



# AlumniMatters

UC DAVIS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010

## Greetings!

I am honored to be writing to you representing our emerging Alumni Council. We are thrilled that Dean Harold Levine asked us to come together and focus on engaging alumni with the School and each other. We all came to education because we believe in its power to change lives and to make the world a better place. Our work with you to build a strong alumni community is an extension of our passion to make a difference.

Please join us for the events highlighted in this newsletter.

We invite your thoughts, energy, enthusiasm and contributions. Let us know if you're interested in contributing your ideas, your time, or your wishes to reconnect and say hello. We consider you an essential part of our history and our future. Write us at [ed-alumni@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ed-alumni@ucdavis.edu).

Sandi Redenbach  
(Credential '73),  
Alumni Council Chair



Photograph by TJ Ushing/UC Davis

Mary Catherine Swanson, Credential '67

## The Power of One Teacher

by Heidi Sciutto

Challenging the school system was not what she had intended. Mary Catherine Swanson created the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program in 1980 because she thought it was right for her students.

Never in her wildest dreams did Swanson envision AVID today impacting more than 400,000 low-income and under-served students in nearly 4,500 schools in 45 states and 15 countries. And counting.

In recognition of her prominent career as an educator and innovator, the UC Davis Cal Aggie Alumni Association has honored Swanson with the 2010 Distinguished Achievement Award.

"What a complete surprise," said Swanson. "It really means something to receive this honor from my peers who know my work intimately. It's the best recognition I could possibly have."

**"Teachers don't understand the power they have. They need to know."**

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# Giving Matters

## Young Professor Joins New Giving Community

Assistant Professor Angela Booker was an Annual Fund student caller during her undergraduate years at Stanford University. She later worked for their development office and became deeply involved as a young alumna. Now a faculty member in the UC Davis School of Education, she is honored to be a part of the Aggie giving community in a new role.

### *How did your experience as a student caller impact you?*

Making Annual Fund calls changed the way I saw my university. It really opened my eyes to how vibrant an alumni community there is and how

they're so involved with their institution. I became aware of how the university existed financially, both as a campus and a people. Gifts keep it all going and we have to tend to it.

### *What is important about giving to the Annual Fund?*

Every gift makes an impact. Contributing to the School of Education's Annual Fund represents trust in Dean Levine and that he will make wise decisions with those gifts. Giving to the Annual Fund expresses "I stand with the School of Education" in a world where we can often be skeptical of institutions. Creating a habit of annual giving instills an ongoing commitment to the School and is a good reminder that it's something I care about. It shows I'm engaged in this process of building a community around a goal that is meaningful and valuable—I can be a part of solutions.

### *You recently visited the UC Davis Annual Fund Call Center. What was that like?*

The room has such a positive energy vibe. The student callers are so enthusiastic and happy to be there that I want to make calls with them! They really enjoy connecting with Aggie alumni who help them see what's possible after graduation. As a faculty member for the School, it's fun for me to sense their excitement and realize how my past experience has evolved. Valuing education this way is so important. ■



Photo by Cheng Sheehao/UC Davis

Antoinette Corbin (Credential '10, MA '11)

## Annual Fund Gift Fulfills Dream To Be a Teacher

By Antoinette Corbin

My dream of becoming a teacher has been made possible with the School of Education Annual Fund Award, a scholarship created with gifts to the Annual Fund. I am so grateful for this support.

As a chemist studying to be a teacher, my time in the classroom lets me share my joy of science and engage my students in the same way my teachers engaged me as a young girl in the study of science.

Through my student teaching, I am learning to use activities and experiments that stir students' natural curiosity about the world around them. I am so grateful to be able to help students mature into thoughtful young adults who are passionate about learning.

The generosity of donors to the School's Annual Fund is an investment that will pay dividends as I and other scholarship recipients take our knowledge and passion into the classroom to inspire curious young minds. ■



Cortney Thompson (BS '12) and UC Davis call center students welcome Angela Booker (left)

You can make an **online gift** to the School of Education by visiting [education.ucdavis.edu/giving](http://education.ucdavis.edu/giving)

## Dean's Update

In the spirit of spring, the School has much to share that is fresh and new.

