Jeff Ceccarelli’s success began at Nevada

Jeff Ceccarelli ’76 has a full life—as a husband, father and executive of NV Energy. Jeff is the 2009 Nevada Alumni Association’s Alumnus of the Year. His is a true story of success for the University, his family and the company he represents.

Jeff began working as an intern for NV Energy—then called Sierra Pacific Power Company—in 1972 after he graduated from Sparks High School. Jeff played basketball for the Wolf Pack while at the University and continued to date his high school sweetheart, Rhonda, ’83, ’93M.A., who had become a Wolf Pack cheerleader. While Jeff was a sophomore at Nevada, he and Rhonda were married. He graduated in 1976, earning a degree in civil engineering.

After he graduated, NV Energy hired Jeff as an entry-level engineer. “I had an opportunity to watch this company grow from a small family operation into a large company, crossing both ends of the state. It has been a wonderful experience,” he says.

NV Energy and the NV Energy Foundation have donated generously to the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center, the Renewable Energy Program, scholarships and other programs. “It’s been fun to watch the campus change throughout the years from the center of campus down south, to now being up north with the Knowledge Center and student union. Being able to support those changes has been very rewarding. The new buildings on campus are awesome, and make the University a world class experience for the students.”

The industry-education partnership between NV Energy and the University created the interdisciplinary minor in renewable energy that began in 2007. Headquartered in the College of Engineering, but open to all students, many of the classes are offered at the Renewable Energy Center at the Redfield Campus in south Reno.

“One of the most unique opportunities has been leading NV Energy’s support for renewable energy studies within the University,” Jeff says. “Renewable and green energy studies are definitely a draw for our campus, and the Redfield Campus has been a great venue for many of those curriculums. It is one thing to see the concept, and another to see it in action.”

As a lecturer, he’s seen students’ excitement for learning about renewable energy firsthand: “Seeing young people’s reactions and interest in the topics has been terrific. We are uniquely positioned in this state with our geothermal resources in northern Nevada to capitalize on renewable energy and make it something special for the University and the state. NV Energy is behind the program one hundred percent.”

Jeff shares his professional success with the family who has given him so much support. “To be the president of NV Energy’s northern utility requires a lot of time. Without the support of my family—my wife, daughters, mother, father and brothers—it would not be possible. At some point they have all been called upon for support, and their support has been pivotal to my success.”

Jeff continues to give University students the same opportunity he was given in the NV Energy internship program: “Both for the north and south, our mainstay for hiring our technical talent is through our internship program, much like the way I started. Great recruiting opportunities exist to attract the best and brightest young minds. These are young men and women who will soon play great parts in their individual fields.”

Jeff makes his home in Reno with wife, Rhonda ’83 (special education), ’93M.A. (counseling and educational psychology), and his two daughters, Angela, a junior majoring in education at Nevada, and Jessica, who graduated summa cum laude from Emerson College in 2008.

—Juliane DiMeo

Professional Achievement

Charles “Chuck” Jeannes ‘80 (political science)
Chuck is president and CEO of Goldcorp Inc., which is headquartered in Vancouver, B.C. Goldcorp is the world’s second-largest gold mining company with nearly 10,000 employees working at 10 mines and several development projects throughout the Americas. While a student at Nevada, Chuck was active in campus affairs, serving as the director of ASUN’s Student Legal Services program in 1979-80. He was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, the Interfraternity Council and Blue Key. In 1978, he served as an intern for Sen. Paul Laxalt in Washington, D.C. through the political science department. Chuck met his wife, Susie (Gray) Jeannes ’82, when they were both working in the ASUN offices.

Janet (Spooner) Trefethen ‘71 (journalism)

Fatih Ozmen ’81M.S. (electrical engineering)
As Sierra Nevada Corporation’s (SNC) CEO, Fatih propels the company in its exploration of cutting-edge technologies. Fatih joined SNC in 1981, and with a strong vision for its future, Fatih and his wife, Eren ’85MBA, acquired the company in 1994. They set their plans to expand through a series of targeted acquisitions of 10 electronics firms, growing from 20 employees to approximately 2,000—mostly scientists, engineers and technical personnel—in 35 locations across 20 states. Through Fatih’s enthusiasm, insight and expertise, SNC continues to lead and maintain itself at the forefront of the electronics, communications, space and aviation industries. The corporation is distinguished as one of the top performing federal contractors in the United States, earning numerous awards, including the 2001 Nevada Distinguished Business of the Year.

