time in history when students, faculty and staff were studying and working remotely because of the pandemic, the Student Involvement team pivoted to plan a virtual Vintage Days — keeping the tradition alive as best they could under the circumstances. 

For alumni like Miller, who have seen firsthand how Vintage Days has evolved over time, the possibilities are limitless to what can be accomplished with the festival — whether that means re-embracing past traditions or coming up with innovative new ideas. 

"I always tell the kids, the more you put into it, the more you’ll get out of it," Miller says. "I say that about going to school and getting an education, and I say that about being involved on campus. The more you’re engaged in school, the more you’ll get out of it." 

It’s been 50 years since Bongiovanni and others brought that innovative idea for Vintage Days to the Fresno State campus. The event created the types of memories that have become legendary among alumni and community members alike — whether they were part of the raucous party crowd from the early years or the wholesome family entertainment of recent times. 

"As long as you’re having fun, it’s a great opportunity and a great way for the school to showcase itself to the community," Miller says. "There are not a lot of campuses still doing these types of celebrations. To have it last for 50 years, still going strong, something good is happening here." 

– Eddie Hughes is senior editor for Fresno State Magazine.
Where Business Dreams Became a Reality

Student entrepreneurs get support to launch their businesses, connect with mentors

By BoNhia Lee

Janel Haas always wanted to work for herself. She was into floral design as a high schooler, so she thought she might want to be a florist. But she left that idea behind and considered opening a bar since she enjoyed her time working at Red Robin. But bars are hard and there’s the liability thing, she says, so she abandoned that idea, too.

The Craig School of Business alumna decided ice cream was her happy place — and Jay’s Specialty Ice Cream truck was born.

“Everyone likes ice cream. Who doesn’t like ice cream? It makes people happy,” Haas says. Smiles abound with her gourmet, handcrafted ice cream flavors like Ba-Nilla-Fer, Nutter Chip-A-Roo and Coconut Almond Joy, though Jay’s most popular flavor is good ol’ Oreo Delight, described on its website as being “spun with every Oreo addict in mind.”

For Fresno State fans, there’s the Red Wave, strawberry ice cream mixed with blueberries and white chocolate chips. Or try saucy scoops like Triple Crown Plus, vanilla ice cream with Whoppers, Twix, Butterfinger and a little bit of Crown Royal liquor.

Jay’s blue truck or trailer is a familiar sight at Fresno State, where the alumna has scooped ice cream since 2015 when she first started participating in Vintage Days, then at other events and student activities in the years that followed.

The trailer was parked by the Resnick Student Union during the 50th Vintage Days, where ice cream flights, shakes, cones and cups were served over the annual three-day festival. Other community vendors included the always popular Country Faire Cinnamon Rolls, Dutch Bros coffee and drinks, FURY Hot Chicken food truck, and Loving Seed, a vintage trailer that serves healthy food options like acai bowls and juices.

Student organizations also sell food every year as a major fundraiser. The Magkaisa Filipino Club sold pancit and lumpia, Sigma Phi Epsilon sold tri-tip sandwiches and Cru sold chicken kabobs.

Jay’s, Janel’s nickname, has been at Vintage Days every year except...
During COVID when Vintage Days went virtual for two years. She recalls one year when she didn’t get her vendor confirmation and says she was “crushed.” A quick phone call revealed that it was a mistake and Jay’s was indeed a vendor.

“I’m very thankful to Fresno State for calling me out to cater things. It’s fantastic when people reach out and say ‘I hear you’re an alum,’ and they are intrigued about my business,” Haas says. “I enjoy that they like learning where I started and where I am at now. I only spent two years at Fresno State. I got a lot out of my business classes. They were the best two years of college for me.”

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Executive director, The Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

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Why ice cream? In addition to the frozen dessert making people happy, Haas’ love of ice cream came from a family tradition of making homemade ice cream for family events the old school way with rock salt in the hand-churned maker.

“I’m appreciative of a lot of the professors who would just let me talk about ice cream. I was like, ‘I really like ice cream.’ They were like, ‘That’s an intriguing idea,’ Haas says. ‘Sometimes they looked at me like I was crazy. Food trucks weren’t a thing then. It wasn’t a big thing so there were a few people who were skeptical of what I wanted to do.’

But she did her research, networked with local business owners through the Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and got valuable mentorship from Dr. Timothy Stearns, the center’s director at the time. She

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Haas graduated in 2012 and bought her first commercial ice cream making machine and started experimenting with flavors. She shared creations with her taste testers – family and friends. It comes down to experimentation and modifying the recipe, Haas says. You basically throw everything in there that you want to eat until eventually you figure out, for example, how many nuts you should add to a three gallon bucket of ice cream so that you get a nut in almost every bite of pistachio ice cream, she says.

