Education and discovery are prevalent themes in Sara Lafrance’s life. Having spent her early years in the eastern U.S., Nevada and its heritage were new experiences when she and her family moved to the state in 1970, where she eventually enrolled at the University of Nevada, Reno.

“I had the privilege of taking the requisite Nevada history course from Dr. James Hulse ’52 (journalism), ’58M.A. (history), who today is recognized as an esteemed Nevada historian, distinguished professor and member of the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame,” Sara says. “In his class, he brought the West to life with stories of trappers, miners, railroad men and pioneers. What had begun as a required subject, in the end imbued me with a sense of place that I still carry to this day. It was truly formative.”

Following graduation in 1973, Sara and her husband, Leonard, moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to start their software company, Century Analysis, Inc. (CAI), which they managed for 23 years, before selling it in 1998. Sara credited the company’s growth and evolution to the contributions of her educated, thoughtful employees and their desire to think, reason and continue to learn. Her college education taught her comparative and interpretive thought, which benefited her greatly in working with engineers and directing a technology company.

In 1998, the Lafrances moved to Incline Village, allowing Sara to resume her relationship with the University. Today, she is active in many areas on campus, including service as chair of the College of Engineering Advisory Board (2009) and the University Foundation.
Board of Trustees (2010). Her other community activities have included involvement with the Reno Philharmonic, KNPB Channel 5, READ Global, Guide Dogs for the Blind and membership in Sierra Angels, a northern Nevada investment group that focuses on promising, early-stage companies.

Through their travels to developing countries, the Lafrances discovered a need for young people in remote villages to obtain a college education. In 2005, they started Educational Pathways International, a foundation with the mission of recognizing, nurturing and supporting gifted young people in developing areas of the world, as well as contributing to educational programs and establishing scholarships for gifted students in the local area. Through philanthropy, the Lafrances aid university students in Ghana and, at Nevada, provide scholarships for National Merit Scholars, as well as support for the College of Engineering’s earthquake engineering laboratory expansion and the Davidson Mathematics and Science Center, among other programs.

Julie Rowe ’94 (journalism) Nevada Alumni Association president says: “The Nevada Alumni Association is excited to honor Sara as our 2011 Alumna of the Year. Her contributions to the University of Nevada, Reno are impressive, as is the global impact of her education accessibility mission. She is truly inspirational and a role model who makes us proud to be Nevada alumni.”

—Crystal Parrish
Professional Achievement

Hing Kee Chow ’91 (mechanical engineering)

After Hing graduated from Nevada, he earned a master of science in mechanical engineering at California State University, Los Angeles. His love of teaching led him to become a math teacher at Temple Intermediate School. Hing married Linda Situ in 1996 and received a math credential and master’s in educational administration from CSULA. Hing was assistant principal of Temple Intermediate, principal of Marshall Elementary School and is the current principal of Monterey Vista Elementary School, named a California Distinguished School, Title I Academic Achievement School and National Blue Ribbon School under his guidance.

Brett E. Coleman ’84 (finance)

Brett is a partner in several businesses including B&C Western Development; 1013 Communications, which owns community newspapers in Arizona, and Fast Lane Ventures and owner of the Mercedes Benz of Reno dealership. Brett founded Coleman Communities, a residential homebuilding company, in 1994 and later combined his company with Barker Homes, forming Barker Coleman Communities. The company was sold to Lennar Corporation in 2005. Brett is married to Karen Coleman and they are trustees of the Brett and Karen Coleman Foundation, which focuses on assisting children in need. They have three daughters and two sons; one daughter is in her third year at Nevada.

Frank Hawkins, Jr. ’81 (criminal justice)

Frank grew up in Las Vegas and was recruited to attend the University where he played football for four years. He went on to a career in the NFL with the Los Angeles/Oakland Raiders from 1981-1987, winning Superbowl XVIII. After his NFL career, Frank returned to Las Vegas and began community development work. He served on the city council from 1991 to 1995. He is president of the Las Vegas chapter of the NAACP and has a foundation with his mother, the Frank Hawkins Jr.--Daisy Lee Miller Charitable Foundation. In 1992, he was inducted into the University of Nevada, Reno Athletics Hall of Fame, and in 1997, he was selected for induction into the College Football Hall of Fame. He has been a donor to AAUN and, in conjunction with Luther Mack, to the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center.

