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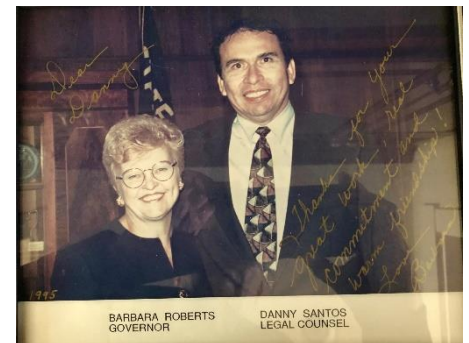
The Heart of Servant Leadership: A Portrait of Public Service

When the Oregon Legislative Session wrapped up in June, Danny Santos finished his second term as Interim Director of the Legislative Commission on Indian Services (LCIS); this role was one of many he has held throughout his career as part of his commitment to public service and advocacy. “I have felt very honored to have the Oregon tribes ask me to serve as the interim director of the LCIS twice. Working with these sovereign nations has been a cultural, historical, educational, and fulfilling experience.”



Santos first worked with the nine federally recognized Oregon tribes when serving as Governor Robert’s legal counsel in the early 1990s. He had negotiated the original tribal gaming compacts (contracts) between the State and individual tribes. “What followed was Governor Kitzhaber’s Executive Order 96-30 establishing Government-to-Government (GTG) relations between those nine tribes and the State of Oregon.”

Earlier in his career, Santos directed the statewide Migrant Education Service Center. He then became a citizen lobbyist, meeting with legislators and other advocates. Over the years, Santos served in four different governor’s administrations in such positions as legal counsel and senior policy advisor. He also assisted the offices of three other governors.



Before serving as Interim Director of LCIS, Santos served for five years as Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Administration for Willamette University College of Law (WUCL). Currently, he serves on the Southern Oregon University Board of Trustees and as a board member for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Foundations for Service

Born and raised in Brawly, California—a year-round farming community bordering Mexico and Arizona—Santos grew up with a unique sense of existing “cultural challenges, biases, and discrimination.” He started school without knowing

English. His mother, an outgoing and caring person, was considered a non-traditional Mexican woman because she owned a restaurant. His father modeled a strong work ethic and a commitment to public service.

Santos's father became the first Mexican-American police officer in Brawley. He then became the chief of police after a city manager told him, *"There's no way we are going to have a Mexican as chief."* One of the lessons Danny Santos learned from his dad was to "ignore peoples' biases, learn from them, and move forward for a better future."

When he was a senior in high school, Santos had an opportunity to apply some of his father's advice. While serving as his class president, he was able to work with other student leaders to address a discriminatory school board action against Black and nonwhite students.

Another lesson Santos learned came from working in the fields during summer. Unlike many of the other kids and families, "our family did not rely on this income for our survival." Instead, his father wanted him to learn the value of hard work. He also wanted him to understand that "fieldwork is very much a skilled job done by hard-working people who have dignity in doing good work and supporting their families."

A First-Generation College Student

"My dad had introduced me to the City of Brawley's attorney who took a liking to me and suggested that I go to UCLA." As a first-generation college student, Santos didn't know what college involved but did love "their baby blue and gold colors."

Santos did not end up attending UCLA. Instead, he chose to attend Southern Oregon College (now Southern Oregon University), where he earned a degree in criminology. "By pure good luck, and certainly one of the best things that ever happened to me, I chose SOC."

While at SOC, Santos took an art appreciation class and had an opportunity to see an Oregon Shakespeare Festival play. "From my agricultural/farm working male experiences, I seriously had to ask if men went to plays." After experiencing live theatre, he "was hooked."

A Growing Interest in Social Justice and Advocacy

Santos returned to SOC to pursue a teaching credential. During this period, he learned about a 12-year-old Mexican girl in the 4th grade who couldn't speak English. "I volunteered to help tutor her in Spanish." He also got to meet and help her farm working parents and family and learned about the migrant experience at that time in Southern Oregon. During that time, "most families were not putting their children into school because there were no programs to assist Spanish-speaking kids; families would wait until they were in California, Texas, or Mexico to place their kids back in school."