A year later, she started selling ice cream, then, in 2014, she participated in her first food truck event at Central High. Since then, she’s added a trailer so she and her handful of employees can sell at multiple events over a weekend. She added a push cart for easy access to indoor events just before the COVID-19 pandemic shut everything down. And now, a decade after starting her business, Haas plans to finally open that store in northwest Fresno.

“I don’t know what I was for sure expecting things to look like after 10 years,” Haas says. “I was like let’s just get through this week and let’s get through this month. OK, we’ve made it past year one and year two … it’s so much more and it’s rewarding, and I’m really glad I went this route to be a business major and make my own path.”

— BoNhap Lee is a communications specialist at Fresno State.
The 200-seat Wahlberg Recital Hall and 270-seat Concert Hall host over 150 events per year, ranging from senior recitals to large festivals and productions, such as the recent “Carmina Burana” by Carl Orff, which included a full orchestra, two pianos, combined choirs and several soloists.

“You’re talking one-third of the capacity of the seating was on stage, which is unusual for a venue,” ElaGarza says.

The Music Department’s faculty is well-connected and often brings top-level guest artists to perform for students – and sometimes alongside them – including the Grammy-nominated jazz quartet “Kneebody” and Grammy Award-winning trumpeter Dan Rosenboom and bass-baritone Gerald Finley.

Fresno State venues have also rented to other organizations for community concerts. In 1972, Fresno State music professor Philip Lorenz created a keyboard concert series in Fresno. After the Concert Hall opened in 1992, the Philip Lorenz International Keyboard Concerts used it as its primary venue. It’s not unusual for these artists to play a date in Fresno in between major international venues.

Music has been part of academics and campus life since the Fresno State Normal School first opened its doors in 1911. Faculty member Arthur G. Wahlberg organized the Glee Club, a female choral group that performed for the first time in the spring of 1912. In 1935, Fresno State awarded its first bachelor’s degree in music.

When Fresno State moved from its original campus in 1954, where Fresno City College now sits, a music building was one of the first buildings constructed and included the Wahlberg Recital Hall, paying tribute to founding faculty.

In 1991, the new Music Building opened and featured a rehearsal hall large enough for a full orchestra and choir to practice together. A short time later, permanent seats and a pipe organ were added to create an intimate 270-seat concert hall, which still serves as the department’s main venue today. In spring 2004, Fresno State revealed plans for a new 1,000-seat concert hall that is currently in the architectural design phase.

Jose ElaGarza, the performing arts technician for the Department of Music, said there are 150 to 185 public concerts in the Wahlberg Recital Hall and the Concert Hall every year. These events range from solo senior recitals for students to large festivals that invite local K-12 students to major collaborative productions, such as the recent “Carmina Burana” by Carl Orff, which included a full orchestra, two pianos, combined choirs and several soloists to perform the powerful piece in a relatively small concert hall.

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From local acts to mega stars, the campus music scene has boosted student life for decades

By Benjamin Kirk ('22)

The lights go down, and immediately there is a palpable shift in the atmosphere. The chatter and laughter quiets and is replaced by building anticipation, clapping and cheers. Electricity dances over the skin as expectation sweeps the crowd in mass camaradene.

“I feel like fluttering is the right word,” says Alexandra Cota, a music performance major, about what it’s like to be on stage. “I have to go into a different mental place and take a really deep breath.”

In this moment, the mundane fades away, and the extraordinary is about to unfold.

For Sean McElhinney, assistant general manager and director of booking at the Save Mart Center, it’s a moment he tries to catch at every concert.

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Spring 2022

Cary Edmondson because it’s a public event,” Cha says. and also just performing to a wide campus festival. 50th anniversary of the springtime after the pandemic to play in 2022, songs. He played his first Vintage cover tunes along with a few original songs. He played his first Vintage Days concert in 2019, then returned after the pandemic to play in 2022, 2023 and this year during the 50th anniversary of the springtime campus festival. “Compared to other stages, Vintage Days is a pretty big stage. Both physically, it’s a big stage, and also just performing to a wide amount of people. It’s pretty big because it’s a public event,” Cha says. "It was a huge event, and student ‘bands’ would have to audition to be part of the competition,” said Julie Logan Lindahl, Fresno State Radio general manager. "It was treated like a live concert, and the crowd would pick the winner of the competition. It was crazy-popular and absolutely hilarious to watch.” Logan Lindahl, who earned her chops on 90.7 KFSR, Fresno State Radio, went to work for KKDJ, the local rock station at the time, while she was still a student at Fresno State. The station was one of the driving forces behind the air guitar competition, which allowed anyone to get that rock star feeling as long as they passed the audition.

Being part of KFSR on campus and the KKDJ off campus while she was a student, Logan Lindahl was often promoting music events across Fresno State. The amphitheater hosted many big-name acts over the years, including Tom Petty, Los Lobos, Radiohead, Soul Asylum, Tool, Hootie and the Blowfish, The Offspring, Bush, Incubus, Green Day, NOFX and Weezer.

