

ESTEBAN VILLA

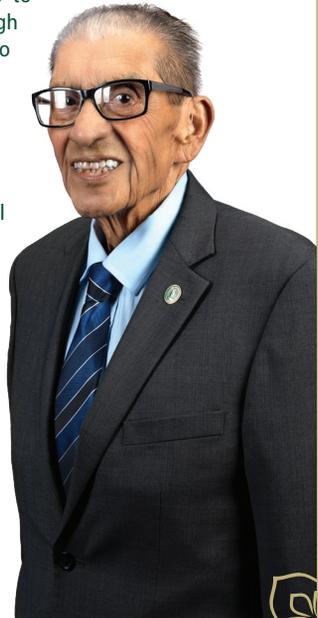
Emeritus Professor of Art, Sacramento State
Founding Member, Royal Chicano Air Force (RCAF)
2022 Recipient of an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts

Esteban Villa was born in 1930 in Tulare, California. He began his career as a high school teacher, but soon became a professor of art at Sacramento State, where he taught for over two decades. Professor Villa is best known for his work founding the Royal Chicano Air Force (RCAF), an iconic art collective focused on social justice during the civil rights era.

The RCAF was described in the Sacramento Bee as “a collection of artists-turned-activists who used their words, music, and images to fight for justice and equality for farmworkers and other marginalized Americans.” The group was founded in 1969 to express the goals of the Chicano civil rights and labor organization movement of the United Farmworkers. The group’s early work and activism was in support of the United Farmworkers Union, and their art and talent inspired UFW leadership.

The other founding members of RCAF included José Montoya, Juanishi V. Orosco, Ricardo Favela, and Rudy Cuellar. The late José Montoya was also a professor of art, photography, and education at Sacramento State. Over the years, Professors Villa and Montoya and other members of RCAF mentored and inspired generations of Sacramento State student artists and activists. Shortly after they started teaching at Sacramento State, Professors Villa and Montoya launched the Barrio Art Program, which connected students to opportunities to bring art to the community through service to schools and senior centers. They also launched a local program to bring arts into prisons, and created the Centro De Artistas Chicanos, which became a springboard for all types of Sacramento community programs.

Professor Villa’s works around Sacramento are cultural landmarks, and include a mural at Southside Park and more recently, a three-paneled mural dedicated in March 2018 at the Golden 1 Center downtown. Along with the RCAF, Professor Villa is credited with making historical contributions to Chicano visual arts and Chicano identity. Through his work with RCAF and with Sacramento State students, Professor Villa helped to mobilize a generation of Mexican-Americans, and their work continues to inspire Latinx students today – and all students dedicated to the pursuit of social justice for all.



MAY O. LEE

Founding Director, Asian Resources, Inc. 2022 Recipient of an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters

May O. Lee has been a pillar in the community since moving to Sacramento from Seattle in 1975. She is the founding director of Asian Resources, Inc. (ARI) and she has dedicated her personal and professional life to community service.

While a graduate student at Sacramento State, Ms. Lee recognized that the burgeoning Asian immigrant and refugee communities had critical needs for job assistance, English classes, youth and senior programs, and health education. She helped evolve the Asian Resource Center Senior Services into a nonprofit that could meet all of these needs, and became its founding director in 1981, where she served until 2006.

Ms. Lee was instrumental in starting My Sister's House (MSH) in 2000, which serves Asian and Pacific Islander and other underserved women and children impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. MSH has expanded to include My Sister's Café, a social enterprise to support MSH job training programs, as well as the MSH Housing First program.

In 2014 Ms. Lee co-founded the APIs Rise Fund, which aims to build and strengthen the next generation of Asian American and Pacific Islander leadership. APIs Rise Fund has raised and given over \$150,000 to community groups dedicated to AAPI civic engagement and leadership building. APIs Rise Fund currently focuses on funding organizations that address anti-Asian hate and that confront and root out anti-Black racism in the AAPI community.

Ms. Lee was actively involved in every U.S. Census since 1990, working to develop thoughtful outreach strategies that reflect the unique needs of local communities, including ensuring hard-to-count populations are identified and meaningfully engaged in being counted, which is vital to everyone in the Sacramento Region.

Ms. Lee and her husband, Milt Yee, established an endowment at Sacramento State which is aimed at providing support for students who show exceptional promise as community services leaders. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Lee could be found distributing food to families in need, staffing vaccine clinics in South Sacramento, speaking out against inhuman immigration policies, and organizing against anti-Asian hate and violence.



TIM COLLOM

Owner, House Real Estate and Tim Collom Gallery 2022 Recipient of the President's Medal for Distinguished Service

Tim Collom's life is a blend of both the business and philanthropic values taught at Sacramento State, and his career is truly a reflection of the ideals of the California State University.

After leaving college, Mr. Collom began his real estate career, eventually founding House Real Estate. Starting with just four agents, House has grown to include 17 agents, listing 141 houses and selling \$170 million in real estate this year alone, and was recently ranked by the Wall Street Journal as the Number One Small Real Estate Team in Sacramento. Mr. Collom is also an accomplished artist, and he has parlayed his success in art and business into helping others in California.

During the fires that devastated much of Northern California in 2020 and 2021, he designed a special California print which he sold throughout the state, donating more than \$200,000 to the California Fire Foundation. These funds helped the residents of Paradise begin to rebuild their lives and their community. In 2019, he won the Hero Award from the California Fire Foundation, which is only given to three people every year in California.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, he partnered with two California nurses who were concerned that medical professionals across the state did not have adequate coverings while taking care of people. Together, they founded "Protect HeART," with the mission of providing PPE scrub hats, free of charge to all frontline healthcare workers. The bright and beautiful scrub hats featured Mr. Collom's famous "Hearts" painting, symbolizing strength and love. The group donated over \$100,000 worth of scrub hats to healthcare professionals.

Mr. Collom has also contributed to the economic growth and well-being of our region, hiring and mentoring many Sacramento State and CSU graduates as they build their careers. As an avid supporter of the arts community, Mr. Collom has donated more than 50 paintings to nonprofits throughout California. He also lifts up the work of other artists by donating space at his gallery at the Sacramento airport.

Mr. Collom has successfully blended business, art, and philanthropy, and is a wonderful example to both students and graduates of the CSU. He has truly made a difference in the lives of so many people in Sacramento and throughout California.

