

Col. Edward Michael Fincke

Colonel Fincke (USAF) was born in Pittsburgh, but considers Emsworth, Pennsylvania, to be his hometown. After graduating from Sewickley Academy in 1985, he attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on an Air Force ROTC scholarship. Fincke graduated in 1989 with a Bachelor of Science in aeronautics and astronautics, as well as a Bachelor of Science in Earth, atmospheric and planetary sciences. In 1990, he earned a Master of Science in aeronautics and astronautics from Stanford University. He was awarded an Associate of Science degree in Earth sciences (geology) from El Camino College in Torrance, Calif., in 1993 and a second Master of Science in physical sciences (planetary geology) from the University of Houston - Clear Lake in 2001.

Colonel Fincke has an extensive array of experience including attending a summer exchange program with the Moscow Aviation Institute in the former Soviet Union, where he studied cosmonautics. He also served as flight test engineer at Edwards and Eglin Air Force Bases, where he flew F-16 and F-15 aircraft.

Fincke has served in various positions within the Astronaut Office since being selected to the Astronaut Corps in 1996. He served as commander of the second NASA Extreme Environment Mission Operations (NEEMO 2) mission, where he lived and worked underwater for seven days in 2002. In 2004, he served as science officer and flight engineer for Expedition 9 to the International Space Station, where he spent six months living and working in space and performing four spacewalks. In 2009, Fincke returned to the space station this time as commander of Expedition 18. And in 2011, Fincke was on the crew of the final flight of space shuttle Endeavor.

Colonel Fincke holds the record for the most cumulative days in space for a NASA astronaut, 381 days, 15 hours and 11 minutes in orbit, and has logged 48 hours and 37 minutes during nine spacewalks.

Mr. Michael Lacey

Michael Lacey grew up in Manhattan Beach and attended Aviation High School. After struggling in high school, Michael attended El Camino College in the early 70's and enrolled in the automotive technology certificate program. This program provided an outlet for Michael who loved cars and learned to repair them. This became an important part of his business success as the owner of the Hermosa Beach Comedy and Magic Club. At the time, young comedians such as Jay Leno and Jerry Seinfeld were struggling comics traveling to different clubs. With little cash and old cars, they would often break down on the road and Michael would go and repair their cars. This created a bond with Michael and the comedians that is still strong to this day.

At 24 years of age and armed with a limited budget and the ignorance of youth, Michael opened The Hermosa Beach Comedy & Magic Club which has been entertaining locals and visitors

since 1978. His respect for the art of stand-up comedy shows in his thirty plus years of providing a home for stars and up and coming talent to perform. The Comedy and Magic Club was one of the first clubs to pay comedians for their performances and remains one of their favorite venues today.

When asked about how the idea of a comedy club became a reality, Michael says “I was never really a business guy, but I was enthusiastic about seeing great talent and I could never get my friends to drive out of the South Bay to go see it. So I said to myself that I’m just going to risk everything and try to open this crazy little club.”

Michael is committed to the community and provides countless opportunities for local schools, service clubs and other organizations to raise money. He generously opens the club for special events and donates all the proceeds to the organization.

Michael and his wife Kathy have one child and two grand children and reside in Manhattan Beach.

Ms. Anita McLaughlin

As a teenage transplant from the wilds of Fairbanks, Alaska, Anita McLaughlin graduated from North High School in Torrance and started at Pepperdine University in 1965, with a full scholarship in their fine arts program. Before starting at Pepperdine, she took summer art classes at El Camino College taught by Professor Willie Suzuki, who had also taught one of Anita’s art classes at North High. The classes were extraordinary and fed her passion and hunger for art.

Pepperdine College was a rich education for her in everything but art. After her first semester, she gave up her scholarship and enrolled at El Camino College, taking every class she could from Professor Suzuki. In 1967 Anita received her Associate in Arts degree and received the Mildred K. Walker Art Scholarship. She went on to Otis Art Institute of Los Angeles in 1971 and graduated with a MFA and started working at the Joslyn Art Center in Torrance where she developed her passion for children’s art.