“It really was a wonderful place to see a concert, and just about every adult in Central California has a story about a show they saw at the amphitheater,” Logan Lindahl says. The final concert at the amphitheater was country star Travis Tritt in 2002. Logan Lindahl also recalls concerts at another venue still operating on campus, the Satellite Student Union. As a smaller venue that holds about 800 people without chairs, it hosted bands such as Sublime, the Replacements, School of Fish, the Del Fuegos and Beck.

Micheal Bonner, program production supervisor for the student unions and a Fresno State music alumnus (2012), runs the Satellite Student Union and is also involved with The Pit, the Leon S. Peters Event Plaza mini amphitheater and The Ruiz hall at the Resnick Student Union. These areas regularly host musical performances during homecoming week and throughout the academic year. Bonner says his favorite event is the live band karaoke.

“They know about 200 charts and you just flip through it like you were a regular person going to sing at the bar. But you’re singing now with the band,” Bonner says. “If you think karaoke is fun, it is more fun with a live band.”

Attracting the Biggest Acts to Campus

Campus life got a boost beginning Nov. 7, 2003, when opera tenor Andrea Bocelli took the stage at the Save Mart Center, marking a major shift in the music scene on the Fresno State campus and the community beyond. With the Save Mart Center and a seating capacity of up to 16,000, the campus now enjoys more concerts and even bigger bands and tours than ever before.

“They no longer had to travel if they wanted to go see their favorite artists. They didn’t have to get to LA. They didn’t have to go to Sacramento. We were bringing the artist to them so that they didn’t have to get a hotel room,” says McElhinney, who started at the Save Mart Center in 2006.

Some acts who have come to campus in the past two decades include Madonna, Elton John, Metallica, Garth Brooks, Drake, Jay-Z, Britney Spears, Incubus, Kiss, Shania Twain, Tool, Foo Fighters and Pearl Jam, just to name a few. Recently, the Latino community has come out in droves to see artists such as Grupo Firme, Luis Miguel, Pepe Aguilar and Christian Nodal.

“Paul McCartney has been the top,” McElhinney says. “We were in a freeze frame because the crowd got to their seats, and they didn’t leave their seats, so the staff got to watch it. We still talk about that one. It was magical.”

From local acts to mega stars to quirky competitions like air guitar, these types of magical moments have helped shape the on-campus music scene for generations of Fresno State alumni and students.

– Benjamin Kirk is a communications specialist in the College of Arts and Humanities at Fresno State.
The 1970s ushered in an era of fearless experimentation and individuality in fashion, symbolizing a time of dynamic self-expression. Whether it was the spirited cheerleaders of the Bulldog squad or the everyday student, fashion choices epitomized a sense of freedom and creativity. Luxurious textures like corduroy, suede, crocheted, paired with crisp button-down shirts or kaleidoscopic prints allowed individuals to showcase their unique personalities. Hairstyles reflected this spirit of self-expression, with lush, voluminous hair and natural curls celebrated alongside afros, and distinctive facial hair styles such as the thick sideburns for men. Bell-bottom jeans, platform shoes, sleek blazers, and floppy hats or head wraps were indispensable elements of the '70s wardrobe, symbolizing the vibrant Bulldog community’s style and embracing the carefree ethos of the era.

During the 1980s, Fresno State showcased a vibrant blend of fashion and music in an era highly influenced by iconic pop culture figures such as Madonna and Michael Jackson. Students embraced extravagant styles and statement accessories, blending preppy elements like polo shirts, Oxford shirts, 501 Levi blue jeans and boat shoes with classic sweaters tied around the shoulders for a refined aesthetic. Flashdance-inspired “off the shoulder” sweaters were a trendy choice for girls, infusing a retro flair into their looks. Sportswear from brands like Adidas and Nike became must-have staples for everyday wear, with tracksuits and sneakers dominating the casual attire of Fresno State students.
2010s - present

Fashion at Fresno State campus in the 2010’s reflected a blend of cultural, technological, and social influences. Notable trends included the hipster style, characterized by vintage clothing and thrift finds, alongside the rise of athleisure wear, normcore, streetwear and minimalist fashion. Boho-chic remained popular, while techwear emerged for those interested in functional and futuristic attire. Sustainable fashion gained traction due to environmental awareness, and gender-neutral clothing styles became increasingly embraced. Social media platforms like Instagram and Pinterest played a significant role in shaping fashion trends, with influencers and bloggers impacting style. These fashion trends highlighted the diverse and evolving nature of the Bulldog campus, influenced by cultural movements and individual expression.

– Katie Xiong, Esra Hashem and Eddie Hughes contributed to this story.

