



**2025 President's Medal for Distinguished Service
and Honorary Doctorate Reception**
Wednesday, April 2, 2025



SACRAMENTO STATE

Honorary Doctorates recognize excellence in areas that benefit humanity, CSU campuses, the state, nation or world. They are conferred by the California State University Board of Trustees jointly in the name of the California State University and Sacramento State.

The President's Medal for Distinguished Service is awarded at Spring Commencement ceremonies to recognize outstanding service to Sacramento State.

The medal is not awarded every year, and it is reserved for individuals who have made the highest, and most positive, impact on Sacramento State.



**President Luke Wood
welcomes you to a special
reception honoring:**

THOMAS L. KARLO

General Manager Emeritus, KPBS/SDSU
2025 Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (LHD)

PAUL LAU

Chief Executive Officer and General Manager, SMUD
2025 Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (LHD)

RANDY SOLORIO

Gymnastics Head Coach, Retired, Sacramento State
2025 President's Medal for Distinguished Service,
Awarded Posthumously

THOMAS L. KARLO

General Manager Emeritus, KPBS/SDSU
2025 Recipient of an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (LHD)



Tom Karlo spent over 40 years as a leader in public media, making exceptional contributions that upheld and exemplified the values and mission of the California State University (CSU) system.

Mr. Karlo's career began while he was a student at San Diego State University, when he took a job as a camera operator at KPBS, the public media station affiliated with the university. He eventually became the station's general manager in 2009. Under his leadership, KPBS thrived, becoming one of the highest-rated public television stations in the nation and winning numerous awards, including three local Emmys.

Mr. Karlo's innovative approach included merging

the TV, radio, and digital departments into a single content-producing center, focusing on journalism and local content, which positioned KPBS as a leader in public media.

In 2023, he came out of retirement to lead Capital Public Radio (CPR), Sacramento State's public radio auxiliary, which was facing a severe financial crisis that threatened to collapse the station. As interim president and general manager, he implemented significant changes to stabilize the organization, including reducing expenses, streamlining operations, and increasing revenue. His efforts resulted in a 20% increase in radio listenership and a 12% increase in membership revenue. Mr. Karlo's leadership ensured the future of public media in Northern California, securing CapRadio's contract with NPR through 2028 and improving the station's overall sound and content.

Mr. Karlo's contributions extend beyond his professional achievements. He has been involved with various organizations, including the Public Broadcasting Service Board of Directors, California Public Television Board of Directors, and Sharp Health Care Board of Directors. Additionally, he worked as a cameraman for NFL Films for 40 years, filming 14 Super Bowls and earning an Emmy Award for Sports Cinematography.

A first-generation college student, Mr. Karlo exemplifies the CSU's mission to advance knowledge, provide opportunities for personal and professional development, and enrich the university and its communities. His work at KPBS and CapRadio significantly impacted public media, benefiting the California State University system and the broader communities in which he worked. Karlo has not only transformed public media but has also embodied the transformative power of education, inspiring future generations to use their skills and passion in service of their communities.

PAUL LAU

Chief Executive Officer and General Manager, SMUD
2025 Recipient of an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (LHD)



Paul Lau is an exceptional leader whose accomplishments and commitments to education, sustainability, diversity, equity, and inclusion have benefited the Sacramento Region and have had significant impacts nationally and internationally.

Mr. Lau is the CEO and General Manager of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). His distinguished 42-year career with SMUD began as a student intern while he was attending Sacramento State. Under his leadership, SMUD became a pioneer in clean energy initiatives, aiming to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. This ambitious goal reflects Mr. Lau's dedication to environmental stewardship, a value that

resonates deeply with Sacramento State's mission. He has driven innovative projects, including smart grid technology and large-scale renewable energy projects, and has supported educational programs through scholarships and workforce partnerships, particularly benefiting students from underserved populations.

