



SILVER & GOLD

NEWSLETTER

NEVADA/CALIFORNIA REGION

THE NEVADA/CALIFORNIA ΦΘΚ HONOR SOCIETY

REGIONAL BOARD'S MISSION IS TO EMPOWER RESILIENT AND PASSIONATE LEADERS WHO SERVE THE REGION WITH INTEGRITY AND HEART. WE ARE HERE TO SERVE ALL THE CHAPTERS AND WILL WORK TIRELESSLY TO UNITE THE REGION IN UPHOLDING THE VALUES OF PHI THETA KAPPA.

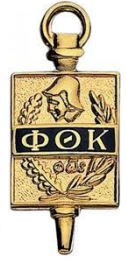
In this edition of the regional newsletter, we highlight:

- ⇒ **Myriam's Corner**
- ⇒ **NV/CA Regional and Alumni Board**
- ⇒ **Meet your new Regional Officers**
- ⇒ **JKCF Scholarship Winners**
- ⇒ **2019 Honor Case Study Challenge**
- ⇒ **2020 Civic Scholar**
- ⇒ **Word by Alumni Association President**
- ⇒ **Documentary Project**

Share your Chapter updates with the region by sending an email to: nvcommunications@gmail.com



NEVADA/CALIFORNIA REGIONAL BOARD MEMBERS



Regional Officers:

President– **Dimitrius Jake Loa**

Communications VP– **Maysa Wilson**

Webmaster VP– **Adrian Tuschek**

Northeast District VP- **Afsoon Aflaki**

Northwest District VP– **Karina Thiagarajan**

Southeast District VP- **Enrique Baranda**

Nevada District VP - **Rachel Holderread**

Southwest District– Vacant

Regional Coordinator:

Myriam Moody

Associated Regional Coordinators:

Bruno Rhodes

Cathy Gillis

Alumni Advisors:

Sal Addotta

Paul Roscelli

Bill Dimopoulos

Alumni Executive Board:

President- **Kristine Lowe**

Executive Vice President– **Sheila Burson**

Secretary– **Christina Essaqi**

Treasurer– **Barbara Dimopoulos**

Directors-At- Large:

Betina Rubio



Myriam's Corner

Regional Coordinator

Hello NV/CA Region,

I hope all is well. It has been an interesting second quarter of the year, has it not? We started fine for the first for almost 3 months, then wham! What a rollercoaster it has been, but I know that you, with help, have weathered the storm. I know that you have come out stronger than when you reluctantly went into this situation. You have learned new skills, which some may be great to put down on your resume. You have discovered new ways of doing things, these can also be beneficial to bring up during interviews for some of those 4-year colleges or jobs. You have learned how to adapt and move on, and for this I congratulate you! I knew that you would succeed, why, because you are Phi Theta Kappans, and even more important to myself, you are part of the NV/CA Region of Phi Theta Kappa which you all the more special and resilient, of course in my humble opinion.

To those who graduated and transferred, CONGRATULATIONS!! Even these times could not stop you from completing this goal and moving onto the next step of your journey. Some of you were to move to a new city to attend the 4-year college, but alas, you are still at home taking classes online. Don't fret! The point is, you are **still** attending that university you applied to! That is a wonderful achievement! I wish you all the best and hope that you have great experiences, meet like-minded peers, and find professors in your field of study who could possibly be a mentor to you. To those members who are still with us, this year 2020-2021 proves to be an extraordinary year full of new adventures. Just wait and see what the board has planned. "See" you soon!

WEAREPTK

REGIONAL PRESIDENT

DIMITRIUS JAKE LOA

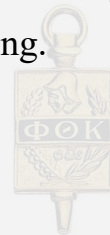
Alpha Pi Epsilon Chapter
Southwestern College
Chula Vista, CA

Dimitrius was born and raised in the beautiful Islands of American Samoa, where hospitality and leadership are its golden attributes. He moved to San Diego to start high school. He is a full-time college student at Southwestern College studying to become a Registered Nurse, with the ultimate goal of becoming a Nurse Practitioner and being able to build his own hospital and eventually expand that dream to a higher education route in creating a School of Nursing for the city of San Diego. Dimitrius was proudly raised by his beautiful mother who was also a nurse, but sadly is no longer here. But in her honor, everything he does is to give back what she has instilled in him. She is his ultimate inspiration. Dimitrius has an amazing first cousins who we call 1CC (First Cuzzies Crew)! They are all so close and his



leadership skills comes from them.

