

**Dr. Mary A. Papazian  
President, San José State University  
Rotary Club of Saratoga  
Saratoga, CA  
February 16, 2018  
12:15 p.m.**

Thank you, Sandie, and thank you all for that warm Rotarian welcome. It's a privilege to speak to you today.

I'm told the Saratoga Rotary Club first met in 1955. As it happens, that's also the year a young man with a penchant for hard work...a winning smile...and a nose made permanently crooked in the water polo pool...began his studies at San José State University.

I mention this student because the 23<sup>rd</sup> Olympic Winter Games are currently underway in South Korea. I'm sure you've been following the events.

This San José State student, who graduated in 1959 with a degree in management, would go on to manage one of the greatest successes in Olympics history. In the process, he would help save the modern Olympics movement.

I'm talking, of course, about Peter Ueberroth, CEO of the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles.

Back then, the Games were in big trouble. The Munich Games had ended in horrific violence. The Montreal Games were a financial failure. The Moscow Games of 1980 had fallen victim to global politics.

In fact, when the bidding opened for the 1984 Games, only two cities bothered to apply. One was Los Angeles—the citizens of which were decidedly underwhelmed by the prospect. The other was Tehran—which, at the time of the selection process, was otherwise occupied with the Iranian revolution.

New thinking and approaches were needed, and Peter was more than up to the task. Rather than build expensive new facilities—which, as so many host cities had learned, can quickly turn into White Elephants—Peter would embrace Southern California's sprawl, and for the most part scatter the Games across the region, in already available venues.

To raise money, and to take taxpayers off the hook, he decided to limit severely the number of corporate sponsors. This might seem counter-intuitive. But this decision made the sponsorships more valuable to corporate bidders, and allowed the LA Games to negotiate significantly greater amounts for the privilege. But ETQ.00000912 0 612

There's Harry Edwards, Class of '64—a scholar who is arguably the social conscience of sports in America, the founder of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, and a regular presence on our campus to this day.

There's the late Gaylord Nelson, class of '39—a U. S. Senator who created Earth Day, and galvanized a generation of environmental activists at a critical juncture for the health of our planet.

I could go on. From members of Congress, to Super Bowl coaches, to founders of major corporations, I'd put our who's who list of distinguished alumni up against that of any university in the country. Bar none.

But when it comes to people, the most significant San José State alumni are all around you. There are nearly 270,000 Spartan alumni. Two-thirds of them live in the Bay Area alone. You know them...but you may not know their common link to San José State.

Maybe they run your neighborhood bank or credit union.

They might be the kindergarten teacher at your kid's elementary school, or serve as the high school principal.

grandparents of San Jose State students, and sons and daughters (or even grandsons and granddaughters) of Spartans of yesteryear.

How about all you Spartans in the room stand up and be recognized.

Now, I'd like to take a moment and say this about all you members of the Saratoga  
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I'm an English literature scholar by training, and one of the great poets I studied