1990s

In the early 1990s, style took a turn towards low maintenance after the extravagance of the 1980s. While platform sneakers stood out, minimalist fashion gained popularity among Bulldog college students. Clean lines, neutral colors and simple silhouettes became the go-to, reflecting an understated and refined approach to dressing. Hip-hop culture heavily influenced fashion with baggy jeans, oversized hoodies, and statement accessories like baseball caps and bucket hats. The loose overall became a signature piece, embodying minimalist simplicity with its effortless silhouette, a stark departure from the frills of the ’80s.

2000s

The shift from the 1990s to the early 2000s marked an evolution in fashion, with many trends seamlessly transitioning. However, pivotal events such as 9/11 ushered in a more conservative style, leaving a lasting impact. Concurrently, the rise of the Internet, propelled by platforms like MySpace and YouTube, redefined how celebrities influenced trends. Notable trends included ubiquitous low-rise jeans paired with crop tops or layered tank tops, dominated by brands like Abercrombie & Fitch and Hollister. Cargo pants, graphic tees, chunky sneakers, velour tracksuits, halter tops, and mini skirts were among the essentials on campus. Subcultures like emo and urban streetwear, inspired by music and hip-hop culture, gained significant traction.
A glimpse at Bulldog cultural activism across the years

By Esra Hashem (’13, ’16, ’21)

In the fourth floor of the Fresno State library, tucked away in the Special Collections Research Center, lies a box with the label “Campus Unrest.” It documents the years leading up to the first Vintage Days at Fresno State in 1975. “Unrest” is a common word to describe the significant cultural, social and political turmoil at that time. The 1960s were characterized by anti-war protests and the Civil Rights Movement, and Fresno State students and faculty joined college campuses around the world in taking part in widespread political and social activism.

“A lot of modern day activism was born at institutions of higher learning,” says Varselles Cummings, director of the Cross Cultural and Gender Center at Fresno State. “If we think about the Civil Rights Movement, for example, much of that movement and push was from college students. Activism is bred here.”

At Fresno State, students protested in the thousands against the Vietnam War, which ended one week before the start of the inaugural Vintage Days. Also in the 1960s and 1970s, they activated along with the United Farm Workers movement to advocate for the rights of Central Valley farm laborers. Historical newspaper clippings showcase the controversy that ensued when students attended a rally in support of a Black Panthers spokesperson. Students and faculty also protested about personnel issues and for programs for ethnic minorities.

What did the campus look like then? Different than it does today. Of the 14,846 students enrolled in fall 1971, 80% were white. Today, Fresno State is a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution, with a population of nearly 24,000 students, 15.8% of whom are white.

Activist voices

As the years progressed, student demographics shifted and diversified. Manuel Olgin recalls arriving at Fresno State in spring 1971. He was part of the growing Chicano movement on campus. Olgin says the 1970s were a time of adjustment for society – for families to adjust to their children becoming first-generation college students, for high school teachers to encourage Chicanos to further their education, for college faculty to accept a more diverse student body, and for the launch of new programs and organizations.

“What our community needed here is pride in ourselves,” he says. “It’s not always easy, but if you have something that reflects and celebrates where you came from, who you are and where you’re going, that’s a Fresno State success model.”

In an effort to increase representation on campus, Olgin and fellow graduate student Tony Garduque launched the Chicano/ Latino Commencement Celebration in 1977 as a part of their master’s theses. Today, the tradition brings thousands to campus annually.

“I’m astounded by our growth,” Olgin says. He remained involved on campus as an employee for years, and is still involved as a founding member and president of the Chicano Alumni Club, which also launched in 1977. What he hopes for Fresno State is continued representation of Chicanos among administration and faculty.

“I think there is vast room for improvement. You can’t ever say we’re done; we have to keep improving,” he says. “But I’m proud of Fresno State, and I always will be. I’m a Bulldog for life.”

The late 1970s and 1980s saw an influx of Southeast Asian immigrants to the Valley. Dr. Katsuyo Howard, who arrived at Fresno State in 1972 from Japan, knew what it was like to be a foreigner in an American university. She advocated for the creation of Southeast Asian Student Activist voices

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In the late 1980s, 14 students formed the Gay Lesbian Student Alliance (now called Unitied Student Pride). They established a booth on campus, which was burned down by vandals shortly thereafter. A few years later, in 1991, Fresno hosted its first Pride parade, which lasted 10 minutes before ending in a brawl with the Ku Klux Klan. Dr. Peter Robertson, who was a student at the time and one of the founding members of the club, recalls the events.  

“It was an interesting time to be out and proud on campus. We had a lot of support from our allies, but also a lot of pushback,” says Robertson, who is now the director of alumni connections at Fresno State. “While it was traumatic, we would not be where we are today if we had not done that then.”  

Some of the recent progress Robertson is proud of includes witnessing the Pride flag being raised in June 2021 – now a yearly tradition – and the annual Rainbow Graduation Celebration, which was established in 2014.