He is highly motivated by their love and support. Dimitrius was captivated by his peers who had this invigorating passion that truly showcased why this honor society of Phi Theta Kappa exists, because of it's never ending mission in transforming lives of students locally and internationally. He believes that in everything you do, you will need a vision for your life. Do not aim aimlessly not knowing what it is you are after. If you don't stand for anything, you will settle for everything.



COMMUNICATIONS

VICE PRESIDENT

MAYSA WILSON

Alpha Pi Epsilon Chapter

Southwestern College

Chula Vista, CA



Maysa Wilson is a full-time college student and member of the Alpha Pi Epsilon chapter at Southwestern college. Currently, she has one more year to receive an Associate Degree for Transfer in Communication Studies and Associate Degree in Psychology at Southwestern College, where she also works part time at Admissions and Evaluations office. Maysa joined Phi Theta Kappa in the Spring of 2019 and became an active member, gaining immense fulfillment volunteering and participating in chapter's programs and fundraisers. In addition to her academics she is a dedicated mother of two children and a military spouse.

Maysa was born in Turkmenistan and spent most of her life there, immigrating to America in 2013. Before moving to the United States, she was an interpreter and spent almost seven years working a high demanding

job in the telecommunication field. Additionally, being a military spouse gave her the opportunity to serve as the Family Readiness Group President for Naval Special Warfare, where she gained an incredible amount of experience working with fellow military families, and organizing and executing a variety of events. Maysa is looking forward to working alongside her fellow elected officers and proud to serve as your 2020 -2021 Communications VP. Despite all the challenges this year brought to us, we are resilient and strong enough to achieve our goals, we are Phi Theta Kappa!



NORTHWEST DISTRICT

VICE PRESIDENT

KARINA THIAGARAJAN

Alpha Sigma Alpha Chapter

De Anza College

Cupertino, CA



Karina Vishala Thiagarajan is the new Vice President of the Northwest district of Phi Theta Kappa. She is half Indian and half Chinese and was born into a poor family in India and adopted by Indians at the age of 7. Her adopted parents took her to the US and then eventually Singapore where she spent most of her formative years. Growing up in such diverse places has given her a tremendous understanding of different cultures, economic differences, and educational attitudes. It is that worldview and her emphasis on the importance of education that led her to study economics at De Anza College, and become a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society.

She is a member of the De Anza's Honors Program, Phi Theta Kappa and the founder of the Entrepreneur's Society at De Anza, a club geared towards teaching entrepreneurship and financial literacy. She is also the Chairperson of her college's Inter-Club Council (ICC),

where she manages the ICC budget and oversees the 92 clubs De Anza has to offer. As an honors student, she is passionate about her academics and her chosen major, economics.

She believes that peer mentorship and student leadership can help more students succeed in the college environment, and PTK is a big part of this. She is very involved in De Anza and passionate about helping the students to find their niche while building an environment that fosters collaboration and academic success. To this end, she is working to create a peer mentorship program at De Anza. She deeply appreciates PTK's goals to promote scholarship, mentorship, and student engagement and intends to lend her full support to all the chapters in the Northwest district and the overall region.



NORTHEAST DISTRICT

VICE PRESIDENT

AFSOON AFLAKI

Beta Eta Psi Chapter
Sacramento City College
Sacramento, CA



Afsaneh Aflaki, known to friends as Afsoon, is a full time student at the Los Rios Community College district. She is currently working toward her STEM degrees, pursuing three associate of Science degrees in Biotechnology, Biology and Chemistry. In order to better understand the laws and help her community she is also majoring in Political Science. And if four majors were not enough, she is also majoring in automotive technology so that she can fix her own used car and reduce the cost of her car repayment. She hopes to obtain her Bachelors of Science in Microbiology and Molecular Biology from Sacramento State university in 2021. Afsoon's journey with Phi Theta Kappa started in spring of 2019 when she was accepted as one of the members of the Beta Eta Psi chapter at Sacramento City College. Looking to become more involved, she ran

and was elected as the Vice President of Fellowship at her chapter the following semester and began actively participating in designing and implementation of her college projects, the Honor in action project and the community outreach program. She has served as president of Biotechnology club and the Vice President of Automotive tech student club at American River College in 2018. Off campus Afsoon divides her time volunteering with "The E 49 foundation", which aims to create small affordable housing for the homeless population in Sacramento, as well as delivering food to those affected by COVID19 through the "Grate Plate Delivery program".



SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

VICE PRESIDENT

ENRIQUE BARANDA

Beta Delta Omega Chapter

Mt. San Jacinto College

San Jacinto, CA



Enrique Baranda is a First-Generation Community College Latino student from Southern California. He is currently attending Mt. San Jacinto College (MSJC) and maintains a 4.0 GPA. Enrique will graduate in Spring of 2021 with his Associates of Science for Transfer degree in Business Administration. His goal is to transfer to the University of California, Berkeley's Haas School of Business, which is one of the most competitive undergraduate business schools in the country. His future educational goal is to pursue a Master's Degree in Educational Counseling to come back to his humble community and become a Counselor. He later would like to pursue his Doctorate Degree, specifically in the Educational Leadership Program (Ed.D) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Enrique was inducted into the Beta Delta Omega chapter in the Fall of 2019, then serving as the chapter's Leadership Officer for his Five-Star Chapter. Enrique is a full-time student who also works as a Student Mentor for the Accommodation Service Center (ASC) helping students with disabilities get through college successfully without any barriers. He is a Honors Student with the Honors Enrichment Program as well as serves as a Honors Peer Mentor. He also volunteers with his college's food pantry "Food 4 Thought".

In his chapter Beta Delta Omega, he has proudly helped organize events and support community activities like the Komen More Than Pink walk to spread the awareness of breast cancer to support medical research into cures. He also has assisted with his chapter's Honors in Action (HIA) project that created a greater awareness at his college about the effects of bullying. The project "Beyond Bullying Rally" impacted many students in his community making them feel welcomed and part of a supportive community that does not accept bullying in any form. Another event that touches his heart dearly was their annual Toy and Food Drive where his chapter raised funds to supply food and toys for families in need during the holiday season.

"It was truly moving seeing fellow Phi Theta Kappans and advisors work together as a team coordinating the necessary steps to making this action come to reality. Delivering the packages to the families' houses was rewarding. I was touched by seeing some of them get emotional and telling us that with our help they were able to provide the basic necessities to make their holidays joyful." - Enrique Baranda.

NEVADA REGION VICE PRESIDENT

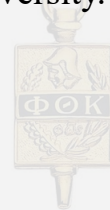
RACHEL HOLDERREAD

Alpha Pi Gamma Chapter
Truckee Meadows Community College
Reno, NV



Rachel Holderread joined the Alpha Pi Gamma chapter of Phi theta Kappa at Truckee Meadows Community College in the fall of 2017 and served as the chapter president for nearly 2 years after serving as VP. Rachel is nearing completion of two associate degrees for Business and for Communications. Communication Research and theory is her passion and she also enjoys speech and debate. Rachel's favorite Hallmark is service. She enjoys volunteering and working on community projects and serving as an advocate for others on campus. Rachel currently lives in the state capital of Nevada, Carson City, with friends and the combined household pet total of six cats and two dogs. Rachel adores animals, enjoys the outdoors, and loves to garden. In addition to her participation with Phi theta Kappa, Rachel served

two terms as an SGA senator, VP of the leadership program, on the student appeals board, and much more. She is most proud of becoming certified as a Student Support Network, (SSN), Peer Advocate through a training program developed by Worcester Polytechnic Institute which allows her to assist fellow students struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues. Rachel's motivated by helping others and holds an unwavering belief that we really can make the world a better place. Her mantra is "No mud, no lotus" and she reminds herself of this regularly to persist through and grow from adversity.



WEBMASTER VICE PRESIDENT

ADRIAN TUSCHEK

Alpha Pi Epsilon Chapter
Southwestern College
Chula Vista, CA



As both an officer and a member, Adrian Tuschek is both eager and committed. He first joined Phi Theta Kappa in 2018, one year after he started his journey towards a double major in Electrical Engineering & Computer Science.

Within his first month at Phi Theta Kappa, Adrian was quick to serve as the Public Relations officer. Adrian was responsible for building Phi Theta Kappa's presence on campus, social media and though planning events. The following year he then served as the Webmaster officer. While serving this position he was able to build his chapter both a professional and modern website from the ground up. Aside from being a student, Adrian Tuschek is also an experienced model and actor.

He has appeared on international television as well in numerous magazines, films, and television shows. Adrian Tuschek was born and raised in Vancouver, British Columbia. Upon working multiple jobs for two years after high school, he went straight to Arizona to start his degree there. He is now studying at Orange Coast College.



Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's (JKCF) 2020 Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship

Forty-three Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) members have received the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's (JKCF) 2020 Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. They will each receive up to \$40,000 a year for up to three years to complete an undergraduate degree.

In total, 50 two-year college students received the scholarship — 86 percent of them PTK members. The JKCF Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship is the nation's largest private scholarship program.

“Year after year, we see that the vast majority of Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholars are also Phi Theta Kappa members, and we don't believe this is by accident,” PTK President and CEO Dr. Lynn Tincher-Ladner said. “We know our members to be among the best higher education has to offer, and they are also among the most deserving. I am absolutely thrilled for all 43 of them, and I can't wait to see what they do with this extraordinary gift.”

In addition to the financial support, each Cooke Scholar will have access to college planning support and advising on how to successfully transition to a four-year school. They will also have the opportunity to connect with previous Cooke Scholars, 69 percent of whom have gone on to attend highly competitive colleges and universities.

Scholars were selected from nearly 1,500 applications and were evaluated based on academic ability and achievement, persistence, leadership, and service to others. Cooke Scholars also now have opportunities for internships, study abroad, and graduate school funding through the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

The Phi Theta Kappa members who have been named 2020 Cooke Scholars are:

California

Juan Becerra, Los Angeles Pierce College
Khadijah Bint Sadiq Abdulmateen, Mira-Costa College

Ava Davari, Mira Costa College
Hanan Dirirsa, San Diego Mesa College
Jenel Fraij, Hartnell College
Licol Zeinfeld, Mira Costa College

Nevada

Alan Cruz, College of Southern Nevada



2019 Honor Case Study Challenge

The Honors Case Study Challenge provides chapters with the opportunity to supplement their Honors in Action research based on the current Honors Study Topic (Transformations: Acknowledging, Assessing, and Achieving Change) with the use of newspapers of varying viewpoints. The Challenge also provides members an enhanced learning experience through the use of newspapers, print or online, and encourages them to stay abreast of current events.

Individual members or chapters may enter the competition. The four award-winning entries received a \$500 scholarship award.

Award Recipients

“The Transition Brought Forth by Gender Non-Conforming and Transgender Inclusion on Institutional Culture”

Alistair Butz

Beta Mu Alpha Chapter

Orange Coast College

Costa Mesa, California

Honorable Mention

“Under the Asphalt: The Transformation of Urban Rivers”

Beta Theta Omicron Chapter

Skyline College

San Bruno, California





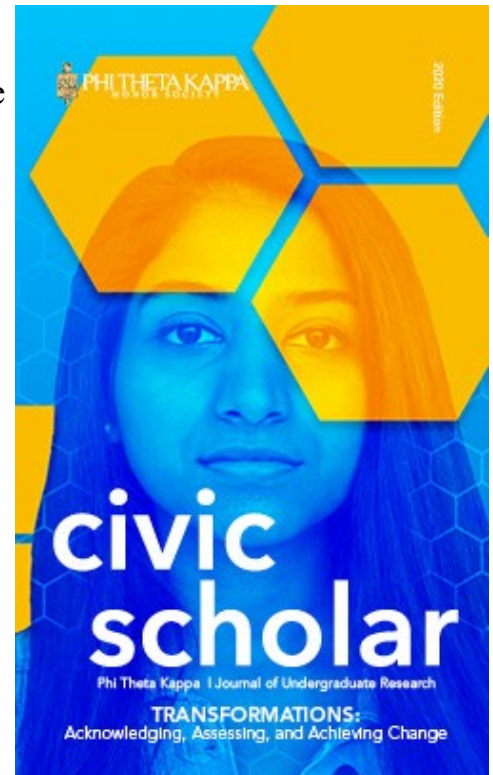
2020 Civic Scholar: Phi Theta Kappa Journal of Undergraduate Research.

Congratulations to the Beta Mu Alpha Chapter, Orange Coast College (Costa Mesa) for their “Networks of Life: The Dynamic Relationship Among Bees, Humans, and Ecosystems” Honors in Action Project for being selected for publication in 2020 edition of *Civic Scholar*.

Civic Scholar: Phi Theta Kappa Journal of Undergraduate Research is the first journal of its kind featuring substantive research and community engagement by community college scholars.

Projects selected for publication in *Civic Scholar* begin as chapters’ investigations into Phi Theta Kappa’s Honors Study Topic. Chapters then narrow their focus to a particular theme and develop research questions related to their chosen theme. Ultimately, students turn their research into action by using their findings to fill specific community needs.

