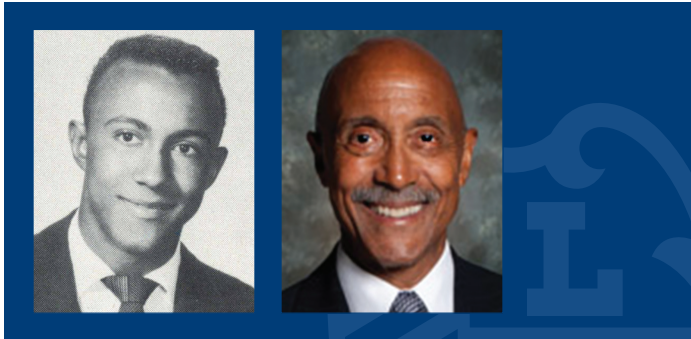


Cahalan Honorees

BY Tracy Mlakar

Marx Cazenave, Class of 1957



EIGHT. That was the number of African-American students in Marx Cazenave's class of 1957. It was also the largest class of African-American students Loyola High School had to date.

"The significance of this didn't occur to us until much later at a reunion," Marx said. "Loyola was unconditional love and discipline and being told over and over again that we were as good as and equal to anyone. We weren't black men, we were Cubs!"

The reality is that Marx was the first African American in almost every job he held. But Loyola prepared him to handle discrimination.

"I went to school before Affirmative Action and the civil rights movement," Marx said. "We learned by being with the best and brightest. Loyola gave me the confidence, skills and a purpose to go out and really make a difference. We were prepared to be activists for social justice in whatever we did for the Greater Glory of God. We were selected as the eight guys to come in there and really change things."

I had something to reach down to, even in my darkest times. I knew there was a voice, AMDG, this voice I had that I was part of a special group of people that was chosen to be at Loyola High School.

—Marx Cazenave

After he was rejected from every stockbroker firm in Los Angeles because of the color of his skin, Marx persisted. He eventually secured a job at a top firm because out of the several hundred people who took the test, Marx scored at the top. But Marx soon realized that his goal to "work on Wall Street" wasn't enough. Through a Jesuit connection,

he started Progress Investment Management Company, LLC, a firm that would increase opportunities for other minorities and women in investment management. While starting his second company, he got cancer.

It was through the tough periods of his life that Marx relied on his Jesuit education.

"You can't replace the formative years," he said. "Any compliment I get, or anything I've been able to overcome, any flaws, it was because of my four years at Loyola High School. I had something to reach down to, even in my darkest times. I knew there was a voice, AMDG, this voice I had that I was part of a special group of people that was chosen to be at Loyola High School."

Marx explained that being a Cahalan recipient "is my way of letting the people know at Loyola High School what they did for me. In some small way, this is paying the Jesuits back for all they've done for me."

Ken Kasamatsu, Class of 1964



WHEN KEN KASAMATSU explains what gave him the foundation to compete in the real world, his answer is simple—Loyola High School. That's how he "sells" his Jesuit education to today's Loyola student hopefuls and their parents when he's asked to share his experience. But that's only part of the story.

Ken attended Loyola during the height of the Vietnam War when prejudices and sensitivity to race relations were high. It was also a time when there were few other Asian students in his class.

"I remember one of my classmates came up to me and asked, 'What are you?' because he didn't know what a Japanese American looked like," Ken recalled. "He was sheltered. I feel that my experiences interacting with other populations made

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—Ken Kasamatsu

me more whole, because of the exposure and understanding of others.”

Ken leveraged this awareness of and sensitivity to other cultures throughout his banking career. In the mid-1980s, he noticed that although the bank approved over 90 percent of its loan applications from Latinos or African Americans, a civil rights organization complained that the bank was not doing enough to solicit a larger number of applications from these communities. He knew the real problem was a language barrier for both the applicants and the many Japanese-speaking bank employees. Later, in 1999, he also saw Japanese-American gardeners being denied truck loans because of their lack of credit.

