



After moving around a lot as a teenager, Luke Kim knew he wanted to pursue higher education in Bakersfield. **He was drawn to the experience of a smaller university, where he could feel like part of the community and not just a number.**

At CSUB, Luke got that and more. He double majored in biology and religious studies, with a minor in chemistry, before graduating in spring 2020.

Luke was active on campus as part of the pre-med club, in plant microbe research with Dr. Kane Keller, and as a peer mentor in the School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering's Pathways program, which supports a small group of first-year science majors as they navigate college life.

"It requires planning, a lot of planning," Luke said of balancing everything. "It's a heavy workload. I was full-time and sometimes overloaded every semester."

Throughout his time at CSUB, Luke repeatedly made the dean's list, as well as the Helen Hawk Honors Program and the Alpha Chi Honors Society.

"On top of all of this, he's constantly seeking to help those around him, in our community and as a peer mentor and tutor to his fellow students," said Dr. Keller. "Luke has been a constant positive presence around the biology department and the entire university community."

When he graduated, Luke was recognized as the Outstanding Undergraduate Student for both the School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering and the School of Arts and Humanities. He also earned the title of President's Outstanding Undergraduate Student.

Luke was accepted to medical school at the University of California, San Francisco, where he is pursuing his dreams of becoming a doctor.



**FOR 'RUNNER MISBAH
CHAUDHRY, RISING UP MEANS
USING SCIENCE TO SOLVE OUR
REGION'S COMPLEX CHALLENGES.**

Spanning approximately 20,000 square miles, in the center of California, over 250 crops grow. The span of land is our Central Valley — and while it encompasses less than 1% of U.S. farmland, it produces over 33% of the nation's vegetables and 67% of the nation's fruits and nuts. Significantly, California is the nation's sole exporter of many agricultural commodities, supplying 99% of almonds, artichokes, dates, and 10 other products to the nation and world.

But to feed the world, farmers who experience hurdles rely on researchers to come up with innovative solutions.

Misbah Chaudhry, who is earning her master's in biology at CSUB, is one such researcher.

"My research has an importance in our agricultural industry, and within that, more towards carrot production," Misbah said. "My research is focusing on exploring a natural method to control a certain disease in carrots, so that we can help out our farmers and growers with these diseases, and not have them use chemical fungicides, which are not as efficient anymore as they've been in the past."

Misbah is able to pursue this project thanks to a scholarship that helps students conduct in-depth research projects with faculty mentors.

"I thank all the donors from the bottom of my heart for being so kind and generous to donate to this program," Misbah said. "It shows me that they actually appreciate the work and all the research that is happening here on campus."



After her father was deported to Mexico when she was 5, Denisse Silva suffered from anxiety and depression. Now a graduate student at CSUB, she aims to become a therapist and help at-risk youth struggling with their own mental health.

"I'm going to have to really focus my practice on mindfulness and what it is to be in the moment, what it is to be aware of your feelings and the pain that you may be feeling," Denisse said.

After earning her bachelor's degree from CSUB, Denisse mentored at-risk youth in Bakersfield, and "became that adult that they may not have had in their life growing up."

Now earning her master's degree, scholarship money helps Denisse make her dream of being a therapist a reality. Her mother has had to stop working due to a shoulder injury, so Denisse is supporting her. She's working at the Graduate Student Center, but only 20 hours a week.

When she's not working or studying, Denisse is conducting research with faculty about first-generation Latinx college students, what success means to them and what drives them to push through the obstacles many of them face in higher education.

In 2019, she earned the California State University Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement due to her superior academic performance, personal accomplishments and community service.

"I was the first person in my family to graduate from college," she said. "CSUB really set the path for me."



When Carmen Meza found out her cousin was diagnosed with breast cancer, she was devastated.

“She’s a really strong person,” Carmen said. “She is a mom and I never saw her sad or saw her think that she couldn’t fight this. If anything, I always saw her say, ‘I’m going to surpass this. I’m going to.’”

