

Annual Founders Day Event Highlights CSUN's Formative Years

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Bob Rawitch

Bob Rawitch '67 (Journalism), likely wouldn't have a degree from California State University, Northridge if not for the wise words of his academic adviser. A journalism major, he felt the pull of the USC brand and was contemplating trading his Matador cape for a Trojan sword.

"I can hear his voice in my head," recalled Rawitch, alumni co-chair of this year's Founders Day event. "My adviser at the time, Dr. Ken Devol, said, 'Look Bob, USC has a lot of distinguished graduates working in the field, and it's true that many people hire from their alma mater. But if you stay at CSUN, I can guarantee you'll get a good education and you'll be able to do the job when you get out.'"

He held tight to his Matador pride and has never regretted it.

His early academic training at Cal State Northridge paved the way for a distinguished

career. Rawitch spent 28 years with the Los Angeles Times as a reporter and senior editor, and also served as founder and executive editor of the newspaper's San Fernando Valley and Ventura county editions. In 1996 he joined Winner & Associates, where he remains today, as a senior vice president specializing in strategic communications and crisis management.

The annual Founders Day celebration is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 23, and brings together alumni, faculty and staff in an annual homecoming for those with ties to CSUN and its early days as San Fernando Valley State College.

"It's fun to be with people and talk about the 'old days' as a student," Rawitch said. "It's nice to reminisce," he added, recalling a time when the campus radio station, then known as KEDC, was only 10 watts, and campus housing consisted of a single, women's-only dormitory. "The changes are dramatic over the decades. It's nice to say, 'remember when' with people who appreciate it."

This year's event offers a lively program, including the induction of about 116 members of the CSUN community to the 50-Year Club, a distinguished group of alumni, faculty and staff who graduated from or worked at San Fernando Valley State College during 1958 to 1961.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to recognize a group of men and women who were able to experience the growth of a college that at every stage of its history has been so special," said Warren Campbell, Founders Day faculty/staff co-chair and emeritus political science professor. Campbell began teaching at CSUN in 1961 and joins his distinguished colleagues as a 50-Year Club inductee.

Additional events include campus tours highlighting how the university backdrop has changed from squash fields and orange groves to becoming one of the nation's largest, most beautiful and successful regional universities, along with special-access tours of the Valley Performing Arts Center, which opened

in January.

“Founders Day brings together faculty, staff and former students from the university’s formative years,” said Gray Mounger, assistant vice president of alumni relations. “They helped create the campus’ unique personality, which is as much a part of the campus footprint as the buildings that tower over the north San Fernando Valley.”

—Stephanie Colman

2011 Founders Day

When: Friday, Sept. 23 at 10 a.m.

Where: University Student Union

What: College receptions, tours of the Valley Performing Arts Center (limited to 75 guests), welcome from President Jolene Koester and Founders Day co-chairs Bob Rawitch and emeritus professor Warren Campbell, Founders luncheon, 50-year inductions, and campus tours

Cost: \$35 per person

Sponsor: CSUN Alumni Association

Audience: Primarily San Fernando Valley State era alumni, faculty and staff

RSVP: Open to all on a space-available basis. RSVP by Sept. 13 via online registration at www.csunalumni.com or by returning an invitation reply card, if available

Info: (818) 677-2137 or alumni@csun.edu