Next, Santos became involved in visiting labor camps and farm working families to help establish "that there were a significant number of migrant kids in the area who were not enrolled in schools."

Then, Santos accepted a position as a program manager for migrant education. "Because of great staff members, we became recognized as an exemplary multiple-itinerant-small-district program." After serving as a program manager, Santos became the statewide director for the Migrant Education Service Center in Salem, Oregon.

When Santos began law school, his interests in social justice and advocacy continued to grow. Like most law students, he "went to law school to pursue justice, fairness, equity, and what is right." One of the lessons he learned was that "if one continues to fight for something they believe is just/fair but keep on losing in the courts, then the remedy becomes changing the law—and that is different and more challenging." And so, the work continues!

Relaxation

“I truly cherish times for gathering with friends and family.” Santos also enjoys both live theatre productions and movies. He also appreciates reading for pleasure rather than for school or work. While Santos has completed 21 marathons, he does not run as much as he once did. Nonetheless, he does “enjoy putting one foot in front of the other.” As a marathon bumper sticker says, “I start out slow, then I slow down.”

Advice

“Stay engaged, find purpose in your life. Use your experience and the things you enjoy(ed). It certainly does not have to be high-level policy stuff. But whether it is gardening, the arts, volunteering, civic engagement, or whatever—make it something that enriches your soul and heart, and that makes you, your family, friends, and communities better.”

One of Santos’s Favorite Quotes

“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist hopes for better winds; the realist adjusts the sails.” (William Arthur Ward)

Moving “The Needle Forward” And Creating a Legacy

“I like to say that at the end of my journey, I hope that I have somehow helped move the needle forward on the gauge of progress.” (Danny Santos)

Part of the legacy each of us will leave is the investments we make in others and the causes that are greater than ourselves. We can help “move the needle forward” through our words and our individual and collective actions. No matter what our role, we all have opportunities to



encourage, support, inspire, and make a difference in the lives of others.

Providing a Foundation

Family members (immediate and extended) can help us establish our values, beliefs, and sense of belonging in the world. Santos’s mother, Esther Pardo Santos, was outgoing and demonstrated caring for others. His father, Wenceslao Juan “John” Santos, Sr., shared life lessons and served as a role



model. Santos recalls his brother, Wenceslao Juan “Johnny” Santos, Jr., as “loving, caring and supportive.” He credits his nurturing and loving family for helping

provide the foundations of a commitment to public service.

Investing in Others

Santos had a teacher/advisor in high school, Mrs. Janet Presley, who encouraged him to do better work and seek student leadership roles. “Then, what to me seemed like such a huge step, she encouraged and allowed me to take her daughter (a White girl) to a dance. It may sound inconsequential now, but it was such a wonderful gesture. She saw me for my merits without bias for my ancestry.”

One of Santos’s role models and mentors was Cruz Reynoso, a legal aid attorney he had met. “What struck me was that this lawyer was a Mexican-American. My first thought was that I didn’t know Mexicans could be lawyers.” Reynoso later became a California Supreme Court Justice and retired as a professor emeritus at UC Davis Law. “Throughout the years, he was such a tremendous advocate and provided me with wonderful counsel and support—another great example of servant leadership.”

Working Together for Greater Good

In the early 1980s, Santos and others established the Hispanic Political Action Committee. “We worked

on a bill to forbid Oregon State and local law enforcement from enforcing federal immigration” policies. While the bill had sufficient support, it did not meet procedural requirements to become law. Then in 1987, under the leadership of State Representative Rocky Barilla (the first Latino elected to the Oregon State Legislature), the bill passed and “has become known as Oregon’s Sanctuary Law.” As Santos notes, it was “an anti-profiling bill to stop police from pulling people over for ‘driving while Hispanic’ and asking them about their immigration status.”

In 1998, Santos was one of the representatives of the American Leadership Forum. “We went to the Republic of South Africa to help with leadership training. (The truth, of course, was that we learned more than we taught.) We got to see President Nelson Mandela and their Congress in action.”

