In 2020, former Sacramento State softball player Alyssa Nakken ’12 made history. This Hornet became the first full-time female coach in Major League Baseball and the first female coach for the San Francisco Giants.

“I am very proud of Alyssa,” said former Sacramento State head softball coach Kathy Strahan. “As her coach, I knew early that she would blaze new trails and do something groundbreaking. Her positive energy, intellect, and tremendous drive to succeed are an invaluable asset to the Giants players and organization.”

Prior to being promoted to full-time coach, Nakken served numerous roles with the Giants developing, producing, and directing a number of the organization’s health and wellness initiatives and events, including coordinating the Giant Race series.

She credits her accomplishments with the Giants to her experience at Sacramento State where she was part of a diverse student body. She learned that being a leader means working alongside others and being open to improving oneself.

“As a team captain at Sac State, your responsibility is to be a liaison between players and coaching staff,” she said. “I learned so much about how to have difficult conversations and how to build and gain trust.”

Growing up in Woodland, California, Nakken always heard about Sacramento State and thought of it as her “safety school.” However, when she was a junior and started touring schools, meeting coaches, and talking with potential teammates, she knew that Sacramento State was the place for her.

At Sacramento State, Nakken excelled in the classroom and on the field. She was named the conference’s Scholar-Athlete of the Year in 2012 for her academic and athletic accomplishments as well as community service involvement. Nakken credits the opportunities at Sacramento State, to learn “inside and outside the classroom,” for developing her into the person she is today.

“Sac State is definitely my second home,” said Nakken. “Anything I needed, I had the support. At Sac State, I learned that the job of a coach is to create environments for players to flourish. To develop into the best version of themselves. Through the dedication and commitment of staff, I was allowed to be myself there. To just be me.”

On the Rise campaign is committed to uplifting generations of people in an equitable and sustainable way.

For more information about On the Rise, please contact the Campaign Office at campaign@csus.edu.
Online: csus.edu/campaign