



BRUCE GORELICK
Class of 1978

In 2017, Gorelick became the general manager and managing director of the Loews Regency in San Francisco after 38 years with Marriott International. He previously worked at The Ritz-Carlton, Renaissance, Marriott Vacation Club, Marriott Hotels, and Marriott Resorts and Suites. Gorelick is a member of The Collins College's Board of Advisors.



LESLEY BUTLER
Class of 1990

Butler has been a Collins faculty member since 1992. She previously worked with FORBCO Management, which owned Sizzler Restaurant franchises. She also worked for Roma Corporation, owners of Tony Roma restaurants, and trained managers and employees for new store openings, and managed the kitchen, bar and service staff.



MATTHEW KOU
Class of 2006

As vice president of investments and acquisitions for Pacifica Hotels, Kou is focused on strategically growing the company's portfolio of more than 30 independent and branded hotels. He credits professors Margie Jones and Don St. Hilaire for introducing him to the investment side of the industry. He has held previous positions with Sonnenblick-Eichner and PKF Consulting.



LERA VAN STRAATUM
Class of 2009

Straatum is the president of The Collins College's alumni chapter and an adjunct faculty member. She is the operations director for one of the flagship properties of the business and sports division of ClubCorp. Prior to that, she worked at the Cordillera Country Club in Vail, Colorado, after graduating as the college's McPhee Scholar.



JON FARZAM
Class of 2011

Farzam is vice president of several independent hotel properties, which he co-owns and operates with his family. He and his family built and opened Shore Hotel in Santa Monica, a LEED gold certified property that is a leader in the Southern California hotel market. He is focusing on asset management and growing the family portfolio.



No GLASS Ceilings



Avanade Scholarship Fosters a New Generation of Women Leaders in Tech

By **SHELLEY LEVITT**

What **Barbae Marquez** was like as a young college student differs from the woman she is today.

While at Cal Poly Pomona, Marquez tried her best to fade into the background, never wanting to draw attention to herself.

"I was very shy. I had a hard time raising my hand in class," she says. "I'd sometimes come out of a class or a meeting not understanding a problem because I didn't want to ask a question. I didn't want to stand out."

Today, just a few months after graduating with a bachelor's degree in computer and information systems, Marquez describes herself in very different terms.

"I have way more confidence," she says. "If I'm feeling insecure, I work through it. I'm very aware of what I project, from facial expressions to how I speak to people. From when I first started at Cal Poly Pomona, I'm almost a different person."

Behind this transformation is a unique scholarship program for undergraduate women majoring in computer information systems or computer science that was created by **Avanade**, the leading digital innovator on the Microsoft ecosystem. In 2016, when she was a sophomore, Marquez became one of the first five students to be awarded the Avanade STEM Scholarship at Cal Poly Pomona.

Avanade scholars receive an annual grant of \$15,000 a year, for up to five years.

Funding education is just one element of the program. During her three years as a scholarship recipient, Marquez took part in networking events and industry conferences, such as the annual Avanade Tech Summit, a three-day event held on the Microsoft campus in Redmond, Washington. She was mentored by Avanade executives one on one and also in roundtables alongside her fellow scholars on everything from shedding the female habit of saying

"I'm sorry" before offering opinions in meetings to learning how to propel yourself toward short- and long-term career goals while maintaining work-life balance. Marquez also had the chance to step into the role of mentor through outreach programs for middle- and high-school girls where she talked about the opportunities for women in the technology field.

The scholarship program is an important part of Avanade's commitment to inclusion and diversity, especially when it comes to attracting more women with qualifications in STEM into the company and the industry.

"Attracting and retaining women into technology roles is a challenge that many companies face," says **Adam Warby**, CEO of Avanade. "We have made it part of our corporate citizenship mission to encourage more women to consider a STEM career and our scholarship program is a great vehicle for doing that."

There has already been progress. Three of the first class of Cal Poly Pomona's Avanade Scholars have graduated and are now working at the company. That includes Marquez, who moved from an internship in IT support to a position as a consultant in advanced analytics.

"I won't be surprised to see these young women taking up leadership positions in tech companies in the near future," says **Heba Ramzy**, Avanade's corporate citizenship senior director. "They bring a positivity and tenacity that any company would want to have on their teams."

Global Impact

Nine universities around the world are partners in the **Avanade Scholarship Program**, and Cal Poly Pomona is only one of three in the United States. It's a fitting tribute to the late **Mitchell C. Hill**, Avanade's founding CEO, who graduated from Cal Poly Pomona in 1980 with a bachelor's degree in economics and a minor in computer information systems.

In 2014, a year after Hill passed away, the university posthumously honored him as a Distinguished Alumni. In his memory Avanade made a \$500,000 donation to establish an endowment for the **Mitchell C. Hill Center for Digital Innovation** at Cal Poly Pomona.

"Mitch's influence and impact on Avanade is still very evident today," Warby says. "He was passionate about technology innovation and continuous learning — both of which are core elements of our culture today."

The Mitchell C. Hill Center, which is part of the College of Business Administration, is a hub for digital experimentation. One key project is a student-run data center that allows students to design and test cloud solutions.

"It's possibly the only student-run data center housed in a business school in the country," says Dean **Erik Rolland** of the center, which partners with cloud technology firms such as Avanade, Microsoft, Chef and Jupiter. "It allows us to do very inventive things. For example, we've worked with two entertainment companies to test whether they could break into each other's systems. Our work is having a major impact on the cyber-security industry."

As Rolland sees it, both the Mitchell C. Hill Center and the Avanade STEM Scholarship provide Cal Poly Pomona students with crucial introductions to industry.

"More than half of our students are first-generation college students," he says. "That means they often don't have networks, connections and mentors within their families. What Avanade is doing in creating those connections for our students is incredibly important. When you come out of college with networks already in place, that's what I call a big head-start."

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HEBA RAMZY,
Avanade's corporate citizenship senior director

The CPP Advantage

Shannon Trinh is one of seven Cal Poly Pomona students who began their journey as Avanade STEM Scholars in 2018. A sophomore and computer science student, Trinh learned to code when she was 13 years old. Still, she says, people often assume she doesn't know as much as her male counterparts.

"It can be frustrating," she says. "When I'm in a study group or in class, I get challenged a lot more than a man would. If I say, 'Hey, we should do this for our project,' the reaction is 'Why do you think that? Can you prove that's the best path or choice?' I'm expected to produce evidence for everything I say or do."

In CPP's computer science program, 83 percent of the students are male and 17 percent female. Trinh says she's excited about the mentoring relationships she'll be able to establish through the STEM Scholarship.

"Not only can I be mentored by professionals who are already in the field," she says, "I can also provide my knowledge and experience to other Avanade Scholars and hear from them as well."

Rolland is looking forward to charting how Trinh and her fellow scholars evolve as they move through the Avanade scholarship.

"When I interact with the Avanade Scholars, the change they go through is remarkable. The program brings them out of their shell and gives them leadership qualities and abilities that will carry them forward in their careers."

That's exactly what Marquez is counting on.

"My goal is to be a manager or higher in five years. I'm interested in innovation. I want to play a part in creating a new technology. I don't know what kind of position that will mean, but the scholarship opened a lot of doors for me and also opened my eyes," she says. "I used to think you can either program or you can web design. Now I realize there's a lot more than that. I don't see a ceiling to what I can achieve."



Shannon Trinh



Isabel DeLaPaz



Carla Castillo



Arriana Daniels



Teresita Esver