As Santos was heading back to the United States, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was on the same flight. After Santos sent the archbishop a note, he was invited to meet with him. “So, I got to go up to the first-class section and sit next to the archbishop for an hour.” Later, the two reconnected when Archbishop Tutu visited Willamette University in Salem, Oregon.



Picking Up the Torch for the Next Leg of the Journey

While serving as the Associate Dean for Student Affairs at Willamette University College of Law, Santos had gotten involved in several programs that supported under-represented students, diversity, social justice, and equity. When he retired, others found ways to continue Dean Santos’s work. “I was honored that upon my retirement, the Latinx Law Student Association established the Dean Santos Diversity Speaker Series, and the College of Law established the Daniel P. Santos Law Scholarship

(focused on under-represented law students with a desire to work in public interest law and social justice matters).” *All of us have the power to “move the needle forward” and make a difference.*

Legacy

“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Upcoming Webinar: What a Financial Expert Keeps Inside His Playbook

Ben James, CFA, CFP, is the founder of Elevate Wealth Management. He is also the author of *The Playbook: 7 Fundamentals of Financial Planning*. Ben offers free quarterly webinars on the Playbook process.



The next webinar will be held on Wednesday, July 28, 2021, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The topic: “Ben is going to reveal what he keeps inside his personal Playbook.”

To register for the free July webinar, click [here](#).

Susan Rochester’s Border Project Update

Susan Rochester continues working on her project about the US-Mexico border and its issues. She recently returned from a self-supported residency at Playa Summer Lake, an artist residency located in the Oregon Outback. Hiking out across the playa each day, she observed the physical qualities of this desert landscape. The colors of the soil, the incredible network of cracks developed by the mud



as it dried out, and watching dust devils form and evaporate with each afternoon's wind complimented her investigations of the US-Mexico border as a physical space.

Later this summer, she will be driving along the US-Mexico border to photograph and take soil samples for the next stages of this project. She is working on a four-volume set of artist's books, each containing a continuous photographic image of the border. She is highlighting the border in copper leaf and binding the books in copper and leather, using these materials because of their commonality to all the cultures who have lived in the region. When the books are completed, she will upload images to her website (susanrochester.com) and apply for exhibit opportunities.

Note: To learn more about Susan's work, watch her [2021 TEDx Talk](#), "Reimagining an Inconvenient Line," or see the [April 2019 Newsletter](#).

David Reeck's Prostate Cancer Treatment and Recovery Update: Part II

Just had the second PSA test after the prostate removal. The result was very good—again in the almost "not" detectable range. Breathing a sigh of relief and thankfulness.



I learned about a new medical treatment "study" for which I am qualified from the Oregon Urology Institute. OK, "study" could be described as a human experiment/test of two relatively new preventive medicines. This study will take about one year. The objective is to keep cancer from recurring without radiation.

A few more blood samples were taken to quantify the baseline. Signed a 24-page form with the usual (potential) risks, which are scary.

The treatment consists of daily pills and monthly visits to the Urology place, and an injection (shot) every three months. So far, "knock on wood," no adverse effects! If this study proves successful, it should benefit many more prostate cancer survivors. I am hopeful this medication will keep my PSA / cancer clamped down so that I can see many more days on this Earth, enjoy socializing with friends, and helping my wife with her Chinese Xiang Cuisine food truck. *Men over 50—make a promise to your loved ones to get your PSA screening blood test!*

Note: To read Part I of David's story, see the [June 2021 Newsletter](#).

One of Life's Biggest Transitions

"Retirement is a major transition...many pre-retirees do not fully comprehend how dramatically their lives will change."
([Jonathon Burton](#))

Free Midlife Planner to Help with Life Transitions

Reed Dewey, CRC, CPRC, CPC, is a certified transitions/ retirement coach and founder of [What's Next](#). He has made available a free ten-page guide to help individuals 50+ prepare for a major transition. The guide includes short self-assessments. Areas addressed include health planning, personal growth goals, lifestyle, and more. You will be asked to provide some basic contact information when requesting your [free guide](#).



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