

March/April  
2006



Amali Tower  
Irvine Valley College  
Class of 2004



#### Amali Tower

U2s' Bono, Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt and .....Amali Tower? You may not have heard of her yet, but as co-founder of Bridge2Peace she's doing her part to combat poverty in one of many underdeveloped regions of the globe.

It took her more than six years to get an associate degree. Yet, within three months of the December 2004 tsunami that killed tens of thousands in Sri Lanka, Amali was sitting down with the country's prime minister shoring up a donation of three acres of land to build a school. Just over one year and many generous donations later, a Montessori preschool is opening its doors in Lunugamvihara, Sri Lanka for 60 very lucky children.

Amali, of Sri Lankan descent, was born in London and moved with her family to Toronto, Columbo (Sri Lanka), San Francisco, back to Columbo, then to Newport Beach. She graduated from high school in 1991. It took awhile to go to college because she was volunteering around the world, traveling to more than 30 countries throughout Africa, South America and South East Asia.

When she walked into her first international relations class at Irvine Valley College, "It was like coming home. Things locked into place. I didn't realize that all this thought and knowledge was an academic discipline." While she had always been struck by the huge disparity of wealth and poverty, "In class we were able to discuss the issues, history, realities of how and why our world is the way it is. Education opens your mind to diversity and looking at issues in many different ways."

Amali, a recent graduate from the University of California at Los Angeles with a degree in international development, attended the Annual Convention of the Community College League of California last

December. She was a recipient of the prestigious 2005 Distinguished Alumni Award.

Amali's long term goal is to work at the United Nations. "If you look at the world as a community of citizens, then you have a more cohesive environment. All the problems are legitimate. Geography shouldn't matter." More information about Bridge2Peace is available at [www.bridge2peace.org](http://www.bridge2peace.org) or by writing Amali at [amali@bridge2peace.org](mailto:amali@bridge2peace.org).

#### Lori Olin

Ten years ago she was a little scared, not quite ready to go away to college, but wanting a taste of independence. Fast forward to her commencement address during which she challenged the Class of 2005 to think big. "What if you find a way to spend the rest of your life doing the one thing you are most passionate about?"

Saddleback College was close to home and her boyfriend was on the Gaucho football team. Since then, Lori Serrato Olin has traveled all over the world handling international media relations for a *Fortune 500* company, married the football player and opened up her own consulting business. "In my career, I can honestly say that every single day I have used something learned at Saddleback."

After getting an associate degree in general studies, Lori transferred to Concordia University in Irvine and majored in English with a minor in Communications. "Saddleback totally prepared me for studying at a university. I took the applied psychology class that helps you figure out what you want to do. I was able to find the major of Public Relations and Communications and knew it was perfect for me."

What really made a difference for Lori was her journalism



## PERSONAL ENRICHMENT

# Profiles in achievement

Education makes a BIG difference.

BY TRACY DALY

professor Mike Reed who helped her find internships. She credits those internships, and some naiveté, for landing a job at Fluor Corporation in international media relations when she was only twenty-one. The highlight: ringing the bell at the New York Stock Exchange.

Lori has lectured on mass communications and public relations at UCLA and her alma maters, Concordia and Saddleback. "While teaching, I learned first-hand that the education and instructors available at Saddleback are equal to that at any four-year institution."

After the birth of son Clayton, Lori took another scary step and walked out of the corporate world to open her own consulting business.

"It's really taken off better than I imagined." She still consults with Fluor and many other publicly traded companies, writes a weekly column for the *Orange County Register*, and is the editor of *The Limo Source* trade magazine. Lori also finds time to serve on the board of directors of the Saddleback Alumni Association.

Will her son Clay be in the Class of 2023? "We already call him the little Gaucho!"

*As Lori and Amali have found, an education can deliver a future full of unlimited possibilities. To find out more, contact Saddleback College at 949-582-4500, [www.saddleback.edu](http://www.saddleback.edu) or Irvine Valley College at 949-451-5100, [www.ivc.edu](http://www.ivc.edu). Financial assistance, career counseling and on campus child care are available. tw*

**Lori Serrato Olin**  
Saddleback College  
Class of 1997