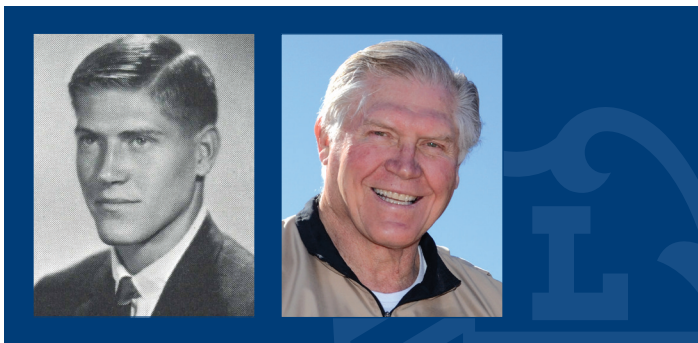
“This led me to think that rather than complaining, I should do something about it,” Ken explained. His answer: to start his own bank, Pacific Commerce Bank in Little Tokyo where he could focus on serving his local community. That bold move also earned him Entrepreneur of the Year from the Asian Business League of Southern California in 2007.

Ken's commitment to the community continued through service on several boards including as a founding member of the USC Asian Pacific American Support Group, now the USC Asian Pacific Alumni Association, and as treasurer and Board member of Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP).

As a founding member of Loyola's Asian Pacific Alumni Society, part of Ken's role is to share with parents of potential Loyola students what to expect.

“Loyola in many ways is like a mini university: the networking, the education, the family feeling,” he said. “There's a special bond we have established with each other while also having a great time. Loyola creates the foundation for your future success.”

George Kunz, Class of 1965



GEORGE KUNZ PLAYED 11 SEASONS IN THE NFL, was a Sunday NFL color commentator for NBC Sports and owned McDonald's franchises for 26 years. But at

age 70, George is living the dream he's had since he was 14: practicing law.

The path to attorney undoubtedly took a lot of hard work and dedication, but perhaps also a little bit of divine intervention.

“My freshman and sophomore years of high school were at a diocesan seminary,” George recalled. “When I realized I didn't want to be a priest, one of the priests there recommended I attend Loyola High School.”

George and his mom were living quite a distance from Loyola. After taking the bus to meet with the Jesuits, George was offered a scholarship. Once at Loyola, he was quickly recruited to play football.

The first day of practice, Coach Lenihan '54 told him he was going to be a tackle; George wanted to play tight end. Then Coach Lenihan pointed to Don Swartz '64, a CIF Player of the Year, and told him to “Do what he does.”

Loyola went on to be 12-0 that year. George continued playing football at Notre Dame on scholarship and was later drafted No. 2 in 1969 to the Atlanta Falcons. After 11 successful seasons, a spinal injury ended his NFL career.

Not knowing what to do next, George was sitting at home when the phone rang. It was Don Ohlmeyer, executive producer of NBC Sports and fellow Notre Dame alumnus, offering him a job as commentator for NBC Sunday NFL games.

What has always worked for me is wanting to do the best job that I can, and doing it in a manner that shows respect for the people who taught me.

—George Kunz

George left NBC after two years to open his first McDonald's franchise, which he felt was a more secure career choice for supporting his wife and young son. Eight restaurants later, he left to finally pursue his lifelong dream of becoming a lawyer.

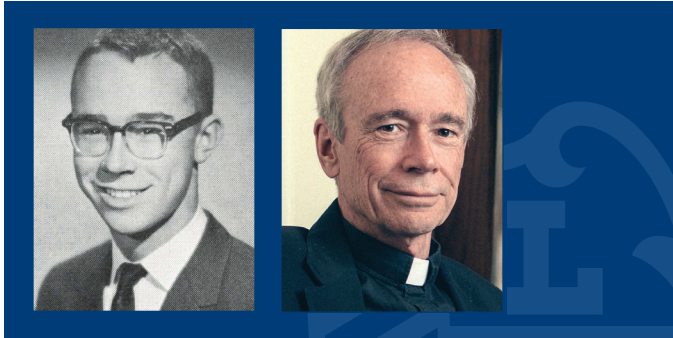
“One of the greatest things I can do as an attorney is pro bono work for those who can't afford it,” George said. “I also help families find the money for a Catholic education, because if it weren't for the people who helped my mom, I wouldn't have gone to Loyola. I try to pay that back in some small way.”

