O n August 16, 2002 — on a picture-perfect day — the ringing of bells from the tower heralded the beginning of a new journey and the culmination of the decades-long effort to create a four-year, public university to serve the people of Ventura County. This day marked the opening of California State University Channel Islands.

The event began with former Congressman Robert J. Lagomarsino and his wife Norma, long-time supporters of the University, ringing the Channel Islands Bell signaling the start of the Opening Ceremony. Sounding the ship’s bell, on loan from the Navy for the event, marked the beginning of a Cal State Channel Islands tradition, President Richard R. Rush shared with the audience of more than 1,200 people gathered on the lawn in the shadow of the University’s Bell Tower.

“I would like to begin by calling your attention to a tradition that we began today — the ringing of the Channel Islands Bell. It is our intention to ring in each new school year with an academic procession set into motion by the ringing of the bell,” Rush said.

Acknowledging the Lagomarsinos’ tradition of support for the University, Rush said, “We are honored to have former Congressman Bob Lagomarsino and his wife Norma as our first bell ringers. Bob and Norma are truly long-time friends and supporters of Cal State Channel Islands.” As a state senator in the 1960s, Robert Lagomarsino introduced the first legislation authorizing a public university for Ventura County. Recently the Lagomarsinos donated $1 million to support the University’s new library, the Lagomarsino Archives, and future archival collections which will be located within the library.

Also recognized for his valuable contribution in establishing the University was J. Handel Evans, founding president and now president emeritus of CSUCI. Evans began work in 1996 to build support and lobby for funds to create the University.

Others singled out for recognition by President Rush for their contributions to the University were his advisory committee; Joyce Kennedy, the retired University Center director of CSUN for Ventura County, who was unable to attend the ceremony; and the late Star Free-Press editor Julius Gius, who recruited supporters for the future University.

The ceremony was attended by guests from academia, the community, the media, and local, state, and national government officials, including Governor Gray Davis. Governor Davis was among many dignitaries who offered good wishes for the success of Cal State Channel Islands.

“I believe higher education is the passport to a better life,” Governor Gray Davis said during his official greetings to the University. “Today, Ventura County becomes home to one of the great public universities in the world. By opening the doors to CSU Channel Islands, we open the doors of opportunity to generations of students in Ventura County and throughout California.”

Welcome the 23rd campus in the CSU System, CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed said, “This campus is as rich in history as it is in its promise for the future. CSU Channel Islands represents the best in our hopes and dreams for a 21st century university.”

Calling the California State University Channel Islands “the miracle on Lewis Road,” State Senator Jack O’Connell thanked the many people who over the years supported the effort to bring a four-year, public university to Ventura County. “This University really is the university that could,” he said. “We knew that if we built this University, the students would come. Without a doubt, this is the brightest jewel in the crown of the California State University System.”
The Opening Ceremony
South Quad Lawn
Friday • August 16, 2002 • Noon

Richard R. Rush, President
California State University Channel Islands
Presiding

Processional
Processional March composed by Theodore Lucas
Conducted by Mike Duty
Performed by Channel Islands and Hueneme High Schools Band

Procession Participants
Chief University Marshal, Louise Lutze-Atan, Chair, CSUCI Academic Senate
Present and past members of the President’s Advisory and Foundation Boards
Led by University Marshal, Ira Schoenwald
Students and Staff
Led by University Marshal, Dan Wakelee and Linda MacMichael
The Faculty
Led by University Marshal, Stephen Leevere
The President’s Cabinet and CSU Representatives
Led by University Marshal, Paul Addak
Opening Ceremony Platform Party
Led by University Marshal, Barbara Thorpe

Invocation
The Rev. James Decker-Mahin
Camarillo United Methodist Church

National Anthem
Richard R. Rush, President
National Anthem performed by the CSUCI Band
Composed by Theodore Lucas

Color Guard
Naval Base Ventura County

Welcome & Introductions
Richard R. Rush

Greetings
From The Governor of the State of California
The Honorable Gray Davis
The Trustees, California State University System
Debra Farar, Chair
The Chancellor, California State University System
Charles B. Reed, Chancellor
The United States Congress
Congresswoman Lois Capps
The California State Senate
Senator Jack O’Connell
The California State Assembly
Assemblywoman Hannah-Beth Jackson
Assemblywoman Fran Pavley
Assemblyman Tony Strickland
The CSUCI President’s Advisory Board
Laura McAvoy, Chair
The CSUCI Foundation Board
Gregory J. Ramirez, Member
The Ventura County Community College District
James Walker, Interim Chancellor
The Ventura County Superintendent of Schools
Charles Weis, Superintendent

Dilemma March
Composed and conducted by Gary Engels

Greetings (continued)
From
The County Board of Supervisors
Kathy Long, Member
The City of Camarillo
Jan McDonald, Mayor
The City of Oxnard
Manuel Lopez, Mayor
The Naval Base Ventura County
Captain Robert Westberg
The Community
Carmen Ramirez
The Faculty
Louise Lutze-Atan, Chair, CSUCI Academic Senate
The Staff
Ginger Reyes, Outreach & Recruitment
The Students
Richard Ramirez

Alma Mater
Music and lyrics by Theodore Lucas
Performed by Fran McNell
Accompanied by the Channel Islands and Hueneme High Schools Band