Carmen’s cousin won her battle with breast cancer, after two years and a mastectomy. But her experience inspired Carmen to do more for those fighting the disease.

As a student in CSUB’s Student Research Scholars program, Carmen is working on innovative breast cancer research.

“My research project involves an enzyme called lysyl oxidase provide,” she said. “What this project will do is that it will provide physicians with enough time to provide radical treatments for their patients.”

Carmen, a biochemistry major, is working on this project with her faculty mentor, Dr. Karlo M. Lopez.

“He’s a really great advisor,” Carmen said. “I think a mentor is really important because they can guide you and push you through your studies.”

Carmen’s project is funded through donor support. As the first person in her family to attend college, Carmen said she is especially grateful to the donors who believe in her success.

“It’s something I’ve never expected. I never thought that I would come to college and do research,” she said. “I am really grateful.”



FOR `RUNNER KRIS ROGIC,
RISING UP MEANS REPRESENTING
CSUB ON AN INTERNATIONAL
STAGE.

Being a student-athlete in the United States was always a dream for Kris Rogic. Though he reached international success as a swimmer in his home country of Croatia, he said his journey truly began at CSUB.

"I came from a country that is doing pretty rough right now," he said. "But I'm hungry, I'm motivated ... We have a program here that gives so much opportunity."

A record-setting swimmer on campus, Kris is a recipient of the Roadrunner Scholarship, which provides financial support to student-athletes in need. While earning his bachelor's degree in business administration, Kris aims to represent Croatia at the 2021 Summer Olympics — putting CSUB on the international stage.

He joins fellow `Runner student-athletes on their journeys to the Olympics. Swimmers Autumn D'Arcy and Loren Gillilan clinched spots at the U.S. Olympic Trials, and international student Mikayla Popham will compete in her home country at the Australian Olympic Trials.

Kris credits much of his success to what he's learned at CSUB.

"I'm very grateful. I couldn't do it without my teammates and coaches, and also the support I get from staff and faculty," Kris said. "The leaders taught me a lot about brotherhood and what it means to be a `Runner. I bleed blue and gold right now. I think of everyone here as a huge family."



FOR 'RUNNER JASMINE ARMSTRONG, RISING UP MEANS MAKING HISTORY.

Jasmine Armstrong spent her first two years of college on the east coast at the University of Southern Maine. While she was away from her hometown of Bakersfield, her grandfather died and her mother became ill.

Jasmine knew she had to return to Bakersfield to be close to family. She took 36 units to finish her semester in Maine and worked two part-time jobs to make it back to Bakersfield.

After moving back to California, she applied to CSUB. Many of the things she loved about Maine also fit her reasons for coming to CSUB. It was smaller classes, close enough to a big city and offered rare opportunities for motivated students like her to succeed.

The history major had close relationships with her professors, like Dr. Mustafah Dhada, who helped Jasmine when she was feeling dejected and overwhelmed.

Jasmine graduated in 2019. While it was an exciting time, it was bittersweet for her mother, who lost her son when he was 16 and Jasmine was 5. The loss has always fueled Jasmine to do things that he was never able to accomplish, like flying in a plane, visiting new cities on the East Coast and graduating from college.

Jasmine dedicated her degree to her mother, and made history by being the first in her family to graduate from college. Her goal is to head to law school to become a public prosecutor.

"I'm proud of everything I've had to go through to make it to this point," Jasmine said. "I could have just as easily not gotten to this point."



FOR 'RUNNER DAVID HARRINGTON, RISING UP MEANS HELPING PEOPLE GAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE BACK.

David Harrington is in the business of giving people their independence back.

As the president and chief operating officer of the Centre for Neuro Skills, his goal is to improve the quality of life for patients through brain injury rehabilitation.

Every year, some 650 people across the country come to the Centre for Neuro Skills after strokes, car accidents, falls and other causes of traumatic brain injury.

"I can't imagine any other work being more meaningful than helping those who are suffering, or those who have a disability," he said.

