

Alumnus of Point Loma Awards Acknowledged

By Kacy Magnett

Paul Allen

When **Paul Allen (57)** took over as superintendent of the Mount Diablo School District in Northern California during the summer of 1995, a teachers' strike was imminent. The signs were made and the teachers were determined.

Allen used his calm demeanor and quiet strength to convince the head of the teachers' association to sit down and talk with him. Three meetings later, the strike was averted and a bond of trust was forged as the two sides united to focus on student learning.

"In working together, we were able to change the whole atmosphere.... Out of that came a trust between the administration that still exists today," said Allen, who worked as a teacher and administrator for 35 years. Allen also taught briefly in the Arcadia School District while doing graduate work at USC, and served for three years as assistant headmaster and principal for the American Community School in Beirut, Lebanon.

From 1995 until his retirement in 1999, Allen remained superintendent of Mount Diablo Unified School District. He was responsible for more than 38,000 K-12th grade students at 60 schools. He also played a vital role in the passage of a \$90 million school bond.

Jean Carroll, president of the district's teachers' association who met with Allen in 1995, stays in touch with him.

"He left us with an important

legacy of working together to make a fine system better," she said. "I think his most outstanding trait is his integrity."

Since retirement, Allen has worked as an interim superintendent and school leadership consultant. His wife, **Esther (Haney) Allen**, was a 1987 Alumnus of Point Loma award recipient for her work in biomedical research and management. They have three children, Laurin, Steven and Scott, and four grandchildren.

The Allens are members of Hillside Covenant Church in Walnut Creek, Calif., where they have served in various leadership roles for the last 40 years. They enjoy traveling and have visited 20 foreign countries since their retirement.

Charles Leach

When **Charles Leach, M.D. (78)** was a teenager, he didn't know if he would have the opportunity to go to college. But God's plans for Leach included becoming a doctor and marrying the girl next door (literally).

Leach, who earned a doctorate in medicine from the University of Utah in 1982, is a professor, researcher and clinician who has gained international recognition as an expert in viral infections in children.

As director of research, Leach spends most mornings in the department of

pediatrics at the University of Texas Health Science Center (UTHSC) at San Antonio. In the afternoon, he heads to Children's Hospital where he is attending physician, overseeing patient care along with a team of interns, medical residents and students.

Two other nearby hospitals retain the services of Leach, who runs a research laboratory dedicated to understanding acquired diseases such as AIDS. Current projects include working with the Texas Department of Health to analyze infections that occur in people along the Texas-Mexico border.

His findings have been published in more than 35 articles, books, or book chapters and he has been awarded many research grants.

"I like working with kids. Pediatrics is an enjoyable field," he said. "I like my department at UTHSC because it is an up-and-coming research institution."

Leach's wife, Robin (Reber) (78) Leach, Ph.D., a researcher and professor at UTHSC, was the girl who lived next door to Charles as a teenager. Now their lives together are busy—but they wouldn't have it any other way.

"God works it out so we get a lot done everyday," he said. "We have a full life, that's for sure."

The Leach family has a third scientist at home. Their 15-year-old daughter, Bethany, was invited to display her work at an international science competition. She traveled with her parents to South America this fall to participate in the global exhibition.



Paul Allen



Charles and Robin Leach

Outstanding Achievement

Robin Leach

For **Robin (Reber) (78)**

Leach, Ph.D., making a difference through her work is what she loves. Leach, a highly accomplished researcher helps find genetic causes for diseases. She investigates the role genes play in health and disease—determining both the risk factors and better treatment for those diseases. “It is exciting to be on the discovery end of things. As a biomedical researcher, I feel like I contribute to the quality of people’s lives,” she said.

The subject of her research efforts include Paget’s disease of the bone, a disorder which “eats up” bone, Type II diabetes, chromosome 18q-syndrome and prostate cancer. She has written more than a hundred scientific papers, reviews, books and chapters. Her research is extensively funded by the National Institutes of Health as well as private foundations.

In 1997, she was honored with the John G. Haddad, Jr. Research Award by the Paget Foundation and received the Presidential Award for Teaching Excellence from the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in 1998.

As a professor in the department of cellular biology and the department of pediatrics at UTHSC, she teaches colloquium, lectures in a cell biology class, organizes a genetics course as well as trains Ph.D. students. “I work with students for five or six years as their mentor” she said. “Seeing them develop into scientists is rewarding.”

For Robin, having an office just down the hall from her husband, Chuck, has its perks.

“We often talk about who’s picking up the kids that day but we also talk science,” she said. “Chuck is the best editor in the world so he has to read all the papers I write.”

The Leaches have three children: Andrew, 15, Bethany, 15, and Charlie, 10. They attend Wayside Evangelical Free Church where they are sponsors for the youth choir in which their children participate.

Larry Rench

Larry Rench’s (78) earliest musical memory is of falling asleep as a five-year-old while playing the violin during a concert. These days, Rench is so busy he could probably use a few extra minutes of sleep.

As an orchestrator, conductor, and proofreader of music for the entertainment industry, Rench has worked on more than 400 movies, television shows and projects since 1988.

Composers for whom he has orchestrated—writing their ideas as a musical score—include John Williams (*Harry Potter*), Hans Zimmer (*Backdraft*), Michael Kamen (*X-Men*), Shirley Walker (*Final Destination*) and James Covell (*Left Behind: The Movie*). He also orchestrated and conducted on the television series *Dr. Quinn: Medicine Woman* as well as *Amarte es un Placer*, the 2000 Latin Grammy Album of the Year by Luis Miguel.

Orchestras around the world have played his orchestrations

including London (*Most Wanted*), Prague (*Princess and the Pea*), the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Chorus (*Suite from Titanic*), and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra (*Suite from Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker*).

Last year, Rench contributed orchestrations to a concert in Bucharest by the Romanian artist Damian which will be shown on PBS in March. Most recently, his work was heard on the films *Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course* and *Swimfan*.

But Rench, who grew up in Taiwan, the son of missionaries, George and Donna Rench, is less concerned with fame than he is with being a Christian in the film music industry.

“My whole life is about being a Christian in the world I live in,” said Rench, who first fell in love with film music during Dr. Ed Wilmington’s music theory class at Pasadena College.

“I talk freely with people about my faith and God’s provision.... I figure every person is in the process of moving toward a deeper understanding of faith, so why not talk about it. I want to give honor to God in my life through my work,” Rench said.

Long-time friend Judy Berry says, “Larry is a man of wisdom and integrity with a compassionate heart and a life that points to God’s grace and mercy.”

Rench lives in Pasadena, Calif., with his wife, Nancy. They attend Pasadena First Church of the Nazarene where he plays cello in the orchestra. ●



Larry Rench