“Looking back, I am so grateful for my lived experiences because it’s made me the person I am today,” Robertson says. “I would not be so passionate about helping students if my life at Fresno State as a student had been easy.”

Services to help better serve students of these backgrounds.  

“If I didn’t have my background, I wouldn’t have been able to advocate for different approaches to teaching and counseling,” she says. “I used my learned knowledge to advocate for change. I wasn’t a refugee like many of these students were, but being a foreigner is applicable and helped me connect to them. And I immersed myself as much as I could – I even visited refugee camps, so I could better learn.”  

Today, there are over 2,700 Asian students enrolled at Fresno State. The Valley has one of the largest Hmong populations in the country. The university’s Hmong minor was the first of its kind on the West Coast, and, most recently, the university library entered a repository of historical Hmong stories.  

“The center’s vision is to create and maintain a campus of respect, inclusion and equal opportunity. It has programs and services for African American, Native American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino/a and LGBTQ+ populations. The center is housed under the Division of Equity and Engagement, led by the university’s first-ever diversity officer, Booker.”

“Understanding the trajectory that higher education has gone through in the last century. It was very monolithic, created for and by a certain, particular type of individuals, which were white, cisgender, Christian men,” Booker says. “And so over the last century or so, access has begun to allow different people from different types of backgrounds and beliefs to start coming in. The university diversity officer position is really a response to that. It’s about helping individuals feel like they belong in a place that was historically not for them, but today, it is for them.”

The ongoing work  

Fresno is nestled in one of the most culturally diverse regions in the nation, and Fresno State history consists of countless significant cultural moments – ones that have challenged, enriched and transformed us.  

Booher acknowledges that sometimes higher education is slow to respond to the demands of activists – but that their activism is never in vain.  

“Higher education is a system that was created to maintain itself and continue to reproduce the same thing over and over. And that’s why change is slow,” she says. “That is across the globe, not just Fresno State.”

But change has happened and is still happening.  

A look at Fresno State’s history showcases its rich diversity. The College’s first ethnic supplements, for example, were launched 55 years ago. The annual affinity celebrations for cultural groups during graduation began in 1977 with the first Chicano/ Latino Commencement, founded by Olgin and Gandue. The Peace Garden (comprised of monuments of social justice leaders) was established in the 1990s, and is still growing today. And most recently, for the 10th consecutive year, Fresno State was awarded the INSIGHT into Diversity Higher Education in Excellence in Diversity (HEDD) Award.

But the work is ongoing, and fostering an inclusive and equitable campus requires critical thought and community collaboration. Cummings himself, a Black man, recalls growing up in Fresno being unsure if Fresno State was the right place for him. His own experience highlights the need to continue fostering an inclusive environment.

“My hope for the future of Fresno State is that we continue to grow and move the needle so that students who are currently enrolled here see this as a place that belongs to them, that they can be proud to say that they attended,” Cummings says. “And that new students and future students see this as a real contender, not just because of academic accolades or rankings, but because they feel like this is the place that will support and grow them holistically and embrace all of the identities and perspectives that they bring to campus.”

-- Ezra Hashem is the director of strategic communications for University Marketing and Communications at Fresno State.
While music, food and fashion have helped shape student life on campus for decades, perhaps nothing has captured the hearts of students, alumni and the community quite like Fresno State athletics. For those who are Bulldog born, Bulldog bred, sports serve as the vehicle to keep people engaged with campus year in and year out.

To gain insight on the evolution of Fresno State sports, look no further than Pat Ogle, who served as executive director of the Bulldog Foundation’s annual fund from 1982 to 2009 and continues to work part-time as a development officer.

After graduating from Fresno State in 1965, Pat Ogle worked in TV broadcasting for 17 years before returning to his alma mater as a fundraiser for the athletic program. From emceeing donor events with his signature voice and unique ability to connect with the audience, to rallying the Red Wave each year during fund drives, Ogle has had a courtside seat to the rise of the Bulldogs, and helped the Bulldog Foundation grow into a multimillion dollar fundraising arm.

“I’m almost a lifelong resident of the San Joaquin Valley,” Ogle says. “I have a 60-year association with Fresno State as a student, as a donor, as a volunteer and as an employee. I grew up like many people in the Valley do — with Fresno State as a real focus.”

Fresno State Magazine: With that 60-year viewpoint, you’ve seen a lot of milestones from this program. How has athletics evolved over the years?

Pat Ogle: At one point in the ’70s, the community leaders said, ‘We want Fresno State to be as good as it can be, and we think athletics is a front porch to the whole university.’ And so the Bulldog Foundation started raising funds to pay for student-athlete scholarships and recruiting. That kicked off the interest, and it has continued to grow over the years. Most of our residents have that mentality of really wanting to get behind something. Fresno State is fortunate in that it’s the only major, Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) football-playing institution in this huge area of Central California. People who enjoy athletics, who want to feel like they’re supporting something, can attach themselves to Fresno State. And they certainly have over the last five generations.

