

George Gowgani '72M.S., '75Ph.D.

Member, Board of Trustees, California State University System

book recognizes the exciting history of the Mackay School of Mines that begins with the famous Virginia City's Comstock Lode in the 1860's, when an Irish immigrant, John Mackay, made his fortune. Mackay was renowned worldwide as one of the four super rich Bonanza Kings. The Mackay family's financial support of the new mining school at the University in 1908 initiated a century of innovations, inventions, and space-age technological advances at the Mackay School of Mines.

In-depth classroom and laboratory studies plus extensive field trips around the West prepared Mackay graduates for leadership positions in the worldwide mineral industry. Whether they were hard at work or competing in international mining competitions, the Mackay students and their instructors had fun, as illustrated by the photos and stories furnished by alumni and emeriti faculty in this book of memories. Not just a book about the past, this book previews at least another 100 years of leadership in the high-tech world of mineral exploration, extraction, and processing, using outer space photography and digital analysis.

MACKAY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

The year 2008 will mark the 100th anniversary of the Mackay School of Mines. We will be commemorating this historic event by holding celebratory events during the week of April 21-26.

A GALA EVENT AND YOU'RE INVITED

You are cordially invited to walk through history with old friends, new friends, and colleagues on April 26 at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino, where great food, lots of laughs and a media presentation highlighting the last 100 years of Mackay success will be presented. To complete a perfect evening, enjoy live music and dancing.

For more information call the Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering at (775) 784-6115. [N](#)

George Gowgani's tenure as associate dean of the California Polytechnic State University was the culmination of a distinguished career as a researcher and faculty member. He retired from Cal Poly in 1998. He has served on numerous commissions and technical advisory committees, and was chair of the California Water Commission in 2000-2001. A native of Iran and a past recipient of a distinguished alumni award from Nevada's College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources, Gowgani was appointed by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2005 to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees for the California State University, the world's largest system of higher education with 23 campuses and 417,000 students. Most meaningful to Gowgani is that he was nominated by a former student, California State Senator Abel Maldonado.



George Gowgani with Governor Schwarzenegger.

1. You've been a teacher, researcher and administrator; you've traveled the world; and you speak six languages. How does this serve you as a California State University Trustee?

I have been involved actively in every facet of California State University system's challenges as a student, faculty member, administrator, fundraiser and volunteer advocate. Thus, I have a greater understanding and appreciation for the biggest higher education system in the world. California is a very diverse state; my very diverse background and upbringing has given me a sense and depth of understanding that one can only realize living through that experience. One prominent president once said, "when Trustee Gowgani talks, everybody listens."

2. What has been the impact of your University education and experience?

My experiences at the University had an incredible impact on my career. When I was doing my master of science work at the College of Agriculture, I experienced a totally different production agriculture, research, climate, soil and topography. I traveled to every corner of the state and I saw wonderful agriculture production that was far different than California's. What I enjoyed the most was the fact that students had an opportunity for hands-on education.

My Ph.D. work at the Desert Research Institute was a lifetime opportunity. I worked under Dr. F.W. Went, whom I believe was the greatest plant scientist who ever lived. His pioneer-

ing work and discovery of plant hormones still remains one of the outstanding discoveries in plant science.

3. Scientific breakthroughs and new technologies have transformed the study and practice of agriculture. What has this meant for you as a teacher and researcher?

There have been many scientific breakthroughs and modern technologies in recent years: computerization and information technology, genetic engineering and biotechnology have dominated most other developments. This is a very fast-changing area of study that requires narrow specialty, constant upgrade, innovative teaching and research.

4. What are the biggest challenges facing America's higher education systems?

American higher education systems face many challenges. First, not so many of our high school students are showing interest in science and mathematics. This is very troubling for the future of our scientific community, as we are falling behind many developing countries such as China. Second, the shortage of funding to attract and retain qualified faculty, update laboratories, facilities and equipment remains most challenging.

5. What advice would you give to a freshman student entering college?

Freshman students entering college must understand that college education extends far beyond books and classrooms. They need to become involved with their academic program, department, community, student government and professional organizations. To accomplish their goals students must decide early on what their interest is. With the cost of education in today's world, there is no time to be wasted.