

UC SANTA BARBARA

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THOUGHT-FULL GRADUATION GIFTS FOR FOUR WOMEN

Academe is even more memorable for four female UCSB seniors who earned a 1998 City Club prize for top academic achievement, complete with an unprecedented \$45,398 award to be shared among them and a reception Saturday, June 13, from 6 p.m. -7 p.m. in the campus Music Bowl.

The winners are Lisa Renee Calderon of Chula Vista, Lisa Michele Dittman of Camarillo, Kendall Marie Burton of Orland, and Mara Tolene Thorsen of Thousand Oaks.

The largest undergraduate cash award given in the nation, the City Club Prize is given annually to the four women graduates of highest academic achievement in political science or a related field at UCSB.

The no-strings-attached gift is from an endowment of the now-defunct Santa Barbara City Club, which was founded in 1926 by a group of women who wanted to become involved in the political process.

The club disbanded in 1978, sold the property below its meeting place and bequeathed the income to UCSB, with the stipulation that interest on the investment must be used annually to "reward the achievements of women who best exemplify the ideals of the club," Lura Dolas,

a former club president whose mother was a charter member of the club, noted previously. Recipients may spend the money as they wish, and usually have no prior contact with the club.

Dittman had stayed up late to finish her last paper, was barely awake and "had no idea" when she was informed of her good fortune via phone. She will begin law school in August, and is ecstatic over the new opportunity to "actually pay my mom back" for helping her financially through college.

Calderon graduated last winter and was concentrating on her job in a major accounting firm when the news arrived. "It really struck me," she said, noting the prize will likely help pay off loans and acquire a more professional-looking auto for work.

Burton was torn between feeling "like I'd won the lottery" and "feeling paranoid---I kept wondering why they kept calling me. It was better than what I'd thought it was," she recalls with a laugh. A politically active undergrad, Burton intends to pay her student loans and eventually advance to public interest work.

Mara Thorsen's excitement included "feeling nice that your hard work is appreciated." She will use the funds to pursue a master's degree in Spain next year, and is leaning toward a subsequent joint-Ph.D. back home in law and psychology. "I love school. I really enjoy learning. All my money goes to education," she said.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.