A Bakersfield native, David earned his MBA at CSUB. The skills he learned in operations management, business ethics and data analysis help him lead a growing team. The Centre for Neuro Skills, after staking ground throughout California and Texas, plans to double in size over the next five to seven years.

When David is not working, he serves as director on the Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Association of America, providing expertise on treatment, legislation and advocacy issues. He is also a member of the Kern County Concussion Consortium, which aims to better recognize and manage concussions among teens and children.

David is also educating Kern County's next generation of leaders as an adjunct instructor for the School of Business at CSUB.



FOR 'RUNNER JEREMY VILLANUEVA, RISING UP MEANS ADVOCATING FOR VETERANS RIGHTS.

In 2008, Jeremy Villanueva, a Marine veteran of the war in Iraq, was working as a journeyman plumber in his hometown of Bakersfield. One day, he found himself replacing some underground pipes at CSUB.

That day inspired his college journey.

"I was 27 years old and always thought about college as a fantasy land for other people's kids, not for me. I thought I'd have a blue-collar job for the rest of my life," he said.

Jeremy struggled while balancing his job as a maintenance man, supporting his family, and studying. He'd sometimes show up to class muddy and exhausted.

One day after class, Jeremy received encouragement from his instructor to apply for an internship with the Panetta Institute for Public Policy in Washington, D.C.

During his internship, he'd give tours of the Capitol and attend briefings in the White House, where he'd hear then-President Obama. And, in an experience Jeremy still describes as "surreal," he was invited to a meeting in the Pentagon office of then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.

"Unbelievably, the people in charge of our nation's defense were asking for my opinion on policy issues," Jeremy said.

Jeremy graduated from CSUB with a degree in political science and government. Now, he is the associate legislative director at the nonprofit Disabled American Veterans, advocating for legislation that supports disabled veterans and their families. He credits his success to CSUB.

"Because of the opportunities CSUB afforded me, I've accomplished far more than I ever thought I could."



FOR 'RUNNER STEPHANIE CAMPOS, RISING UP MEANS TEACHING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES.

Stephanie Campos' commitment to education doesn't end during a world-wide pandemic.

She is just one of many CSUB alumni educators who went through extraordinary lengths to ensure students keep learning while staying at home to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

For her 27 fourth-grade students at Bakersfield's Evergreen Elementary, Stephanie individualized her teaching based on each student's circumstances.

About 60% of her students began doing assignments online; the rest would work on packets of assignments created by curriculum and instruction administrators. Stephanie reached out to each student's family members to determine the best approach.

As she provided dedicated instruction to each student, Stephanie said she was encouraged by her "amazing" students' eagerness to learn and stay busy.

"I just want them to be healthy and stay home," she added.

Stephanie earned a liberal studies degree and teaching credential from CSUB in 2015, and her master's in education in 2019. The university's School of Social Sciences and Education houses 70% of CSUB's graduate and professional degree programs. Its advanced degree programs have led to Washington Monthly ranking CSUB as No. 5 of the Top 100 Masters Universities in 2018.



FOR 'RUNNER COLLEEN
MCGAULEY, RISING UP MEANS
ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN IN
NEED.

CSUB alumna Colleen McGauley has a heart that beats for people.

Colleen was among the 13 members of Kern County's first CASA class in 1994 and went on to serve as the organization's executive director for 18 years.

CASA, or Court Appointed Special Advocates, trains community volunteers to get to know children in the juvenile dependency court system and communicate their needs and desires to judges deciding their care and placement.

"When I heard about CASA, and the courts and the possibility of a volunteer making a difference, I just said, 'Count me in,'" Colleen said.

She expanded the number of advocates from about 57 to 215, grew the annual budget from about \$300,000 to \$1.2 million, and

initiated a series of locally groundbreaking education, mental health and family reunification programs for thousands of CASA-represented children.

And then there are her technical gifts, many of which she honed while earning her master's degree in public administration at CSUB.

