



EARL GALES JR. AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LA METRO RAIL SYSTEM

In summer 1958, Earl Gales Jr. and his brother took one of the last rides on the Red Car – formally known as the Pacific Electric Railway – from Los Angeles to Watts, sparking a lifelong interest in the social and economic factors that affect transportation planning.

It inspired his senior thesis, which caught the attention of Los Angeles City Councilman Tom Bradley when he visited the College of Environmental Design. In 1970, Gale was a college sophomore when he took his first airplane ride, bound for Washington, D.C., at the invitation of Bradley and Los Angeles County Board Supervisor Kenneth Hahn to present his thesis to the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMPTA), predecessor to the Federal Transit Administration. It became a critical document in the federal funding package for the Los Angeles Metro Rail System.

“Tom Bradley was looking at regional issues that affect the city, and my paper was on transportation. He saw where I wanted to focus on mass rail transit as a solution for mass transportation. He told me to expand on this paper, which eventually became my thesis. Later on in my graduate year, he wanted me to present the paper in Washington, D.C. to UMPTA. That was great for me.

“I presented to UMPTA on a needs analysis for the rail system. LA City had only focused on buses, and mine was the only paper that focused on mass rail in LA. They adopted my paper that became the initial funding document for the mass transit program in LA.

“Mr. Bradley said something that made a difference for me; he said that there will be gridlock in LA, perhaps not in his lifetime, if we don’t act on it quickly and adopt the mass transit program. He gave my thesis more background for my graduate thesis at UCLA. Although I went there for architecture and urban design, I focused on transportation because I was looking for a way to develop environments around the stations that would be conducive, to have it mean something to the area. The urban core was key for me.”

PLANNING for the FUTURE

alumni

ENV ALUMNUS' SCHOLARSHIP WILL ADVANCE EQUITY, INCLUSION AND EXCELLENCE

By SAMANTHA GONZAGA

At a time when the country is reckoning with the long-term effects of systemic racism coupled with a global pandemic that disproportionately affects people of color, it is timely that the head of one of the nation’s largest minority-owned architecture, engineering and construction management firms would create a new endowed scholarship to help advance equity.

But Earl Gales Jr. ('72, urban and regional planning) had long been thinking about a scholarship for students at the College of Environmental Design. A decade ago, he saw a need to prepare students for shifts in the urban planning and architecture professions. Whether they’re caused by technological innovation and evolving business models, or an accounting of the design disciplines’ roles supporting and advancing equity, one thing remains immutable. Gales saw that students would need support in their academic studies to thrive in a future that he believes is full of promise.

“I think we have an opportunity to start pre-training people in high schools and giving people opportunities during their freshman year to prepare them for what we think is going to come in the future,” says Gales, chairman and CEO of Jenkins/

Gales & Martinez, Inc. and a founding board member of the Cal Poly Pomona Philanthropic Foundation.

The Earl Gales Jr. Endowed Scholarship will support Cal Poly Pomona’s commitment to diversity and inclusion, making higher education more accessible to students from underrepresented groups or socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. As early as spring 2021, it will award \$2,000 to an undergraduate and/or graduate student in the urban and regional planning or architecture programs. Qualifying students must have at least a 3.0 GPA and demonstrate involvement in equity and inclusion efforts in higher education.

“Student diversity is one of most important values at the university,” says Professor Dohyung Kim, past chair of the Department of Urban & Regional Planning. “Equity, inclusiveness and diversity are also core principles of urban and regional planning. With the help of Earl Gales Jr., the scholarship will make a difference for the department to support the education and career development of bright, creative students of color.”

The College of Environmental Design’s programs – architecture, art (visual communication design and art history), landscape architecture, and urban and regional planning and the Lyle Center for Regenerative Studies – have long been nationally recognized for its diversity. Last year, Planetizen’s Guide to Graduate Urban Planning Programs ranked the graduate urban planning program No. 4 for the largest percentage of minority representation.

The accolade reflects the college’s commitment and ongoing efforts to attract, retain and invest in talented scholars and academics of color. As part of its 2019-23 Strategic Plan, the college formed the Diversity and Plan of Action Committee, composed of faculty, staff and students. Over the summer, a group of architecture students established the Cal Poly Pomona chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (CPP-NOMAS), while landscape architecture lecturer Steven Chavez and alumni Sara Abed ('14, landscape architecture) and Alejandro Armas ('18, landscape architecture) formed the National Association of Minority Landscape Architects.

“Thanks to Earl Gales’ generous support, generations of students will receive a fine design education at Cal Poly Pomona,” says Interim Dean Lauren Weiss Bricker. “The scholarship encourages applicants committed to the needs of communities of color. We see this scholarship as a catalyst for the creation of similar support for students in every ENV department and center.”