After several years at the Joslyn Center, Anita started Custom Racing Colors, where she designed and manufactured racing silks for thoroughbred horse owners around the world for more than 30 years. Never giving up her passion for art, throughout the 70’s and 80’s she continued to make art, while developing a portfolio of children’s book illustrations. She also began to explore art with computers which led to her next career as a video game artist making art for children’s computer games. She later taught computer animation at Los Angeles Unified Occupational Centers.

Love of art for children brought Anita to Disney Interactive Studios in 2005. For the last seven years, both as a full time employee and now as owner of Artopolis Design, LLC, she has worked to create beautiful and inviting art for children’s interactive games.

Anita credits the principals and skills she learned at El Camino College as the very same ones she uses every day as an artist.

Mrs. Candace Messer

Candace Messer is a successful entrepreneur and is extremely involved in the community. She is passionate about her business and helping others become successful. Candy started Affordable Bookkeeping and Payroll (AB&P) in 2002 with the goal of providing local businesses with high quality bookkeeping and payroll services at a reasonable price.

Even as a high school student, Candy was involved in the community as she was treasurer and president of Junior Achievement. She attended El Camino College, graduated with honors and transferred to California State Dominguez Hills, where she received a B.S. in Business Management. As a high school and college student, Candy would not have predicted that she would one day own her own company.

Candy's career started as a cashier in retail and grew into a management position. As her family life evolved, so did her career. In 1998, she went to work part-time as a full charge bookkeeper for a publishing company. In 2002, Candy began her own bookkeeping business on the side to assist a few small business owners she knew who asked for help. By 2004, Candy began to focus solely on her own business.

Ardent about volunteering, Candy works with organizations that bring value to the community. Some of the groups she has assisted include Walk With Sally, American Business Women's Association and Networking Matters, where she has been the co-chair since its inception in 2007.

Candy participates in the Torrance Chamber of Commerce and is very active in many of the sub-groups. She was the chair-elect for the 2010-2011 term and is the current chair of the Torrance Area Professional Roundtable of Financial Services (P.R.O.F.S.). She was named Woman of the Year for 2009-2010 by the Peninsula Chapter of the American Business Women's Association and Entrepreneur Mom of the Year by Today's Innovative Woman Magazine in 2011.

Candy resides in San Pedro with her husband and two teenage children.

Mr. Chris Montez

Chris Montez grew up in Hawthorne, California and was influenced by his Hispanic culture and the rock 'n roll success of Ritchie Valens. Music was an integral part of his family life and Chris began singing rancheras with his older brothers when he was a child. They taught him to play

the guitar and sing the high parts. In his junior year at Hawthorne High, Chris formed a band and recorded his own songs that gained the interest of Monogram Records. "All You Had To Do Was Tell Me" became a local hit.

Chris' single, "Let's Dance," hit the top 10 and he was on his way. In 1963, he toured the United Kingdom with Tommy Roe, his opening act was an up and coming English group, The Beatles! In 1965, after three years on the road, Chris came home to complete his education at El Camino College. Shortly after he joined a new label, A & M. At one of Chris' first sessions Herb Alpert dropped in and suggested he try a soft ballad sound. It was a more conservative style than Chris would have preferred, but Alpert's instincts were good and the hits "The More I See You," "There Will Never Be Another You," "Call Me" and "Time After Time" followed in quick succession.

While the British and psychedelic rock were invading the U.S., Chris left A & M, signed with CBS International and amassed a string of hits outside the U.S. that has firmly established him as an international recording star. He has recorded songs in both English and Spanish that have become hits Japan, Austria, Germany, Holland, France, Mexico and the U.S.

Through the years, in between tours to Britain and South America, Chris has continued to grow as an artist and to concentrate on his own compositions. His confidence in his music gives him the freedom to integrate the unique influence of his Hispanic culture and rich rhythm and blues style into his own personal hit making musical interpretations.

Chris lives in Simi Valley with his wife Chaz, a prominent local D.J., and their daughter, Ryan.