The interdisciplinary projects found in *Civic Scholar* demonstrate the innovation found in today’s community colleges. Here scholars are conducting research that matters, drawing conclusions that reshape our understanding of the world, and taking action that leaves a lasting impact.



<https://www.ptk.org/Programs/HonorsinAction/CivicScholar.aspx>.



Article produced & submitted by:
Kristine Lowe, NV/CA Alumni
Association President

We're Here for You

One of the most rewarding joys of serving in the Nevada/California Regional Alumni Association is that I work side-by-side with those who mentored me during my years as a member and later as a Chapter and Regional Officer. They were there for me during every step of my Phi Theta Kappa experience.

Shortly after I joined Phi Theta Kappa and attended my first conference at Irvine, California in 2010, I felt insecure. I feared not fitting in because I was an older student (in my late 30s at the time). I shared my worries with my Advisor, Sal Addotta, and he welcomed me with open arms. When I attended a District Summit as a Chapter Officer, Treasurer Barbara Dimopoulos encouraged me to become more involved with our Nevada/California Region and consider running for regional office. I soon purchased the first of many cool-looking regional pins from our enthusiastic Advisor Bill Dimopoulos. After I was elected Regional President, Bill was there for me when I asked for advice on several matters – and also to buy more pins so I could exchange them with officers from other regions at the International Convention. During my service as a Regional Officer, our Executive Vice President, Sheila Burson, was there for me through her kind words of encouragement and the incredible plethora of knowledge she holds.

Through my mentors, I realized our Alumni Association is a boundless resource of support – from helping our Region and Regional Officer team throughout the year, to participating in chapter activities, to promptly responding to an email inquiry or phone call, and so much more. I am happy to be a part of this team and be there for you in your Phi Theta Kappa journey. Though I may be working beside them, I will always look up to my mentors. Our Secretary, Christina Essaqi, has been instrumental in making my job as President easier to manage by keeping our records updated and accessible, as well as informing all of our alumni members through our monthly newsletters. And I can always lean on Advisor Paul Roscelli for some last-minute advice and support as I take on this new stage of my Phi Theta Kappa experience.

In spite of what we all had to endure during this Shelter in Place order, I am excited for what is ahead for our Alumni Association and the Region. I am proud to welcome our new Director of Communications Thanh Nguyen, Director of Technology Geoffrey Alejo, and Directors-at-Large Betina Rubio, Jill Schragen and Justin Margolis. I am thrilled to be associated with this group of enthusiastic, accomplished, and dedicated individuals; it's a privilege to serve as their teammate.

I wish you a happy and safe summer; and we will see you at the Fall Leadership Conference! We are all here for you!



2020 Spring Leadership Conference

Article produced & submitted by:
Kristine Lowe, NV/CA Alumni
Association President

Thank You!

I want to give a special thanks to the volunteers who helped monitor the Regional Officer Candidate Meet & Greet virtual “rooms,” and assist our Regional Coordinator Team with the Spring Virtual Convention presentations.

Sheila Burson
Mark Campbell
Barbara Dimopoulos
Bill Dimopoulos
Christina Essaqi
Cathy Gillis
Justin Margolis
Bruno Rhodes

and

Katie Hill, Andrew Latimer, and the Endless Events crew for their hard work and promptly responding to our numerous inquiries.





Article produced & submitted by:
Kristine Lowe, NV/CA Alumni
Association President

Be A Part of A Documentary Film Project

I am directing and producing a documentary film on Phi Theta Kappans who are working on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic. And I want to hear your story.

If you are or know someone who is a Phi Theta Kappa student or alumni working in the medical, grocery retail, transportation, public safety, or an essential profession not yet mentioned, please contact me at kristine.lowe.ptk@gmail.com.

I will be documenting what it is like to put yourself at risk - and how this experience has affected you, your family, those you serve, and anything else we should know about fighting on the front lines.

I will schedule a Zoom meeting in early-July to hear your stories and give direction on how to provide footage for this documentary. I may also feature a few of your stories in a future alumni and regional newsletter. I will give a short presentation at the upcoming Fall Leadership Conference in October and show the completed film early next year. I look forward to hearing from you. And thank you frontline Phi Theta Kappans! You are keeping us safe, fed, sheltered, and alive.



Alumni Association President Kristine Lowe visited Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri shortly before the California statewide Shelter in Place Order took effect in March 2020.

In Service,
Kristine Lowe
NCRAA President