Cheryl A. Hug English ’78 (biology), ’82M.D.

Cheryl graduated from Nevada with a biology degree and earned her medical degree from the University of Nevada School of Medicine, then went on to earn her master of public health from UCLA in 1985. Cheryl has spent the past 25 years as a faculty member for the University and the School of Medicine. She has served as the medical director for the Student Health Center since 1994. Within the School of Medicine, Cheryl has served as chair of the Admissions Committee, assistant and associate dean of Admissions and Student Affairs, and most recently, interim dean. She is a past president of the School of Medicine’s Alumni Association and was named the School of Medicine’s Alumnus of the Year in 2008.

William C. Siegel ’84 (civil engineering), ’86M.S. (civil engineering)

While at the University, Bill was elected president of ASUN and Phi Delta Theta Fraternity, and named Outstanding Engineering Student. After graduation, he joined Kleinfelder, an engineering and architecture firm. In 2009, Bill was selected to be the company’s CEO. At Nevada, Bill met his future wife, Becky Vradenburgh, and now has two college students of his own, Matthew, 24, and Mitchell, 21. He splits time between Kleinfelder headquarters in San Diego and his home in Colorado. He is also active in a variety of professional and charitable organizations.

University Service

Riley M. Beckett ’68 (accounting)

Riley earned his bachelor’s in accounting while gaining acclaim as a boxer. He earned his Juris Doctor from the University of San Francisco in 1971. As a founding partner in the law firm of Beckett, Yott & McCarty in Reno, he has been in private practice since 1971. Riley is an active trustee emeritus of the University of Nevada, Reno Foundation Board, serving from 1997 to 2002. Through his work as a trustee of the Mallory Foundation, he has attracted critical financial support to the University, including support for the Davidson Mathematics and Science Center, the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center, the earthquake engineering structures expansion, engineering K-12 outreach, MESA, the Jean Mallory scholarship, the Mallory Foundation Scholar Leader scholarship and technology-enhanced “smart” classrooms.

Milton D. Glick (posthumously)

Milton D. Glick served as president of the University of Nevada, Reno from 2006-2011, before passing away on April 16 at age 73. Milt led the campus to historic institutional and reputational milestones: The University increased its number of National Merit Scholars to a record 38 in 2011, set all-time records for enrollment and graduation, and saw freshman retention rates reach a record 80 percent. Milt stressed the value of creating a “sticky campus”—a dynamic campus setting where both the student body and the community are excited and engaged. Several key buildings opened during his tenure, markedly strengthening the connection between campus and community. He is survived by wife, Peggy, sons, David and Sandy, and three grandchildren.
William N. Pennington ’08HDG (posthumously)

A gaming industry pioneer, entrepreneur and one of the University’s leading philanthropists, William helped build Circus Circus into a gaming and entertainment powerhouse in Nevada. Together with his business partner, William Bennett, they expanded their gaming enterprises in the 1970s to include the Excalibur, Luxor and Mandalay Bay resorts in Las Vegas. He gave millions of dollars through the William N. Pennington Foundation in support of education, medicine and other charities, including construction of the Pennington Medical Education Building and the new William N. Pennington Health Sciences Building at Nevada. William was honored in 1997 as a Distinguished Nevada and with an honorary degree in 2008.

Jack T. Reviglio (posthumously)

In 1964, Jack and his wife, Ro, moved to Reno to start a family and a business. Along with his partner and friend, Bill Higgins, Jack started Western Nevada Supply, a wholesale distributorship of plumbing supplies. He was joined in business by his brother Tom in 1967. Jack and Ro had three children, Ted, Rick and Kari, and numerous grandchildren. Jack had an undying love for filling the needs of the community. He raised funds and gave generously to every cause imaginable. To count all the community organizations and youth he touched would be impossible. But among his dearest was the University of Nevada, Reno.

