

neighbor to neighbor

COMMUNITY NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF ORANGE

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT IS CHAPMAN'S FIRST RHODES SCHOLAR

Vidal Arroyo, a first-generation student from Orange County, has been named Chapman University's first Rhodes Scholar, earning one of the most prestigious fellowships in the world.

As late as his junior year of high school, Arroyo wasn't considering higher education. But high school friends were busy taking SATs, so he did, too. He aced them, and in May will become the first in his family to graduate from college.

During his first year at Chapman, Arroyo enrolled in a molecular biology class, where his focus and determination caught the attention of Melissa Rowland-Goldsmith, Ph.D., an associate professor of biology. She suggested he should consider research, and Arroyo began learning about her work on pancreatic cancer.

But Arroyo was also intrigued by the work of Jake Liang, Ph.D., a School of Communication professor who researched human-robot interactions, so he joined that lab team. Then heartbreak struck: Liang was diagnosed with cancer and died at age 37. Arroyo then felt called to the only path that now made sense – cancer research.

"My parents have always raised me with the idea of *duende*, which in Spanish means passion or soul. It's the idea of pursuing something because you're passionate about it," he says. "Before Professor Liang's diagnosis, I didn't really have that connection with cancer. Seeing him die of that disease so young was just really shocking to me. It felt almost like a social responsibility. I decided I'd use whatever talents I have to change this for others."

In October, that journey will continue at Oxford University, where Arroyo will complete graduate work and study the applications of data science to improve colorectal cancer treatments.

"The professors believed in me more than I did, and that's been incredible," he says. "It's really a testament to the amazing environment here and the ability for someone to see potential in someone else."



Vidal Arroyo, a senior from Rancho Santa Margarita, plans a career in cancer research.

CHAPMAN GRADUATE WORKS ON O.C. HOMELESSNESS WITH UNITED WAY

A massive effort by Orange County United Way to count the area's homeless population in January was led in part by recent Chapman graduate Atty McLellan, who undertook the work as Chapman's first recipient of a Shinnyo Fellowship.

The fellowship provides a paycheck and benefits for 10 months to a small group of recent college graduates, enabling them to work full time at a nonprofit of their choice. McLellan is working for United Way and was tasked with organizing more than 1,000 volunteers for the Point in Time Count.

"I am excited about this because an accurate count will be pivotal in understanding and solving homelessness in the county," said McLellan, who became involved in outreach and research related to homelessness while at Chapman.

Funded by the Shinnyo-en Foundation, the fellowships seek to support the organization's philosophy of peacebuilding through service to the recipients' university campuses or immediate surrounding communities. As part of her fellowship year, McLellan also works part time at Chapman's Center for Undergraduate Excellence.

Other recipients of the 2018 Shinnyo postgraduate fellowships are from Stanford, UC Berkeley, Seattle University and George Mason University.



Atty McLellan

Did You Know?

Chapman's Digital Media Arts Center on Cypress Street in Old Towne Orange was one of only six projects in California chosen for a 2018 Governor's Historic Preservation Award. The 1922 California Wire and Cable Co./Anaconda Wire and Cable Co. building was transformed into a high-tech learning space for future Hollywood storytellers at a cost of more than \$11 million before its 2014 reopening. Gov. George Deukmejian founded the Governor's Awards in 1986 to honor major achievements in preserving California heritage.

Need to report a concern?

- Contact Chapman University's Office of Community Relations at (714) 289-2097 or email neighbors@chapman.edu.
- To report a disturbance that needs urgent attention, please call City of Orange PD dispatch at (714) 744-7444.

YOU'RE INVITED!

Join us for these engaging events at Chapman

There are many terrific Chapman University events, and neighbors are always welcome. Here are just a few. Find more at the University's online events calendar, www.chapman.edu/events. Advance tickets for performing arts events may be purchased online at www.chapman.edu/tickets.

Saxophone Quartet

Sunday, Feb. 17, 5 – 6:30 p.m.
Berteia Hall 100

Enjoy an early evening concert in Salmon Recital Hall featuring Chapman faculty member Gary Matsuura with Mike Vaccaro on alto saxophone, Damon Zick on tenor saxophone and Jay Mason on baritone saxophone. \$10 general admission; \$5 for senior citizens, alumni and non-Chapman students; free for Chapman students, faculty and staff.

www.chapman.edu/tickets.

Avenue Q

Feb. 14-16, 7:30 p.m.; Feb. 16, 2 p.m.
Musco Center Main Stage

Winner of three Tony Awards, the laugh-out-loud musical about a recent college grad living in a shabby apartment is performed by students from Chapman's College of Performing Arts. Contains adult themes and language that may not be suitable for all audiences. \$25 general admission; \$15 for senior citizens, alumni and non-Chapman students; \$10 for Chapman students, faculty and staff.

www.chapman.edu/tickets.

Women's Leadership Forum

Saturday, March 2, 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Argyros Forum 209

Come find inspiration from women in leadership positions throughout California. Hosted by Attallah College of Educational Studies and sponsored by SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union, the forum features Santa Ana College President Linda Rose, Ed.D., and Gretchen DeVault, a Los Angeles web designer, podcaster and musician. Online registration ends Feb. 27. On-site registration by credit or debit card only. \$30 (\$15 with Chapman affiliation).

www.chapman.edu/tickets.



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A NEIGHBORLY VISIT WITH ... LAW STUDENT JUAN VALDEZ

Around the neighborhood, dogs are sometimes as well known as their owners.

If you see a handsome boxer working as a service dog in the vicinity of Chapman's Dale E. Fowler School of Law, that's probably Tank. The man with him is Juan Valdez, a retired Marine who entered law school last fall, 12 years after being seriously wounded in a sniper attack in Iraq.

Tank helps Valdez manage lingering symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and alerts him to sounds such as doorbells that Valdez's damaged hearing doesn't register. Tank even joined Valdez at commencement when he graduated from UC San Diego and is a near-constant companion on the journey that has brought Valdez to law school and a role as an advocate for veterans and others.

"I like standing up for people," said Valdez, whose interests include politics. "I joined the Marine Corps for altruistic ideals, and I still carry those with me. I like the idea of standing up for the defenseless."

Valdez was awarded a Purple Heart after the 2006 attack and eventually recovered from his injuries enough to return to Iraq and serve in Afghanistan before retiring with the rank of sergeant in 2013.

He pursued his education under the GI Bill, attending community college before transferring to UCSD. His legal education is being paid for by Veterans vocational rehabilitation benefits. But in addition to the GI Bill, former service members who are pursuing their education at Chapman can receive benefits and support through the University's Veterans Resource Center.

Valdez expects Tank to be at his side when he is an attorney, possibly in politics. (Valdez has served as a military legislative intern to Florida Congressman Matt Gaetz.) He also has worked for veterans locally as a volunteer for the nonprofit Veterans Legal Institute. Perhaps Tank will even join him in a courtroom someday.

"If I'm a prosecutor, maybe I'll put Tank up there with the witnesses to help calm them," Valdez said.



Service dog Tank accompanies retired Marine Juan Valdez to classes at Chapman's Fowler School of Law.

More inside! 