

Renee West Norton to speak at 2005 Commencement

The 108th Commencement exercises at SUU will be held Saturday May 7, 2005. Ms. Renee West Norton will receive an honorary Doctorate of Business and will deliver the commencement address to the graduates of 2005. Additionally, Khosrow Bagayeb Semnani will receive an honorary Doctorate of Science, Harold Shirley will receive an honorary Doctorate of Humanities, and Kent Myers will receive an honorary Doctorate of Education. All have been exemplary in their contributions to their professions and the communities where they live.

Renee West Norton is President and Chief Operating Officer of Primm Valley Casino Resorts, which includes Buffalo Bill's Hotel & Casino, Primm Valley Resort & Casino, Whiskey Pete's Hotel and The Primm Valley Golf Club.

Prior to joining the Company, Norton held senior positions at both Caesars Palace and Station Casinos. She also served as a Vice President for Rapport Leadership International and provided strategic planning and organizational development services for MGM Grand Inc., Stations Casinos, Caesars Tahoe, Southwest Gaming, Phelps Dodge Mining, Andronico's Foods, Beazer Homes, Christopher Homes, Summerlin Hospital, among others. Under her direction, Primm Valley Casino Resorts last year saw an increase in earnings of 30 percent.

Mr. Khosrow Semnani has been a 30-year resident of Utah. He and his wife Ghazaleh and their three sons, Taymour, Rodmeher, and Jahangere take special pride in their Iranian heritage and have tried to be spokesmen and advocates of the loving, intelligent and kind people of Iran. He has been a generous trustee of the Encyclopedia Iranica Foundation for the past eight years and its Vice-Chairman since 1998. In 1987 he founded and operated Envirocare of Utah, currently the largest nuclear waste processing and disposal company in the country. Mr. Semnani has been involved in various charitable activities for many years and has founded the Semnani Foundation to facilitate his philanthropic work. This foundation has been involved in supporting many Iranian causes and cultural and religious programs, including the Encyclopaedia Iranica, and is working with programs worldwide to benefit several women and children's organizations.



Renee West Norton



Khosrow Semnani

Harold Shirley was born in Gilmer, Texas, but has lived in Cedar City for more than 30 years. He has given so much to the community, it truly would not be what it is today without his contributions. Besides being an influential educator, Harold is also known as Mayor Shirley, having recently retired from the position after 12 years of service; a period in which the community experienced unprecedented growth. Harold also served eight years as a city councilman. In all his endeavors, Harold has remained supportive of, and an integral component of the Institution's progress. In 1991, SUUSA honored him with the President's Award. SUU is indebted and grateful to Harold for his decades of endorsement and care for the issues of SUU, on both the local and state levels. Harold and his wife Diane proudly acknowledge that eight of their nine children have attended SUU; the ninth is still in high school.



Harold Shirley

Kent Myers ('53, education) proudly claims that he is a native of west Beaver County and was reared and educated in Minersville and Milford, Utah. Following his graduation with honors from Milford High School, he attended BAC, receiving his degree in Elementary Education. While at BAC he was a member of the football, basketball and track teams and also participated in music and drama. Kent then received his masters degree from BYU, and also his officer's commission in the USAF, serving in Korea and Japan. He began his teaching career in the Iron County Schools and taught English and speech at the CSU before completing a Ph.D. from the University of Utah in 1964. Dr. Myers is a prize winning poet and published author. His community and church service is remarkable in its scope and influence. His work with the Sons of the Utah Pioneers is nationally recognized. One of his most recent contributions to the community is his, and his wife Cherie's re-establishment of the Master Singers, a men's choir that presents several community concerts each year in Cedar City and the surrounding area. Cherie and Kent are the parents of five children and grandparents of nineteen.



Kent Myers