FSMag: Can you tell me a little bit about how Fresno State athletics has changed over the years?

Ogle: Well, another wonderful fact about the people who support Fresno State athletics through donations or through just interest and being a fan and coming to an event, is that most of them have a real broad-based interest. And so, as they contributed dollars for scholarships or for recruiting or for special projects, most of the facilities around here have been built by donations.
**FSMag**: What are some of the highlights across Fresno State athletics over the years?

**Ogle**: There are certainly legacy markers out there. You have the Freedom Bowl in football, the National Invitation Tournament in basketball in Madison Square Garden in New York, a national championship in softball, a national championship in baseball. Those are real high watermarks. And there are all the conference championships. Another key point is our student-athletes, just like most of our population on campus, stay in the Valley after their graduation. And so half the former student-athletes are out there coaching or being fans and helping organize. We talk about the pride of the Valley, we talk about the Green V Society of recognizing agriculture. All of those are marketed throughout this wide, wide area.

**FSMag**: What do those moments mean? How do they bring us together?

**Ogle**: Well, after the legacy moments, there have been parades, and you don’t get parades at the college level very often. From the Fresno airport to the campus after the NIT championship in basketball in ‘83, after the softball championship in ’98, after the baseball championship in ’08, people lined the streets to welcome back their Bulldogs. That just shows, not only are they coming to games, not only are they watching, not only they’re bringing their young children to games for them to become Bulldog fans, but they have a real heart for the program.

**FSMag**: Tell me about the Red Wave and where that nickname for the fan base came from.

**Ogle**: When the program started to take off because of the support we had, many of our sports, including men’s basketball, would have people travel, especially to other California destinations to attend games. And one of the big trips was going to San Jose to play the Spartans. We had busloads of people. We had more people at the San Jose State game than they did. One of [The Fresno Bee’s] big writers at the time, Ron Orozco, in his story said it was like a Red Wave going over Pacheco Pass. That just took off. It’s this wonderful representation of people not only donating and supporting, but going on the road to events.

**FSMag**: What does Fresno State athletics mean to this community?

**Ogle**: For most of us, we look for joy in our life. We look for fun in our life, and that’s what Bulldog athletics can bring to an individual or a donor or their family. They can come to competitions, and they can know that when we have national success, ‘Hey, I’m part of that success.’ I think that’s what drives most Bulldog fans. They’re having fun, they’re finding joy and they are supporting a wonderful university that is unique.

**FSMag**: What can someone expect in terms of atmosphere when they go to a Fresno State athletics event?

**Ogle**: Bulldog sports really is a special event no matter what sport you’re talking about, because most of our sports are very well attended and the atmosphere is really special. Even if it’s a crowd of 100, or it’s a crowd of 10,000, or it’s a crowd of 40,000, because everybody has that Bulldog spirit and they are really involved in being part of that particular game or match.

**FSMag**: What do you think it says about the folks who are part of the Red Wave, who are willing to travel, who are committed to this university and to supporting the Bulldogs?

**Ogle**: The majority of Fresno State fans are definitely using their time, their treasure and their talents to support their Bulldogs, and they are willing to do the donations necessary. They are willing to go on the road to support away because they really enjoy it and they have the heart for it.

**FSMag**: What makes our region special in that sense?

**Ogle**: Maybe it’s more about the uniqueness of these types of events in the Valley. We don’t really have [major] professional teams. A football game in terms of the scale is pretty unique for this region. People who have an interest in athletics can look to Fresno State, and they know that’s where they can enjoy that. Even if I didn’t attend the school, I live in the Valley, I have pride in the Valley, and I’m going to support the Bulldogs.

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Eddie Hughes is senior editor for Fresno State Magazine. Victoria Cisneros is a marketing and communications strategist. Matt Mealer, senior video producer, also contributed to this story.
Perseverance with Purpose

Health challenge creates purpose for campus event coordinator

By BoNhia Lee

From the third-floor windows of the Resnick Student Union in April 2023, Shawna Blair caught a glimpse of the bustling Vintage Days celebration below.

In her five years as coordinator of major events and staff development for the Student Involvement Center, which includes leading students in the planning of Vintage Days, 2023 was her biggest challenge.

The three-day festival was relocated from the grassy area in front of the Satellite Student Union to the parking lots between student housing and the new Resnick Student Union because of construction on campus. Blair and the student planning committee didn’t know what to expect.

And during much of the planning that year, Blair worked virtually from home and from the chair she sat in while receiving chemotherapy for breast cancer.

Now cancer free, Blair watched from the third-floor windows in the Resnick Student Union as thousands enjoyed the festival below. Vintage Days like she did every other year talking to vendors, colleagues and old students who worked for her. So, she mustered up what energy she had to take a peek at her team’s hard work — from a safe distance high above.