George added, “Part of a Jesuit education is learning that you must perfect your art to the best of your ability. What has always worked for me is wanting to do the best job that I can, and doing it in a manner that shows respect for the people who taught me.”

Although George has received many awards throughout his career, the Cahalan award is particularly special to him. “You don't go through life worrying about winning awards, but the best ones are the ones that are given to you by your peers,” George said. “I put more credence in knowing that I'm doing the right thing if I get feedback from those I know.”

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Rev. Thomas J. Reese, SJ, Class of 1962



FR. TOM REESE KNEW he wanted to be a priest since the second grade. He recalled that his teacher, who was a nun, asked, “What’s the most important job in the whole world?” We said things like firefighter, president, baseball player, but of course the *right* answer was priest,” said Fr. Reese. “So I thought to myself, ‘Well, that’s the job I want!’” he added with a chuckle.

After middle school, Fr. Reese assumed he would enter the minor seminary, a secondary boarding school for teenage boys who have expressed interest in becoming priests. “My older brother advised me to talk to our family friend who was a chaplain in the air force before making my decision,” said Fr. Reese. “This friend said to me in a booming voice: ‘Go to Loyola High School!’”

So he did. And that experience changed the trajectory of Fr. Reese’s career.

“Had I not gone to Loyola, I would have been a diocesan priest,” he admitted. “Seeing the Jesuits at school, how they interacted with each other, worked hard, their commitment to faith and the students, all of that made it a no-brainer for me.” Fr. Reese entered the Society of Jesus immediately after high school and was later ordained a Roman Catholic priest. He has spent most of his ministry as a writer, including seven years as editor of *America*, the national Catholic weekly magazine published by the Jesuits. Today, Fr. Reese is senior analyst at Religion News Service, a wire service that provides copy to newspapers, websites and magazines.

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When he found out that he was being honored as a Cahalan Award recipient, Fr. Reese admits he was not expecting it. “I’m honored and pleased and grateful to the school. It means a lot to be recognized for the work that I’ve done. It also honors the Jesuits, because they made me what I am.”

Tom Simms, Class of 1966



TOM SIMMS HAS BUILT a career by, literally, serving the community. He opened his first restaurant in West Hollywood in 1974. Over the next 25 years he opened Mimi’s Cafés located in cities from coast to coast.

Then in 1974, the Simms family had the opportunity to purchase The Kettle, a restaurant located in the surf town of Manhattan Beach. It has been a popular mainstay ever since. When asked why, Tom’s answer is at the heart of the Simms’ restaurant philosophy. “We want to be considered the ‘locals’ eatery. Neighbors come in for a reason; it is more than just dining—they are there to celebrate.”

This philosophy permeates every one of the Simms family restaurants located throughout Southern California, owned and operated by Tom, his brother Scott ’72, and his two sons Chris ’93 and Mike ’96, all Loyola alumni.

“And what a wonderful thing to have hundreds of graduates each year, ready to go out into their communities and take new leadership positions. It’s an honor to have graduated from there.”

—Tom Simms

While a student, Tom did not fully understand what a great education he was getting at Loyola. “As I’ve grown older, I realize that Loyola provides a first-class education, to the point where I believe it is truly a privilege to attend.” As part of its education for the whole person, Loyola has a nationally recognized community service requirement for students—140 hours of service, though most students give back to the community with almost 200 or more hours.

The Simms Family believes that “part of being a successful business is being invested in the schools, hospitals and churches around us. We have been so blessed with our success. We want to be involved and help strengthen the community.” With all his accomplishments in the restaurant industry, Tom credits Loyola for preparing him to be a leader.

“Loyola High School is recognized for developing quality leaders,” he said. “And what a wonderful thing to have hundreds of graduates each year, ready to go out into their communities and take new leadership positions. It’s an honor to have graduated from there.” ■