She learned about statistics, human resources and making a persuasive argument — a skill she'd use to persuade funders to invest in the organization.

Colleen said her CSUB education paid off exponentially, and allowed her to focus her efforts on helping CASA-represented children who have suffered neglect and abuse.

"I'm called your advocate," she'd say to a child in need. "I'm going to stand up for you."



FOR 'RUNNER
HILDA NIEBLAS, RISING UP
MEANS **DREAMING BIG.**

Hilda Nieblas, the daughter of farmworkers, always dreamt big.

She was the first in her family to attend high school. Then the first to obtain a bachelor's degree. And a master's degree. And pursue a doctorate.

"Education was never just about me," Hilda said. "My parents had sacrificed everything so that I could have an opportunity to do this."

Hilda is the oldest of four children, born to parents who came to the United States seeking opportunity in east Bakersfield. In the tight-knit apartment complexes where she grew up, she recalls immigration raids.

Like many "Dreamers," young people brought to the United States without papers, she didn't originally know how to pursue college. Dreamers must navigate rules for gaining legal status, qualifying for financial aid and putting their degree to use.

That common experience made Hilda a great fit for her role as coordinator of CSUB's Multicultural Alliance and Gender Equity Center and Dreamers Resource Center.

The Dreamers center is an information hub and safe haven for students, faculty and staff grappling with immigration issues for themselves or family members. It offers contracted legal services, academic advising, financial aid information and other support. It's run by Hilda and two graduate students.

For Hilda, the role is a perfect fit. She's been in the shoes of many of the students she's helping. She hopes to mentor them the way she was mentored as a student.

"The people at CSUB who really, truly adopted me, put me under their wing," she said. "They changed my life forever."



**FOR 'RUNNER BOBBY
HARTSTOCK, RISING UP
MEANS FILLING A CRITICAL
NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY.**

Bobby Hartstock had never been called upon before to help with a public health emergency.

But when the COVID-19 pandemic led to a shortage of face masks for health care workers, he knew he could help.

Bobby is a CSUB alumnus who works as a specialist in the university's Fab Lab, the center of ingenuity and innovation on campus. The Fab Lab is where students and the public alike turn their inventions and ideas into reality, with the help of CSUB staff and equipment, including 3D printers and lasers.

Through the Fab Lab's technology, and support from the community, Bobby was able to make 100 face shields per day during the coronavirus pandemic. Those face shields were donated to local health care workers.

"It's engineering in action," said Andrea Medina, director of grants and outreach for the School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering. "Filling a need. It's working with what you have."

The project was funded through donations to the CSUB Fund. When community members give to the CSUB Fund, university leadership is able to use those dollars to address unforeseen and immediate issues.

"We love our community, and so it feels amazing to be able to provide a service in this way," Medina said during the pandemic. "As a university, we're still impacting people's lives, even though we're locked indoors."



FOR 'RUNNER LUIS CABRALES,
RISING UP MEANS PROVIDING
SOLUTIONS TO THE CENTRAL
VALLEY.

California's water shortage is no secret. Especially hard hit are the rural, agriculture-rich areas of the state's Central Valley.

Dr. Luis Cabrales, an associate professor of engineering at CSUB, has been puzzling out solutions to this problem for years. **He and his students are focused on finding better ways to clean and reuse water leftover from oil production, with the hope that it could be used to irrigate the region's millions of acres of farmland.**

"We have very large commercial farming and oil production industries here in Bakersfield," Dr. Cabrales said. "Why not work together and with our local community? We are in the ideal location to help."

When he started at CSUB in 2012, one of the first things he did was reach out to collaborate with local industry.

"Research in how to reuse wastewater is in demand and we're doing it right here at CSUB," he said. "The hope is that our research will provide efficient technologies to alleviate water problems in the agriculture industry, especially within our Kern County community."

As an educator, his classes in environmental engineering always emphasize the practical, not just the theoretical. A number of Dr. Cabrales' former students have gone directly into careers in the local agriculture industry.