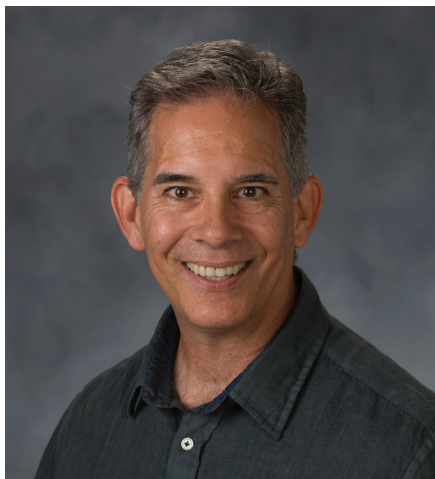
Mr. Lau also is active in international energy issues, serving as a delegate with the United States Energy Association and contributing to electrification and demand-side management in countries such as Bangladesh, India, and Jordan. He holds leadership positions in several organizations, including the Smart Electric Power Alliance, the Balancing Authority of Northern California, and the American Public Power Association. Locally, he serves on the boards of the Greater Sacramento Economic Council and Valley Vision, and he is a past chair of the Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce.

A Chinese immigrant who came to the United States in middle school speaking very little English, Lau's personal journey is a testament to his resilience and commitment to helping others. After graduating from Sacramento State with a degree in electrical engineering, he continued to give back to his alma mater by creating and maintaining internship and workforce development programs targeting diverse student populations, providing hands-on experience in clean energy technology and engineering. These programs help bridge the gap between the classroom and real-world career preparation, especially for students from underrepresented backgrounds. He also promotes STEM education among K-12 students in underserved communities, creating a pipeline of diverse students prepared to succeed in the CSU system.

Paul Lau's life and achievements embody the transformative potential of the California State University's mission. Through his visionary leadership, deep community engagement, and unwavering commitment to sustainability and education, he has become a powerful example of how individual passion can create meaningful, lasting change for society.

RANDY SOLORIO

Gymnastics Head Coach, Retired, Sacramento State
2025 Recipient of the President's Medal for Distinguished Service,
Awarded Posthumously



For nearly four decades, Randy Solorio was a pillar of Sacramento State, leaving an indelible mark on the University as a coach, mentor, educator, and performer. His passion for gymnastics, commitment to student-athletes, and love for his campus community made him a beloved figure whose legacy will continue to shape generations to come.

Solorio first arrived at Sacramento State in 1986 as an assistant coach for the Hornet gymnastics program, helping lead the team to seven conference titles and four NCAA Regional appearances. In 2016, he took the helm as head coach, guiding the Hornets to a Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF) championship in his first season and

overseeing some of the program's most successful performances. His coaching excellence earned him multiple accolades, including the USA Gymnastics Assistant Coach of the Year, and being a two-time recipient of the West Region Assistant Coach of the Year and the MPSF Assistant Coach of the Year awards. During the 2022-2023 season, Solorio was recognized for his outstanding service to the University, MPSF, and women's gymnastics.

Beyond his coaching achievements, Solorio was deeply committed to enriching the student experience. As a dedicated Kinesiology instructor, he transformed learning into a joyful journey, with his ballroom dance class becoming a campus favorite. His influence extended well beyond the athletic realm; he served on both the University Foundation and University Enterprises Inc. boards, notably playing a pivotal role in securing a state-of-the-art training facility for Sacramento State's gymnastics program.

An accomplished gymnast himself, Solorio competed at UC Davis from 1980-82, earning All-America honors in three events before finishing his academic journey at Sacramento State, where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees.

His love for performance extended beyond athletics. A gifted singer and actor, he graced local theater stages and could often be heard performing the national anthem before gymnastics meets, joined by his wife, Jori, and daughter, Kaycee.

Solorio's warmth, optimism, and unwavering dedication to Sacramento State made an immeasurable impact on all who knew him. His Hornet spirit remains woven into the fabric of the University he loved so deeply.

Thomas L. Karlo's Honorary Doctorate will be conferred during Sacramento State's College of Arts & Letters Commencement ceremony on Friday, May 16 at 8:30 a.m.

Paul Lau's Honorary Doctorate will be conferred during Sacramento State's College of Engineering & Computer Science commencement ceremony on Friday, May 16 at 6:30 p.m.

Randy Solorio's medal will be awarded during Sacramento State's College of Health & Human Services Commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 17 at 8:00 a.m.

WELCOME

Sacramento State President Luke Wood

RECOGNITION OF HONORARY DOCTORATE RECIPIENT

Thomas L. Karlo

RECOGNITION OF HONORARY DOCTORATE RECIPIENT

Paul Lau

RECOGNITION OF PRESIDENT'S MEDAL RECIPIENT AWARDED POSTHUMOUSLY

Randy Solorio

CLOSING REMARKS

President Luke Wood



SACRAMENTO STATE

csus.edu/commencement