Benediction
Alan Salazar, Chumash Elder

Closing Remarks
Richard R. Rush

Recessional
Channel Islands and Hueneme High Schools Band
Conducted by Mike Doty

Califomia State University Channel Islands
OPENING CEREMONY, AUGUST 16, 2002

Ceremony Highlights

CSUCI President’s Advisory Board Chair Laura McAvoy spoke not only of celebrating the joy of the University’s opening, but also of the need for the community’s continuing commitment to its success: “Today is our day to celebrate. It is also the beginning of what all know is the most challenging part of this experience... This is the time that this University will continue to need ongoing diligence, commitment, caring, and certainly support of all kinds. This day is also a call to all of us in the community to remind us of our ongoing responsibility. Thank you to everyone for making this day possible by joining in the venture and the dream and for your ongoing support.”

“We strengthen our society when education is available to all of us.”
– Carmen Ramirez, representing the community

Representing the CSUCI Foundation Board, Ventura attorney Gregory J. Ramirez thanked the community for its crucial backing in establishing the University. “We have worked as a team,” he said, “to raise support for the University, so that every student, every child, in every city of this county would know that this University belongs to them.” Referring to the community’s efforts, Ramirez said, “You demonstrated to the state legislature, you demonstrated to the CSU Trustees, that when the citizens and the businesses of this county are asked to rise to the occasion, they do so. We thank you for that.”

Oxnard Mayor Manuel Lopez spoke about how the University will benefit the local community: “This day symbolizes the opening up of opportunity for many local children and young people to aspire to an education that they could never have hoped for before.” Speaking about the advantages a public university brings to the community, local attorney and President’s Advisory Board member Carmen Ramirez called Cal State Channel Islands “my University, our University, your University.” She added, “To many people in our society, a college education is the only way out of a plight of poverty and ignorance. We strengthen our society when education is available to all of us.”

“We welcome the miracle on Lewis Road. It doesn’t get any better than this, does it?”
– State Senator Jack O’Connell

Local resident Richard Ramirez, representing the present and future students of CSUCI, said that having a university close to home made his dream of a four-year degree possible. “Opportunity was knocking, and I’ll tell you what: I couldn’t open that door fast enough,” he said. Speaking to the inaugural class, he said, “We have a destiny to fulfill, and it’s going to start here, with us.”

The ceremony concluded with the clear sound of bells as the University’s alma mater was played for the first time from the Bell Tower.

Above: Carrying the University Marie in the academic procession is CSU Academic Senate Chair and biology professor Louise Lutze-Atan.
Speaking at the Opening Ceremony are, top right to bottom right, Assemblywoman Hannah-Beth Jackson, Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, Assemblyman Tony Strickland, President’s Advisory Board Chair Laura McAvoy, Foundation Board member Gregory J. Ramirez, Ventura County Community College District Interim Chancellor James Walker, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Charles Weis, Ventura County Supervisor Kathy Long, and City of Camarillo Mayor Ken McDonald.
Photos on this page by McLean.
“By opening the doors to CSU Channel Islands, we open the doors of opportunity to generations of students in Ventura County and throughout California.”

– Governor Gray Davis
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS

OPENING CEREMONY, AUGUST 16, 2002

The Ventura County Naval Base Color Guard, background, marches at the beginning of the Opening Ceremony. Right, Fran McNeill sings the debut performance of the University’s alma mater, with music and lyrics written by Theodore Lucas.

Calling the establishment of a four-year public university in Ventura County a “Herculean achievement,” Governor Gray Davis, center, congratulates CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed, left, and President Richard R. Rush, right, on the opening of California State University Channel Islands.

California State University Channel Islands
is pleased to recognize and thank the following sponsors of the University’s Opening Events

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Oxnard Harbor District/Port of Hueneme
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Garcia Mortuary
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Conway & Templeman
Morgan Stanley
Dover and Susan Petty
Bruno and Victoria Pozzi
Rainforest Plant Company
Ridge Landscaping
Soria, Tafur Bank & Trust
Ventura County Transportation Department
Dick Wagner/Edward Jones Investments
Weldpoint/Blue Cross

Mission Statement

California State University Channel Islands provides undergraduate and graduate education that facilitates learning within and across disciplines through integrative approaches, emphasizes experiential and service learning, and graduates students with an international perspective that includes facility in two languages. To accomplish its mission, the University strives to create learning communities that involve all elements of the University, integrate community and university resources, build community-university partnerships, engage the educational community from preschool through community college, provide opportunities for adult education and lifelong learning, and preserve and enhance the culture and environment of the region.

“This campus is as rich in history as it is in its promise for the future. Cal State Channel Islands represents the best in our hopes and dreams for a 21st century university.”

– CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed

Top left: City of Oxnard Mayor Manuel Lopez, left, and Ventura County Naval Base Captain Robert Westberg await the Opening Ceremony. Top right, from left to right: President’s Advisory Board member Carmen Ramirez, CSUCI staff member Gregor Reyes, CSUCI student Richard Ramirez, and Rev. James Decker-Mahin await the procession to begin the Opening Ceremony. Middle right: President Emeritus J. Handel Evans wearing the Presidential Medallion. Bottom right: Chumash elder Alan Salazar gives the benediction.

Photo by Bill Knapp

Photo by Bill Knapp

Photos by Bill Knapp

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