"My main goal is to give students a good education by providing them with hands-on training in real-world problems," he explained. "The training my students receive in this area is very valuable and applicable; these are skills which can be applied statewide, nationally and globally."



FOR 'RUNNER JAMIE PACHECO,
RISING UP MEANS INVESTING IN
STUDENTS.

Jamie Pacheco knows student veterans have unique needs on their journey to success that differ from a civilian college student. As the coordinator of the Veterans Success Center, she manages a space on campus dedicated to veterans, those who are active duty, reservists and national guardsmen.

"I truly see the impact it makes with our veteran students," Jamie said. "Seeing their success stories, and seeing them when they graduate — it's very meaningful to me."

At the CSUB Veterans Success Center, student veterans access resources, educational benefits information and academic advising. Student veterans are also able to study and collaborate with their peers in a dedicated space.

Jamie does more than manage the center — she donates to it as well.

"For me to donate to a program and invest my own money, because I know I'm making a good investment — it's just that much more worth it to me," she said.

For student veteran Ulyses Rodriguez, Jamie's work makes all the difference. He started his CSUB journey two days after being discharged in 2017; he was a Marine Corps sergeant who served two tours in Afghanistan.

"I couldn't relate to students in my classes who were 17, 18, 19 years old. I was 10 years older," he said. "That's why I sought out the Veterans Center."

Supporting students like Ulyses is a no-brainer for Jamie.

"We're investing in our students because they are our future," she said. "They're a part of our community."



FOR 'RUNNER DR. JACKIE KEGLEY, RISING UP MEANS LEAVING A LEGACY THAT IMPACTS GENERATIONS.

When Dr. Jackie Kegley looks back on the 48 years she's spent teaching at CSUB, it isn't the many accolades, published research, or scores of courses she's taught that she thinks of first.

Rather, it's the many students who have learned how to think more deeply about everyday ethical dilemmas that the professor of philosophy is most enthused about.

In Dr. Kegley's near-half-century of service at CSUB, she has been a tremendous catalyst for change and transformation, in her specialty of ethics studies and well beyond.

"[Ethics] is about mediation between views or about having the courage to stand up for values and having personal integrity," Dr. Kegley said.

These strong feelings led Dr. Kegley to donate \$250,000 for the development of the

Kegley Center for Student Success in 2013. The center provides tutoring and mentoring services for students.

"Student success is being able to develop skills that allow students to go on and succeed in their professions," she said.

In addition to being the co-founder of the Kegley Institute of Ethics, Dr. Kegley was the chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies and director of the Helen Louise Hawk Honors Program.

She said one of CSUB's main roles is "to provide access to quality education for all our students so that we can build a strong workforce."

"But it's about more than," she added. "It's about educating citizens to serve their communities."



FOR RUNNER DR. ANTJE LAUER,
RISING UP MEANS JOINING
STUDENTS TO BATTLE VALLEY
FEVER.

It isn't a terribly warm welcome to the community, but newcomers to Bakersfield often are presented with a warning: Stay indoors on windy days or risk catching valley fever, a serious medical condition contracted by breathing in spores that live in Kern County's soil. But when microbiologist Dr. Antje Lauer heard the precaution, it piqued her interest.

