



AFP Inland Empire Chapter Presented to James & Judy Watson Philanthropists of the Year

The contributions and generosity of James Watson, who was recently elected chair of the Cal State San Bernardino Philanthropic Foundation, and his wife, Judy Rodriguez Watson, were honored in Ontario recently as this year's Philanthropists of the Year. The Inland Empire Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals saluted the Watsons, who are longtime CSUSB supporters, as part of National Philanthropy Day.

National Philanthropy Day is celebrated throughout the country and has been held annually since 1986 on Nov. 15 to honor the spirit and contributions of philanthropy and those active in the philanthropic world.

The Philanthropist of the Year Award is presented by local chapters to an individual or family with a proven record of exceptional generosity who, through direct financial support, has demonstrated outstanding civic and charitable responsibility, and whose generosity encourages others to take philanthropic leadership roles on a community level.



“The Watsons are the epitome of philanthropists,” said Cindi Pringle, CSUSB associate vice president for development. “They are generous monetarily and generous with their time. They contribute to various organizations in the Inland Empire, even though they do not have a residence here. Their passion for giving stems from their desire to help young people become successful; they are particularly passionate about helping those

who have challenges that are not of their own making.”

The Watsons were the driving forces behind the fundraising efforts to support the university's College of Education building.

“When the College of Education embarked on a capital campaign to construct a new building to house the growing graduate-student population, Jim and Judy did not hesitate to chair the fundraising campaign,” Pringle said, noting that the campaign helped raised more than \$3 million for the building, which opened in 2008.

A personal gift from the Watsons helped establish the Student Services Center in the College of Education. The Watson and Associates Literacy Center stems from the hardships Jim Watson experienced as a child learning to read. When he discovered the work of CSUSB College of Education faculty, the Watsons' Seal Beach-based company donated the funds to create the Literacy Center as a freestanding facility that now serves 100 students from the Inland Empire every quarter.

“The Watson and Associates Literacy Center is a gem that needs to be duplicated throughout the two counties served by CSUSB,” said Jay Fiene, dean of the CSUSB College of Education. “I have no doubt that Jim and Judy would be anxious to contribute to this vision and to have others join them in providing resources to replicate the work of the current center.”

Over the years the Watsons have supported the YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles, Children’s Museum of Orange County, Trees for Seal Beach Fund, and they have also created their own foundation, dedicated to supporting education-based organizations. They also have been involved with the San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra.

The Watsons also have demonstrated a passion for the arts and have contributed to CSUSB’s art department, which stimulated the creation of student and faculty art projects that are displayed publicly throughout San Bernardino.

The Judy Rodriguez Watson Public Arts Project has resulted in the installation of art in downtown San Bernardino, as well as in north San Bernardino near the Cal State San Bernardino campus.

“Jim and Judy Watson have been wonderful friends and steadfast supporters of our art department,” said Eri Yasuhara, dean of the university’s College of Arts and Letters. “Besides providing very generous financial support for our students, faculty and alumni to create works to display in our community, they also are always there when one of these pieces is installed and dedicated for the enjoyment of the people of San Bernardino. Their love of art is an inspiration to us all.”

In 2011, Judy Watson served as honorary chairperson for the Latino Education and Advocacy Days Summit at Cal State San Bernardino. The event, which focused on increasing the college-going rate of Latino students, attracted more than 1,000 to campus and tens of thousands viewers to more than 1,500 viewing stations around the United States and 29 countries around the world.

Past winners of the Philanthropist of the Year Award with ties to Cal State San Bernardino include Bill and Janice Lemann in 2011, Glenda Bayless in 2009 and the James Ramos family in 2008.