Outstanding Young Alumnus

Lea M. Jensen ’05 (accounting)

Lea grew up in northern Nevada and graduated from Reed High School. During her time at Nevada she was an active member of Delta Gamma Women’s Fraternity, Beta Alpha Psi, and also served on the Elections Board for ASUN. After graduating, she served as the secretary, interim vice president of programming, and then as president of the Young Alumni Chapter. She started her career at Deloitte & Touche, earning her CPA license. She recently relocated to Denver, Colo., where she works in the financial reporting department of First Data Corporation.

Eugenia A. Larmore ’03 (international business and marketing), ’04MBA

Eugenia was born in Russia, moving to Stateline, Nev., with her family at age 12. Eugenia graduated with honors from Whittell High School. Following high school, Eugenia enrolled at Nevada, obtaining both a bachelor degree and an MBA. She is currently attending the Ph.D. program in economics. Eugenia’s first job was with Meridian Business Advisors, where she worked her way up from intern to director over eight years. Last year, Eugenia started her own consulting company, Ekay Economic Consultants, where she provides economic consulting services to state and local governments, developers, attorneys, engineering firms, gaming operators and business owners. Eugenia is married to Robert Larmore ’04 (computer science), ’06M.S. (computer science).

Benjamin S. Rogers ’01 (mechanical engineering), ’02M.S. (mechanical engineering)

Since graduation, Ben has worked as a business analyst, a newspaper reporter and also a research scientist at various labs, including the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He is the lead author of Nanotechnology: Understanding Small Systems, a comprehensive textbook on nanotechnology. Since 2004, he has been principal engineer at Nevada Nanotech Systems. He also loves to write and has earned literary arts grants from the Sierra Arts Foundation and the Nevada Arts Council. His debut novel, The Flamer, about the boyhood of a closet pyromaniac, will be published in 2012.

Alumni Association Service

Louis A. Bonaldi ’75 (biology), ’77AAMD

Lou received a four-year scholarship to play golf at Nevada under then-coach Jake Lawlor. Initially a music major, his life changed when he got a job as a surgery orderly at Saint Mary’s Hospital. He graduated from the two-year program at the School of Medicine in 1977. In 1979, Lou graduated from Tufts University School of Medicine. He completed his internship and five-year residency in general surgery at University of California, San Diego. A two-year fellowship in plastic surgery was followed by a fellowship in microsurgical surgery in Melbourne, Australia. Lou continues to serve as an assistant clinical professor of surgery in the School of Medicine. Five years ago, with the help of many, Lou started the School of Medicine Alumni Association.

Lisa M. Lyons ’88 (medical technology), ’97M.D.

After graduation, Lisa worked in the University Medical Center laboratory in Las Vegas, where she completed the majority of her clinical practicum. Following a few years of full-time employment and the birth of her son, Cameron, she began medical school at the School of Medicine. After graduation in 1997, Lisa returned to UMC to complete training in internal medicine. Later, she began working at Nathan Adelson Hospice, where she has been for 11 years. Lisa has served on the Nevada Alumni Council for six years and is a member of the UNSOM Admissions Committee. She is president-elect of the School of Medicine Alumni Association.
Chapter of the Year

Football Alumni Chapter

The Football Alumni Chapter hosted a 20-year reunion at Homecoming for the 1990 Wolf Pack, celebrated the record-setting 2010 Wolf Pack team, which had the highest national ranking ever achieved, and hosted the inaugural Ring Ceremony in March. The chapter held a reunion golf tournament in May for more than 120 players. In addition, the chapter just concluded the inaugural Wolf Pack Football Mini Ironman Tournament, a sporting clays competition and fundraiser where 55 "shooters" attended to support Wolf Pack football. All told, the chapter raised more than $25,000 toward the chapter's goal of assisting the Wolf Pack football team achieve the highest graduation rate in the country by paying for summer school. In 2010, 17 of 19 seniors graduated.

