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Assemi honored at Top Dog Gala as distinguished alumnus

Fresno entrepreneur and philanthropist **Darius Assemi**, president of Granville Homes, was honored with the [Fresno State Alumni Association's](#) Top Dog Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2013 during the Top Dog Alumni Awards Gala, Friday, Oct. 18 at the Save Mart Center.

Assemi, who graduated Cum Laude from Fresno State in 1983 with a degree in Civil Engineering, has served as president of Granville Homes since 2009. He also served as vice president from 1983 to 2009 for the local, family-owned and operated home builder.

During his acceptance speech, Assemi stressed the importance of giving back to the community.

Assemi came to the United States from Iran more than 30 years ago and is the driving force behind the Granville mission “to improve the well-being of people in our community” and promote “positive change in the lives of people in the Central Valley.” This is done not only through the family homes Granville builds, but also through community programs like Granville’s Home of Hope that provide access to food, shelter, health care and education to the underprivileged.

At the Top Dog gala, Assemi was joined by 14 other Outstanding Alumni Award recipients who were chosen from each of the university’s academic schools and colleges, the Department of Athletics, the Henry Madden Library, the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Graduate Studies. (See full list below.)

Service to the university and community were also recognized through the Arthur Safstrom Service Award, presented to **Omel Nieves** (1983) and **Dennis R. Woods** (1969), who co-chaired Fresno State’s seven-year comprehensive campaign raising \$214 million for scholarships, faculty, programs and facilities.

Nieves is senior shareholder, chief operations officer and partner of the Pasadena-based law firm Hunt, Ortmann, Palffy, Nieves, Darling & Mah, Inc. and a former Bulldogs basketball athlete under Coach Boyd Grant. Woods is president and chief executive officer of United Security Bank.

During the sold-out event, the Alumni Association awarded \$125,000 in scholarships to 54 students based on academic achievement, financial need and community service. The Fresno State Alumni Association leads the 23-campus California State University system in student scholarship giving.

The 2013 Top Dog Alumni Award recipients are:

- Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology: **Enrique E. Figueroa** (1973), chief executive and administrative officer of the Roberto Hernandez Center at University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

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- College of Arts and Humanities: **Anthony Marquez** (1985), chief of bureau for Associated Press, Los Angeles
- Department of Athletics: **Kevin Sweeney** (1987), former Bulldogs quarterback and National Football League player and current senior vice president at Wells Fargo Bank
- Craig School of Business: **Tim Rios** (1993), senior vice president, Social Responsibility Group, Wells Fargo Bank
- Kremen School of Education and Human Development: **Ruben V. Castillo** (1994), administrator for the Migrant Education Program, Region IV, Fresno County Office of Education
- Lyles College of Engineering: **Kirk D. Grimes** (1980), group president, Fluor Corporation
- Division of Graduate Studies: **Carole Goldsmith** (1991, 2005), president of West Hills College Coalinga
- College of Health and Human Services: **Nancy Hollingsworth** (1982), president and CEO of Saint Agnes Hospital
- Henry Madden Library: **Sandra 'Sandy' Speers Stubblefield** (alumna), volunteer and friend of Fresno State
- College of Science and Mathematics: **Ken Schmidt** (1964), principal of Ken Schmidt & Associates.
- College of Social Sciences: **Henry R. Perea** (1974), Fresno County Board of Supervisors chairman, District 3
- Division of Student Affairs: **Carissa Phelps** (2002), author, social entrepreneur and youth advocate

By [Kathleen Schock](#) | October 21st, 2013 | Categories: [PRESS RELEASES](#) | Tags: [alumni](#), [top dog](#) | Comments Off

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