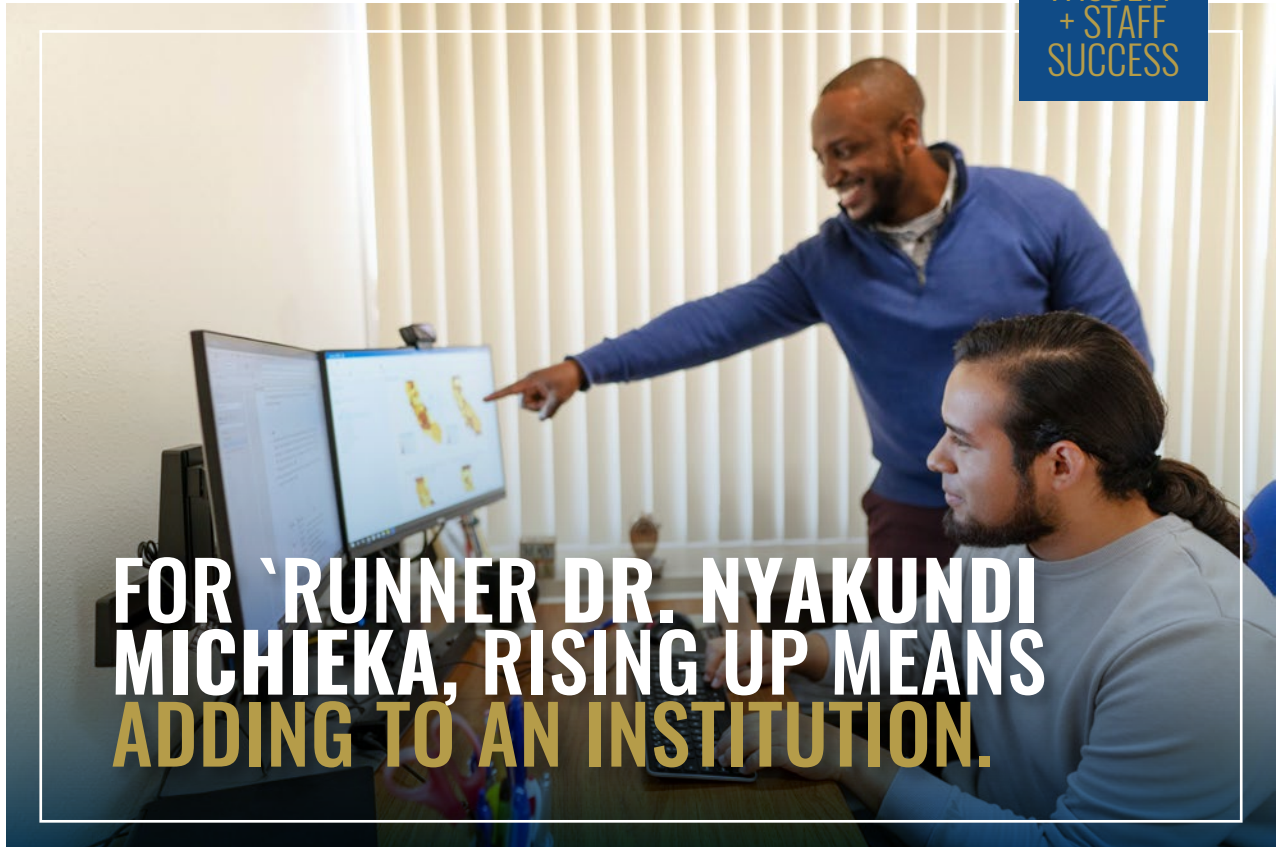
Dr. Lauer studies *Coccidioides*, the fungus responsible for valley fever. Found in the soil in certain areas, the fungus is dangerous, and sometimes even deadly, for those who breathe it.

Though plenty of research continues to be done on the medical side of the issue toward treatment and vaccines, environmental research like Dr. Lauer's is much less common.

"My work is more targeted toward knowing the pathogen better to prevent disease," Dr. Lauer said. "For example, when we figure out where the pathogen is growing and what actually spikes its growth in a particular area, we can maybe give recommendations that these soils should not be disturbed."

Dr. Lauer mentors students who are interested in the research. Stephanie Ertell, a senior studying biology, said microbiology is her passion and that she was thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Dr. Lauer. Stephanie has been extracting DNA from Central Valley soil.

Stephanie said working with Dr. Lauer on this research "is very exciting because it affects our community and other areas that are similar to our climate. It's something that's not really well studied because it's not worldwide, so it's exciting to be a part of that research."