Now cancer free, Blair had reconstruction surgery in February and returned to work just in time to finish planning and celebrating the 50th Vintage Days festival on campus.

“I’m always amazed every year of what we make happen,” says Blair, a two-time alumna. “I was at home doing what I could, working remotely, but showing that things are still possible. I may have cancer. I am not cancer. It is a part of me now, but it is not me. It’s not all of me.”

Getting Involved

Vintage Days was one of the campus events that Blair always wanted to help plan when she was a student in the early 2000s. Originally from Madera Ranchos, she sold corn dogs as part of the Catholic Student Association, but didn’t have time to do more. Blair was a student employee for the Student Union, worked in the old campus post office, was a senator for Associated Students, Inc. and a student coordinator for USU Productions on top of her studies as a recreation administration and leisure studies major.

Shawna Blair
Coordinator, major events and staff development
Student Involvement Center

She would later earn her master’s degree from Fresno State in education administration and supervision and was named a Graduate Dean’s Medalist upon graduation. She was hired by the Student Union in 2006, where she oversaw USU Productions, now known as Spotlight Events. In 2019, she became coordinator for major events: Welcome Week, homecoming, commencement and Vintage Days.

“Part of my goal is that [students] have the same experience that I had,” Blair says. “That we can help them feel like Fresno State cares that they belong. Give them something fun and exciting to do and to really say that ‘I love Fresno State’ and ‘why not Fresno State?’”

Health Challenge

Blair felt a sharp pain in her chest after finishing her lunch on campus one day in summer 2022. She thought it was a heart attack, but a visit to the emergency room ruled out any
problems. A follow up with her general practitioner uncovered a problem with her gallbladder, which would need to be removed.

But Blair soon noticed something else — a lump in her left breast. She had just turned 40 that summer. It was a two-month wait after her initial doctor’s appointment for a mammogram. She knew she had to be seen, so Blair put herself on the waitlist and checked in with the medical office often to see if there were any cancellations. The call for a mammogram and ultrasound came in November.

About a week later, she had her gallbladder removed and received the official confirmation of her breast cancer diagnosis. The following weeks were a whirlwind, she says. To keep her stress level down, her headspace in the right place and her body healing, Blair ordered a hat that said “breast cancer warrior” and T-shirts with positive sayings related to breast cancer.

She started a six-month chemotherapy treatment in January 2023 where she met her “breasties,” new friends also undergoing treatment. They would schedule their appointments together as the weeks rolled by. And Blair kept working.

“I was immuno-compromised so I worked remotely. Last year, when I was in the thick of it — planning Vintage Days — I was able to Zoom in,” Blair says. “The staff helped out when they could. I was texting them reminders and doing whatever I could to be supportive from home. They did a really amazing job.”

Fresno State colleague and friend Patricia Benavidas had to remind Blair often to stop calling and to rest. Blair is of that era where you give 110% at work, maybe only 90% on your lowest days, Benavidas says.

“I have a lot of respect for her and her work ethic,” Benavidas says. “She’s dedicated a lot of herself to her work. I said let this be a lesson for you to put that same commitment into yourself.”

Blair finished chemotherapy on June 22, 2023, and Benavidas was there to present her with a silver crown and pink feather boa. There were cookies and Blair handed gifts to her “breasties” and nurses.

Benavidas handed pink ribbon stickers to the Student Involvement staff and encouraged them to send Blair photos of support.

“We made it a party for everybody,” Benavides says. “We’re event planners, our job is to make people feel welcome and to have a sense of belonging. We’re always trying to celebrate.”

Recovery

Blair walked the Christmas in July 5K in Fresno a month after she finished chemo. It was a goal she made when her breast cancer journey started six months before. Then she had a double mastectomy. By early August, she was in remission and cancer free. She has some lingering side effects from her illness and will remain on medication and treatment for some time.

“Right now you push through it and do what you can and try to stay positive,” Blair says.

“[This disease] is hitting younger people,” Blair says. “The one thing you can do for yourself is to do self checks and get yourself into a doctor.”

“I hope to start doing presentations or workshops, not only about my story, but to provide information, to bring purpose to this,” Blair says. “It helps me.”

Her future goal includes bringing a breast cancer walk back to Fresno, maybe even to Fresno State.

– BoNhia Lee is a communications specialist at Fresno State.
1950s

Alisdair Sharp (1954) was appointed as principal of Clovis High School. He retired in 1990 after 36 years of service.

1960s

Jim Schulte (1973) received the Eagle of Excellence Award from the Clovis Chamber of Commerce. He served as an adjunct faculty member in agricultural engineering and plant propagation.

1970s

Jonathan Held (1980) has been appointed to the Missouri Wine and Grape Board. He is a former commissioner of the Clovis Community College Foundation.

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Frank Wittwer (2005) was honored through a display of the F/A-18A Hornet outside the Main Gate and Gate 2 of Arnold Air Force Base.