Eren Ozmen ’85MBA
Eren is president and chairwoman of the board of Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC). After joining SNC in 1988, Eren and her husband, Fatih ’81M.S., acquired the corporation in 1994. Under their financial, technical and business leadership, which included acquisitions of 10 electronics firms, SNC has grown into one of the top U.S. woman-owned federal contractors, employing approximately 2,000 people in 35 locations across 20 states. Eren has received numerous leadership awards, including SNC being voted as a Best Place to Work by Nevada employees in 2009, winning the 2001 Nevada Distinguished Business of the Year, the 2002 Women’s Role Model of the Year, and 2005 and 2006 Government Computer News awards, which recognized Eren and SNC as one of the top woman-owned companies demonstrating excellence in applying IT solutions to the federal government.

John Larsen ’72 (accounting)
John is the founder and CEO of Port of Subs, Inc., a Reno-based company that franchises and operates Port of Sub’s specialty submarine sandwich restaurants. The first restaurant was opened on North Rock Boulevard in 1972 and still exists today. There are 150-plus units currently open with another 10 in development stages. John is responsible for corporate long-range planning, which primarily includes the growth and development of new restaurants. He is the past chair and continuing member of the Nevada Small Business Development Center Advisory Board, a board member of Nevadaworks and has been a director of Nevada State Bank since 1995. In addition to these boards, John has been involved with many other organizations helping small businesses in Nevada.

University Service

James “Jim” Carr ’79 (geological engineering)
Jim earned his master’s and Ph.D. from the University of Arizona after graduating from Nevada in 1983, he was appointed assistant professor of geological engineering at the University of Missouri-Rolla. He returned to Nevada in 1986, becoming full professor in 1994. In 1990, Jim was one of the principal grant writers who brought NASA Space Grant to NSHE, a program that continues to this day. In 1993, he received the F. Donald Tibbits Distinguished Teaching Award. His devotion to students includes his 16 years as chief faculty adviser of Nevada Alpha and the University’s chapter of the engineering honor society, Tau Beta Pi. He is also a mentor with the ASCENT program in collaboration with Procter Hug High School. Jim is married to Janice Freeman ’74, ’78 (biology).
Dorothy (Sewell) Gallagher ’47 (premedical)

A fourth-generation Nevadan, Dorothy has served as a Nevada System of Higher Education regent for 22 years. After retiring in 2002, Dorothy returned to the Board of Regents in 2004. She currently serves as chair of the Health Sciences System Committee and is a member of the Audit Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee. She also serves on the Presidential Evaluation Committee for the University of Nevada, Reno. Serving her fifth term on the Board of Regents, Dorothy was first elected in 1980 to represent 11 counties in rural Nevada. Dorothy has received numerous honors and awards including: Gold Medal from the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America; University of Nevada School of Medicine, Center for Health Services Outreach—The Rural Nevada, Reno. Serving her fifth term on the Board of Regents, Dorothy was first elected in 1980 to represent 11 counties in rural Nevada. Dorothy has received numerous honors and awards including: Gold Medal from the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America; University of Nevada School of Medicine, Center for Health Services Outreach—The Rural Nevada Who Dares to Care; Nevada Hospital Association, Trustee Excellence Award and the Volunteer Fireman from Spring Creek, Nevada Fire Department.

Outstanding Young Alumnus of the Year

Stephani Foust ‘01 (English), ’08 M.A. (counseling and educational psychology)

During her time as an undergraduate, Stefani served as ASUN vice president, two-term senator for the College of Education, coordinator of the Student Orientation staff and was a member of Circle K, Student Ambassadors and a variety of other campus groups. She returned to the University in 2003 for the position of admissions and recruitment coordinator. Stefani has served as a founding board member and president of the Reno Tahoe Young Professionals Network, president of the University of Nevada Young Alumni Chapter in 2008, and a board member on the American Heart Association Wedding Faire Committee.

Melissa Molyneaux ’06 (marketing)

Melissa Molyneaux is a native Nevadan and graduated from McQueen High School. She graduated in 2006 with a degree in marketing and a minor in journalism. Melissa was a presenter for the award winning IMC advertising team for Postal Vault. She was an active member of Delta Sigma Pi, the college’s business fraternity. Upon graduation, Melissa joined and took an active role in the Young Alumni Chapter, College of Business Alumni Association and created The Group. Melissa joined the Office Properties Group at Colliers International in 2005 as a sales associate. To date she represents over 850,000 square feet of office space and has been involved in transactions totaling over two million square feet. She is currently the President-Elect for CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women).

Alumni Association Service

Ronda (Brown) Bybee ’95 (political science)

In 1997, halfway through her master’s program at Nevada, Ronda decided to move across the country to pursue a master’s in political management in Washington, D.C. After only a few months in D.C., she learned the Nevada Alumni Association’s Washington, D.C. chapter was gathering for a baseball outing. Eager to connect with “home,” she headed to her first of many baseball games with fellow alumni with the Washington, D.C. Chapter. Sadly, after the first outing, the chapter coordinator moved back West. In 2000, Ronda got the chapter up and running again, first with baseball outings and then adding softball and basketball watching parties at what was soon dubbed “Lawlor East.” In 2005, Ronda married fellow alumni, Stewart “Mac” Bybee ’99 who she met at one of the Nevada events.

