



## Honoring a father, family and the military

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A new scholarship endowment established by CALS alum Karen Conde and her family will provide funding to students with military ties, as well as work to increase representation of women in leadership within professional and service careers.

Karen Conde, '79, already has a lot on her plate, but that hasn't stopped her from adding more, including a new commitment to the University of Arizona that honors her parents and supports members of the military.

Karen, who studied merchandising and fashion promotion, is CEO of Conde Group—the award-winning company she founded in 2003. The Conde Group provides information technology services and staffing across insurance, financial, automotive, entertainment, health care, retail, and utility industries, including such companies as Facebook, Airbnb, PayPal, Toyota, Fox Entertainment Corp., Taco Bell, Nissan, and Pacific Gas & Electric. Karen also founded Conde Group Cybersecurity Managed Services in 2015, in response to small to mid-sized companies' need for cybersecurity support.



Karen Conde

Outside of her career, Karen still finds time to improve the lives of others. She is on several service and national industry boards and councils, serves as a mentor to young adults, and founded Forgotten Victims—a nonprofit that assists people who accidentally caused catastrophic injuries or deaths in vehicle accidents that did not involve alcohol, drugs, road rage, or texting. She also fits in trips to the East Coast to visit her granddaughter Maggie Jean, whom she calls “the apple of her eye.”

And then there’s Karen’s service to the University of Arizona. In 2020, she accepted a seat on the **Norton School** Advisory Board, which helps guide the school and grow its alumni engagement, industry connections, and philanthropy.

This fall, her involvement with the university deepened. Karen partnered with her family to establish a scholarship endowment honoring her father, Colonel Joseph H. Battaglia, who died in 2020 and at one time served as a commander at Davis Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson.

“My father was a huge proponent for higher education,” Karen said. “He was a big influence on my life. It wasn’t what he said, it’s what he did. He was a man of action and led by doing, he led by example.”

Many members of Karen’s family have proudly served or are serving in the military, and the family wanted that commitment to supporting military service, past and present, reflected in the scholarship. The endowment will provide funding to undergraduate and graduate students in the Norton School, with priority given to those who have ties to the U.S. military—whether that be as veterans, active military, ROTC students, or dependents of veterans or active military personnel.

The scholarship will also honor Karen’s mother, Ruth A. Battaglia, who was “the backbone of the family” and managed six kids while supporting her husband’s military and corporate careers. Karen’s father encouraged Ruth to pursue her own opportunities as well, and she attended college in her 40s.

The Colonel Joseph H. and Ruth A. Battaglia Leadership Scholarship Endowment will also place a priority on supporting students who will increase the representation of women in leadership roles within professional and service careers. Karen hopes to mentor the students who receive this scholarship.

“Providing scholarship support to the veterans and active military students and their dependents is so important to acknowledging these students’ commitment to our country and eases the financial burden so many face in striving to complete their degrees,” said Bruce Grissom, Veterans Education and Transition Services (VETS) Program.

The VETS Program provides a comprehensive set of services through military-connected student centers to help increase the number of veterans who successfully graduate and obtain meaningful employment.

“We are so grateful to Karen Conde and the Battaglia family. It will have a transformative impact on our students, and we hope it inspires others with military affiliations who attend the University of Arizona,” Grissom said.

“The reason I wanted to establish this scholarship is because my father deserves to have his legacy live on in helping other people,” Karen said. “That’s what he was all about.”