Courtney Young (2001), a speech-language pathologist at Community Regional Medical Center, was presented the first TULIP award for going above and beyond for her patients and colleagues.

2010s

Chris Carter (2011), a Fresno State football standout and seven-year NFL veteran, is now assistant general manager for recruiting and personnel for UCLA football.

Robert DeSoto (2016) is now the general manager of Learfield’s Wyoming Sports Properties.

Erika R. Gamez (2014) is the music director of the all-female musical "Lizzie" in Hartford, Connecticut.

Eric D. Hadden (2014) is now director for the Water, Energy, and Technology Center at Fresno State.

Cactus Sam Harris (2012), an organist and director of worship for University Presbyterian Church, was recognized as a 2023 Difference Maker by GV Wire.

Nathan Kandler (2016) is a winemaker at Thomas Fogarty Winery in Santa Cruz.

Andrea Kelly (2015) is co-executive director of FoodLink in Tulare County.

Zaeem Shaikh (2022) is a reporter covering breaking news for The Dallas Morning News.

Mariela Vasquez Herrera (2023) is a field organizer with Project California.

Elizabeth Ochoa (2011) was honored as the Region 7 California League of Schools Elementary Educator of the Year for 2023-24.

Constantine Pappas (2014) made his debut on Broadway in "Harmony" at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in New York.

Thurabudeen Sahul (2016) is a power electronics mechanical engineer at Magnix in Seattle.

Alex Soto (2019) is the media education specialist for Community Media Access Collaborative.

Erica Stanciff (2010) is a winemaker for Trombetta Wines in Sonoma.

Dustin Thompson (2017) is the Veterans Resource Center student services coordinator at Merced College.

Malarie Thompson (2012) won the 2023 North Carolina Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Excellence in Ag Award.

Zachary Worden (2015) is the head of sales for Arable, a crop intelligence company in San Francisco.

Payton Allen (2023) is now head baseball coach at Mt. Whitney High School in Visalia.

DaRon Bland, former Fresno State cornerback, was selected to his first Pro Bowl with the Dallas Cowboys after leading the NFL with nine interceptions.

Oscar Duran (2022) is senior geomatics analyst for Towill Inc. in Fresno.

Alex Garcia (2021) was elected as mayor of Wasco.

Anissa Martinez (2022) joined Great Day at KMPH 26 as a news reporter.

Kelsey McKenny (2023) is senior vice president at Newmark Pearson Commercial in Fresno.

Raymond Pun (2020) was elected 2024-25 president of the American Library Association.

Madi and Dom, former Fresno State students, welcomed their first child, Dempsey Devine Breshears, on March 14.

Madison (Casagrande) Ehresman (2015) and Tyler Ehresman welcomed their daughter, Elliot, on Nov. 10.

John Yergat (2003) and Janet Yergat (2017) were married on Aug. 8 in Peninsula Papagayo, Guanacaste, Costa Rica.

Lyn Myers (2014) is now chief operating officer for the Fresno Chaffee Zoo.

Elizabeth Ochoa (2011) was honored as the Region 7 California League of Schools Elementary Educator of the Year for 2023-24.

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In Memoriam

‘For thee, our hopes and memories’

Darrell Bacon (1981), Nov. 2, Del Rey.
Van Dennon Baker (1972), Dec. 2, Sacramento.
Alberta Ann Beale (1968), Feb. 11, Portland, OR.
Marianne Beard (1979), Dec. 2, Clovis.
Heather Beard (1977), Jan. 20, Redding.
Lawrence Bop (1972), Aug. 20, Fresno.
Marilyn Buckner (1965), Oct. 1, Reedley.
Daisy Lee Bitter (1953), Aug. 24, Visalia.
Joan Bobglich (1972), Nov. 25, Fresno.
James Hallowell (1962), Sept. 15, Fresno.
Laura Bonita (1954), Dec. 12, Fresno.
Darrel Boone (1963), Dec. 24, Fresno.
Brian Bone (1961), Nov. 13, Fresno.
Terry Borchardt (1970), Nov. 10, Fresno.
Chuck Borup (1962), Jan. 16, Fresno.
Andrew John Camoroda (2017), Mar. 21, Fresno.
Daisy Lee Bitter (1953), Nov. 3, Anchorage, AK.
Anna Bonsgire (1972), Dec. 2, Clovis.
Darrell Bacon (1981), Nov. 2, Del Rey.
Van Dennon Baker (1972), Dec. 2, Sacramento.
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Celebrate the past by creating the future

After 50 years of Vintage Days, Bulldog spirit continues to shine bright. Fresno State’s future is boundless thanks to champions like you. Keep up your connection to your beloved university. Attend an event, become a mentor, volunteer, cheer on our ‘Dogs or support student programs.

This is your campus. Learn more about getting involved at president.fresnostate.edu/get-involved.html