College and Division Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients

Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources
Robert O. Ryan ’77 (premedical), ’82Ph.D. (biochemistry)

Robert pursued post-doctoral training at the University of Arizona under the auspices of a National Institutes of Health National Research Service Award. In 1988, Robert joined the department of biochemistry and lipid and lipoprotein research group at the University of Alberta as assistant professor and Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research scholar. Robert became full professor and Heritage Medical Scientist and was appointed director of the lipid and nutrition research group. In 2000, Robert joined Children’s Hospital Oakland Research Institute and is currently a senior scientist and chair of the Center for Prevention of Obesity, Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes. In 2004, Robert was appointed adjunct professor of nutritional sciences and toxicology at University of California, Berkeley.

Business
Hera K. Siu ’82 (managerial sciences), ’84MBA

Hera K. Siu is president of SAP China. Hera has more than 20 years experience in business software and mobile technologies. She has held leadership roles as corporate vice president and general manager of Nokia Telecommunications Limited, vice president and regional manager of Computer Associates, and senior vice president, application service provider for Pacific Century Cyberworks. Born and raised in China, one of her strengths is a deep understanding of the challenges customers and partners face in China’s dynamic global business environment. She is fluent in English, Mandarin and Cantonese and lives in Beijing with her husband, Bernard Kwok ’81 (electrical engineering), ’84MBA, and two children.

Education
Verlita L. Conner ’52 (elementary education), ’70M.Ed.

Verlita graduated with numerous honors including the Supervising Teacher Award—given after training some 100 elementary school teachers—Reno Little Theater Outstanding Service Award, Sagens Senior Women’s Service Award and others. Following graduation, Verlita taught in several elementary schools in Washoe County and Anchorage, Alaska, and Barraquilla, Columbia. Verlita served as the executive director of the College of Education Early Learning Center for 11 years. Verlita retired from the Washoe County School District in 1990 after 34 years of teaching. She is the past president of several organizations including the International Reading Association, Alpha Delta Kappa, Reno Beta Chapter and Reno Women’s Golf Club.

Engineering
Tom D. Whitaker ’60 (electrical engineering)

Tom graduated with ROTC Distinguished Military Graduate citation while playing four years of football and two years of baseball. During his junior year, Tom was the national pass receiving champion in college football. After graduation, Tom signed with the Dallas Cowboys. In 1982, Tom joined General Electric Company as an engineering management trainee. In 1971, he received his MBA from the University of California, Berkeley. For more than 20 years, Tom has served as chairman and CEO of Motion Analysis Corporation, the world’s leading provider of video-based computer imaging motion capture equipment. In 2005, Motion Analysis was awarded four technical achievement Oscars by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Tom has served on numerous boards including Chairman of National Bank of the Redwoods, Dry Creek Vineyards Winery, Standard Structures and Penngrove Community Church.

Division of Health Sciences
Kathleen L. Apple ’93M.S. (nursing)

Kathy began her nursing career in Alaska in the field of psychiatric mental health nursing. She earned her first master’s degree at the University of Alaska in counseling psychology and became the first nurse to be licensed as an advanced practice nurse in psych-mental health in the state. Kathy moved to Reno and completed her second master’s degree at Nevada in psychiatric nursing. Kathy began a new career in nursing regulation for the Nevada State Board of Nursing, ultimately becoming the executive director. In 2001, Kathy began her current position as CEO of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. She is a Nevada Board Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Fellow and a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing.
Liberal Arts

Adriano B. Lucatelli ’90 (international affairs)

Adriano is managing partner of Reuss Private, an independent wealth management company serving business owners and executives. He is also co-founder of Reuss Private Group, providing products and services for professional asset managers, family offices and private investors, with assets under management of almost $5 billion. He studied international relations and economics at Nevada and the London School of Economics, and in 1995 earned his Ph.D. at the University of Zurich with a dissertation on a framework for an international financial oversight regime. Adriano has also completed an MBA program at the University of Rochester, New York, and an advanced management program at the Wharton School.