Marcedes Parsons ’84 (social work)

Marcedes has been actively involved in various aspects of the Nevada Alumni Association including the University Club, the Nevada Alumni Council and volunteering numerous hours of her time at Alumni Association events and activities. Marcedes volunteers at events including, Pack Picnics, Easter Egg Hunts, pregame parties and Graduation Celebration. She often shows up early or stays late to offer extra help. Everything from hiding Easter Eggs, passing out bananas and cookies, to corralling kids at the end of the face-painting line. Marcedes has it covered. Marcedes resides in Sparks with her husband Bill.

Robin Joyce ’83 (journalism), ’04 M.A. (journalism)

Robin was formally ordained on Feb. 1, 2009 and is pastor of Community, Marketplace and Church Relations at Canyon Ridge Christian Church in Las Vegas. Previously, Robin worked as an advertising and public relations professional for 25 years, managing multi-million dollar advertising and political campaigns in Nevada, California and the southwestern United States. Robin served for five years on the board of directors for the Las Vegas Crisis Pregnancy Center, and also as board director for the southwest region Prison Fellowship. He served 15 years as an area representative for Promise Keepers, and in 2003 was outreach director for the Las Vegas Promise Keepers Conference. While in college, he met Patricia Kay Wilson; they have been married for 27 years and have two children.
Joanne (Ortiz) Petre '57 (French)  
Joanne began teaching after graduation and continued until retirement in 1999. She taught at the old Central Junior High School, Swope Middle School and Reno High School. She has also remained connected to the University through the years by serving on the Nevada Alumni Council from 1990 through 1995 and as secretary for the Alumni College Chapter for many years. The Alumni College Chapter is responsible for planning an annual three-day educational event for alumni and friends. The goal is to educate attendees about the University and the state of Nevada while having fun. Teachers are also able to earn in-service credits for attending Alumni College. Joanne has been an integral part of planning and longevity of these events along with other Alumni College board members.

College Distinguished Alumni Awards

Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources  
Cherrie Tripp '87 (agricultural economics)  
Cherrie is the director of contracts management in finance and strategy for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Cherrie is an attorney with 15 years of experience in deal management, negotiation and partnership relations. At the Gates Foundation, Cherrie manages a team of attorneys and business professionals who oversee the foundation's contracting practices in Global Health, Global Development and its U.S. Program. She joined the Gates Foundation in 2006 after many years in leadership roles in the technology sector with Microsoft, Avaya, and NCR. While working in the technology sector, Cherrie was responsible for structuring complex agreements across various international geographies. Cherrie has managed teams supporting $250,000,000 portfolios across the Americas, Asia Pacific and Europe. Cherrie resides in Seattle with her husband, Marc Lawrence.

Business  
Clyde Turner '60 (business administration)  
Clyde founded a CPA practice in 1966. He sold his interest in 1979 to join Golden Nugget (later Mirage Resorts) becoming executive vice president, CFO and treasurer. He served on the Nevada State Gaming Commission from 1970-73. In 1993, he founded development companies Turner Investments and the Spectrum Companies, and later that year joined Circus Circus (later Mandalay Bay Group) as president and CFO. He was promoted to the positions of chair and CEO. He co-founded a private equity fund in 2005. Clyde currently serves on the Board of Directors of Epiphany Biosciences and Nano...

Alumni Chapter of the Year: Young Alumni Chapter  
The Young Alumni Chapter has more than 100 members who all graduated within the past 10 years. YAC's mission is to advance the chapter by staying connected to the University, awarding undergraduate scholarships and making sure their members have FUN! Some of the events include Old Timer’s Night, Wingology (a chicken wing and beer tasting event), Mystery Bus dinners, Bagna Caulda and, our most popular event, Beerfest! The 14th Annual Beerfest in April 2008 generated more than $20,000 in revenue. As a result, the Young Alumni Chapter has been able to provide more than $10,500 annually for undergraduate scholarships, host monthly events for members, as well as sponsor Nevada Alumni Association events including Old Guy’s Night, Pack the Wal’ for Homecoming and Graduation Celebration.

Melissa Molyneaux ’06,  
David O’Mara ’99, Stephani Foust ’01, ’08, Lea Jensen ’05,  
Maria Perez ’06, Paul Klein ’03, Seema Donahoe ’02,  
Neetra Childs ’06, Derek Zielinski ’05, Rosalia Nunez ’07, Lesley Davis ’04
Filtration Technologies and previously served on the boards of St. Rose Hospitals, Coast Casinos and Sierra Pacific Resources.