**FOR 'RUNNER DR. NYAKUNDI
MICHIEKA, RISING UP MEANS
ADDING TO AN INSTITUTION.**

“My goal is to work with others to develop and build opportunities and resources at CSUB,” said Dr. Nyakundi Michieka, associate professor of economics.

Born in Nairobi, Kenya, Dr. Michieka obtained his Ph.D. in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics.

“CSUB provided me the opportunity to work on research related to energy and the environment, which is an area I’m passionate about,” Dr. Michieka said. “The active symbiotic relationship between the university and the community also drove me here,” he added.

Dr. Michieka noted three things he loves most about the work he does: the opportunity to train and motivate tomorrow’s generation; the flexibility that comes with academia and the opportunity to do interesting work.

While being a professor certainly has its rewards, it also has its own set of challenges to work around – preparing for class, teaching, research projects, presenting at conferences, serving on academic committees and so on.

However, in spite of navigating the multiple duties, Dr. Michieka has watched his students rise up in various ways. Students have engaged in research to build their resumés, while others have shared their findings at conferences and graduated with additional skills that made them more marketable.

Some of the findings in the research conducted by Dr. Michieka and students have been shared at Kern Economic Summit, featured by the media and published in peer-reviewed journals.



During his 30 years on the bench, Judge Louie Vega has looked at how things are done and championed ways to do them better.

When young defendants wound up in his court, Vega looked hard at whether a learning experience was more appropriate than a juvenile hall sentence. When unresolved court cases were preventing some homeless residents from getting a driver's license or job, he helped resolve them through Homeless Court.

And when he saw how important it was to help keep fractured families in-tact, he launched "Family Reunification Day," an annual celebration of the hard work parents put into regaining custody of their kids.

"My dad is the type of person who makes sure things are the way they are not because they've always been that way, but because

they're the way they should be," said Vega's daughter, Raquel Vega.

That hasn't been just as a judge. It's been as a helicopter crew chief during the Vietnam War, as the first non-white Kern County television news reporter, and as a teacher.

Vega's path toward the law began while earning his political science degree and teaching credential from CSUB. It was in a class taught by political science professor Stanley Clark that Vega realized the legal career he'd long thought about pursuing was actually within his reach.

"I don't know if it's survivor's guilt or whatever but when I got through Vietnam, I thought there had to be a reason," said Vega, who ultimately graduated from UCLA's law school. "You want to find a purpose for why you made it and others didn't."



FOR 'RUNNER DR. BRE EVANS-SANTIAGO, RISING UP MEANS ADVOCATING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE.

When something needs to be done, Dr. Bre Evans-Santiago, an assistant professor in the Teacher Education Department, rises to the occasion.

It's important "to be able to come up with ideas instead of sitting back and watching," said Dr. Evans-Santiago.

She likes to look at problems, then see what she can do to solve them. Dr. Evans-Santiago isn't one to sit on the sidelines – she does her fair share of the work and then some.

"I see myself in three different roles," said Dr. Evans-Santiago. She is a leader. A professor. An advocate for students.

"I'm just trying to be a voice on campus and let students see me as a person of color and identifying as queer, to be able to work for what you want and be an example," she said.

She especially wants to advocate on campus for the underrepresented or marginalized

students that have lacked a voice. Dr. Evans-Santiago is a community engagement coordinator, co-chair for the LGBTQ+ affinity group for faculty and staff, as well as the co-advisor for the LGBTQ+ student network, and works with the Black affinity group and Black students on campus.

"I'm always trying to support faculty, find ways for us to just be leaders for social justice in the community and use my knowledge to be able to help teachers, for sure. That's a big part of who I am and what we do," said Dr. Evans-Santiago.

That's part of the reason she decided to write a book, "Mistakes We Have Made: Implications for Social Justice Educators." It features five faculty members from CSUB and one faculty member from CSU Northridge.

Her favorite part of the job is seeing her students' progress.

"To know that I can help be a part of that is so exciting," Dr. Evans-Santiago said.