Libraries

Kelly E. Bland ’91 (finance)

Kelly is a principal and senior vice president of retail properties at NAI Alliance, a commercial real estate brokerage company. He has more than 20 years experience in commercial real estate. While a student at Nevada, Kelly was active in campus affairs, serving as a senator for the College of Business, vice president of ASUN and president of Sigma Nu fraternity. He was also a member of the Inter-fraternity Council and Blue Key. Upon graduation, Kelly was one of the founders of the Young Alumni Chapter, serving consecutive terms as president. He was on the Nevada Alumni Council for six years, with the last two years as the vice president for the Community Outreach Task Force. Kelly has been a member of the library board for 17 years, serving as president in 2002, and he is the current president.

Mackay

Dennis P. Bryan ’72M.S. (geology)

Dennis is senior vice president of Western Lithium Corporation and a longtime member of the advisory board for the Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering. His career has been in Nevada’s construction and mining industries, specializing in industrial minerals. He is a registered engineer and serves on the Nevada Commission on Mineral Resources. He is a current board member and past president of Hot August Nights and is active in and past executive producer of Sheep Dip, the annual roast of Reno. Together with his late wife, Diane, he has three stepsons and eight grandchildren. Diane’s endowment, in recognition of her love for earth science education, benefits the Mackay School.

Reynolds School of Journalism

John E. Brodeur ’72 (journalism)

John is chairman of Boston-based Brodeur Partners, a marketing communications consultancy. John founded Brodeur Partners in 1985 and built it into an award-winning global organization with offices and affiliates in the U.S., Asia, Europe and Latin America. Brodeur reported for UPI and was a part-time writer for the Reno Gazette-Journal during his Nevada college years. John also was a summer intern at the Las Vegas Review-Journal. He worked on Capitol Hill for seven years as a press/legislative assistant to Sen. Howard Cannon, D-Nevada, and as chief of staff for Rep. Jim Santini, D-Nevada. Brodeur earned a master’s degree from Harvard University’s Kennedy School and is adviser and board member of several corporate and nonprofit enterprises. Brodeur was named the Outstanding Journalism Graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno in 1972 and Alumnus of the Year in 2000.

Science

William Honjas ’93M.S. (geophysics)

Bill is president and CEO of Optim, Inc. He holds a bachelor’s in geophysics from Oregon State University and a master’s in geophysics from Nevada. He began his career as a geologist with Exlog Smith Geothermal Division in 1982. He has worked as a project and logistics manager for the Natural Resources Defense Council USA-USSR Nuclear Test Ban Verification Project and director of Network Operations, Global Seismic Monitoring, at Scripps Institute. Bill was also geophysical division director and senior project geophysicist for William Lettis & Associates, a Bay Area geosciences consulting firm. In 1998, Bill co-founded Optim with Satish Pullamanappallil ’94Ph.D. (geophysics). Optim’s founding technology is based on computational algorithms written and researched by Satish and Bill while they were graduate students at Nevada. The technology is used by geotechnical and engineering companies to reveal complex earth structures that could affect design and construction, and to measure ground-shaking potential of earthquakes. Bill is a visiting research faculty at the Nevada Seismological Laboratory and is on the board of advisers to the University’s College of Science and College of Engineering.

Satish Pullamanappallil ’94Ph.D. (geophysics)

Satish is the vice president, chief technology officer and co-founder of Optim, Inc. He holds a bachelor’s in geophysics from the Indian Institute of Technology and a Ph.D. in geophysics from Nevada. After graduation, he spent two years as a post-doctoral fellow at Rice University in Houston, Texas, working on understanding scattering and wave propagation in heterogeneous media and modeling the Earth as a fractal media. In 1998, Satish, along with Bill Honjas’93M.S. (geophysics), started Optim. The company began its life on the University campus under the auspices of the Nevada Applied Research Initiative. It has since grown to include offices in Reno and Las Vegas. Optim produces software and provides services to the geophysical, geotechnical, engineering and geothermal communities.