Education
Ginny Knowles ’92Ed.D. (educational leadership)
Growing up along the coast of Oregon, Ginny always knew she would become a teacher. Ginny graduated from Oregon State University in 1975 with a bachelor’s in home economics education. She attended graduate school at Washington State University, earning a master’s in vocational-technical education in 1980. After moving to northern Nevada, she taught reading at Sierra Nevada Job Corps Center and joined Washoe High School and Traner Middle School. She completed her doctoral degree in educational leadership at Nevada in 1992, and served as assistant principal at Traner for two years. She became principal of Vaughn Middle School in 1995, where she is in her 15th year.

Engineering
Fatih Ozmen ’81M.S. (electrical engineering)
Fatih is also the recipient of the James G. Scrugham Medal Award from the College of Engineering. (See Professional Achievement Award on page 46).

Health Sciences
Kim A. Eagle ’77A.A.M.D. (medicine)
Kim is the Albion Walter Hewlett professor of Internal Medicine and director of the Cardiovascular Center at the University of Michigan Health System. He graduated from Oregon State University and attended University of Nevada’s School of Medicine, receiving his M.D. from Tufts University Medical School in 1979. He completed his residency and chief residency in internal medicine at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Kim has published more than 385 articles, 39 chapters, and edited seven books including his latest, The Heart of a Champion, co-written with legendary Michigan football coach, Bo Schembechler. Kim is a member of the American College of Cardiology Guideline Task Force, chair of the Task Force for the Development of Performance Measures in Cardiovascular Care, annual Scientific Sessions Program Committee, and is the editor of the American College of Cardiology’s CardioSource Review Journal.

Liberal Arts
Jackie L. Leonard ’71 (speech/theatre)
Jackie is a minister at St. John’s Presbyterian Church in Reno and is a member of the board of trustees of the San Francisco Theological Seminary. Ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament of the Presbyterian Church (USA) by the Presbytery of Nevada in 1988, Jackie has served churches in Yuma, Ariz, Columbia, Mo., and St. John’s in Reno. In 2007, she established the Paul A. Leonard Chair for Ethics and Writing in Journalism in honor of her father, a Nevada Class of 1936 journalism graduate. Her philanthropy continues her family’s long tradition of giving back to the University. “It is a joy and a privilege to give back to the University and community, which have been so important in my life and the lives of my parents and brother,” Jackie said.

Libraries
Patricia (Cronenberger) Chase ’57 (psychology)
Pat graduated from Brainerd Jr. College in 1959 and soon after joined Women in the Air Force and served as a stenographer in Rome, N.Y. and the Air Force Cambridge Research Center in Massachusetts. Pat returned to school at Nevada and earned a bachelor’s in psychology. As assistant professor in educational psychology, she moved to Pocatello, Idaho to teach at Idaho State University. In 1960, she moved to Oxford, Ohio to Miami University of Ohio, where she worked as associate director of the Reading Materials Center under a Ford Foundation Grant. Pat received her master’s degree in 1965 and was hired as a Title I reading teacher/specialist and continued for 18 years. Pat also served on the local and state boards of the American Cancer Society.

Reynolds School of Journalism
Frank McCulloch ’41 (journalism), ’67HDG (doctor of humane letters)
Described as a force in journalism for more than 50 years, Frank got his start at the United Press in San Francisco. He returned to Nevada to uncover links between organized crime and casinos in the 1940s as a reporter with the Reno Evening Gazette. Frank wrote Time magazine’s 1955 cover story on Thurgood Marshall and conducted the last interview given by Howard Hughes. Hired as a managing editor by the Los Angeles Times in 1960, Frank helped transform the paper into the world class paper it is today. He left in 1963 to cover the Vietnam War for Time. Frank is retired but says he still dreams about the newsroom every night. He said that without the school of journalism, he’d “still be pitching hay in Fernley. It’s dead true. It’s not an exaggeration.”

Science
Gene McClelland ’71 (chemistry), ’78M.S. (metallurgical engineering)
After graduation, Gene continued the career he began in 1969 at the U.S. Bureau of Mines until he resigned in 1983 to manage a metallurgical laboratory in Sparks for Bateman Engineering. In 1986 he founded McClelland Laboratories, Inc. Gene’s business was successful and he remains president and CEO. Currently, McClelland Laboratories, Inc. employs about 50 people, including many Nevada graduates. Gene has authored more than 100 publications and obtained several metallurgical process patents used by mining companies throughout the world during his 40-year career. Gene is a volunteer in several community activities: director, Reno Rodeo Association (27 years); organizing committee of the Legends Reno Tahoe Open (11 years); organizing committee of the Ronald Mcdonald House Charities Golf Tournament. Gene and his wife, Patti, were freshmen at Nevada when they married in 1967.