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University mourns passing of proud alumnus Peter Mehas

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Dr. Peter G. Mehas, a Fresno State alumnus, student-athlete and servant-leader who was an unfailing advocate for his alma mater and a fervent Bulldog athletics promoter, will be greatly missed by the university community. Dr. Mehas died Friday, Sept. 27, in a Fresno hospital.

Dr. Mehas was well-known and liked throughout the Fresno State campus. He frequently attended a variety of academic and athletic events, always with a big smile and kind words for students, faculty, staff members, administrators and other alumni.

As chairman of the university's Centennial Celebration in 2010-11, he reveled in promoting the history of Fresno State and in touting its bright future. In a Centennial interview he said:

"I am so very, very proud to be a graduate. ... Thank goodness that I graduated from this university, did graduate work here. My children and my wife have all attended this university. Not only does this community owe a great deal to Fresno State – California State University Fresno – but I personally do as well."

A native of Fresno, Dr. Mehas received his bachelor's degree from California State University, Fresno in 1962, his master's degree from UCLA in 1967, and his doctorate in education from the University of Southern California in 1979. He was an All American, All Conference center at Fresno City College and played on Fresno State's undefeated 1961 Mercy Bowl football team.

He started his career as a teacher in Fresno and worked in educational positions on the local, county, state and national levels. Since 2007 he had served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the California State University system, which governs Fresno State and 22 other CSU campuses.

Dr. Mehas and his wife, Demi, have two daughters, Alethea and Andreanna.

Here are some comments from the Fresno State community:

Joseph I. Castro, Fresno State President:

"Mary and I are deeply saddened by the news that Dr. Mehas has passed away. He was an incredibly talented man who used his gifts to serve others every day of his life. I was fortunate to get to know and work closely with him as the head of my search committee and a member of my transition

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team. I will miss his wisdom, warmth and unwavering Bulldog spirit. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Mehas family.”

Timothy White, Chancellor, California State University:

“We are deeply saddened by the loss of such an iconic individual. Dr. Mehas committed his entire life to everything positive through education and his work and efforts touched education at every level. The entire California State University family is diminished by his loss.”

John D. Welty, President Emeritus, Fresno State:

“I worked closely with Pete Mehas for 22 years and never met an individual more loyal to his alma mater and his community. Pete always put the needs of others first in his life and served with great passion and enthusiasm. He often remarked that he owed so much to Fresno State, but it is we who love the university and the community who owe so much to him.”

Jacqui Glasener, executive director of the Fresno State Alumni Association:

“Pete Mehas was a proud Bulldog like no other. From being a member of the Mercy Bowl Football team as a student, to returning to his alma mater to chair the Centennial Celebration and most recently heading the committee that brought Dr. Joseph Castro to Fresno State as our new president, he was always involved. We were pleased to present him with the Distinguished Alumnus Award for his tireless support of Fresno State and the community in 2002.”

Thomas Boeh, director of Athletics:

“On behalf of all that are associated with Fresno State Athletics, we are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Pete Mehas. As a former outstanding Bulldog student-athlete and member of the historical 1961 Mercy Bowl team, Pete embodied the concept of utilizing sport as a foundation for the development of dynamic passion and life-long leadership skills. Pete’s boundless service on behalf of the advancement of education as well as his extraordinary accomplishments as a leader, advocate and mentor, will remain as a continual source of great pride for those serving in the Department of Athletics and for Bulldogs everywhere. Pete will greatly missed and our deepest condolences go out to Demi and the entire Mehas family.”

Moses Menchaca, president, Associated Students, Inc. (ASI)

“Dr. Mehas was truly an inspiration and a mentor and was the voice of reason even when others disagreed. The CSU and Fresno State will truly miss him, but his work will last for generations.”

Russel Statham, former ASI vice president of finance and current Fresno State administrator:

“I served with Dr. Mehas on the CSU Board of Trustees when I was Fresno State student, and in fact sat next to him at meetings. He was one of my biggest mentors, providing me good advice on leadership and how to manage through difficult times. He was a humble servant leader who set a tremendous example for all of us.”

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