Most notably, we have a new home on campus. The School of Education building is in a great location, at the corner of First and A Streets, near the Quad. This year, we will host our Picnic Day (April 17) activities and our Honoring Educators Reception (May 6) in our new building's beautiful courtyard. I encourage all of our alumni to visit us at these events, or to stop by anytime. This is your new home on campus, too.

We are also pleased to announce our redesigned Web site. Not only is the new site much more attractive, but also it provides a much better window onto the School's people and programs. New content includes an in-depth look at areas where the School is making significant contributions through our research, graduate programs, teacher preparation, and professional development. Major areas of concern school-wide include STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), English learners, and leadership and policy.



Dean Harold Levine

We are also proud of our extended alumni section, where we feature news and stories about our alumni and our Alumni Council. I know that all of you have great ideas about how to make the Web site more interesting and interactive for alumni, and we are eager to hear from you. Send us your thoughts at [ed-alumni@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ed-alumni@ucdavis.edu). You can also let us know what you think of the site by using a form located at "contact us" on the site.

We are excited to have such a great place to share our stories and provide easier access to information on programs and services, all in one attractive and easy to navigate Web site. Stop by soon—and often! ■

### Visit the School's New Web site ([education.ucdavis.edu](http://education.ucdavis.edu))

You can also find us on **Facebook**, **LinkedIn**, and **Twitter** ([twitter.com/UCDEducation](https://twitter.com/UCDEducation))

If you would like to receive periodic updates via email, please send your name, class year, and email address to [ed-alumni@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ed-alumni@ucdavis.edu) with subject line: Sign Me Up. ■

## Hold the Date!



### Honoring Educators Reception and Distinguished Alumni Award

**May 6, 2010**  
5 – 7 p.m.

School of Education Courtyard  
UC Davis

Join us in honoring the achievements and contributions of educators at our third annual reception, which will be held during the first week of May to commemorate National Teacher Appreciation Week.

During the event, we will also present our second annual Distinguished Alumni Award. Honorees exemplify "doing what matters" in the field of education.

Help us celebrate the many ways that all of our alumni transform the lives of children every day.

#### RSVP by April 28

online at: [education.ucdavis.edu/honoring-educators](http://education.ucdavis.edu/honoring-educators) or to

Doreen Barcellona Strnad at  
(530) 754-2131

# Mary Catherine Swanson – The Power of One Teacher

(continued from page 1)

## Discovering UC Davis... And Her Calling

Born and raised in the small town of Kingsburg, California, Swanson went to college in the Bay Area to make it big in journalism. Her father, a newspaper publisher, advised her to think about teaching English instead. “I wanted to write hard news,” Swanson recalled, “but I realized I had to be realistic as a woman in the 1960s. As a summer intern at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the most I ever got to do was obituary research.”

Keeping her options open, Swanson pursued a double major in English and journalism, taking classes at both UC Berkeley and San Francisco State University. Her high school sweetheart, Tom Swanson (BS '67, MS '69), would visit her often from his UC Davis campus and marvel at how different their college environments were.

“Berkeley and San Francisco were hotbeds in the '60s,” Swanson said. “Students were on drugs and passing out in class. Riot police were on campus with rifles. Professors and students were often jailed for protests. It was not the best education. It was survival.”

“I took Tom to my senior prom, which was formal dress at the San Francisco Fairmont Hotel. Then he took me to his senior prom at the Davis gym—a barn—where at one point everyone joined hands in a circle and did the Bossy Cow-Cow cheer!”



Mary Catherine Swanson is the new English teacher at Clairemont High School, San Diego (1971). Inset: Swanson earns her teaching credential at UC Davis (1967).

Swanson was drawn to the Davis campus. With her father's encouragement, a clear path took shape when she graduated. Even though she had a prestigious national fellowship lined up for Columbia University graduate studies in New York, Swanson instead married and enrolled in the UC Davis teaching credential intern program in the summer of 1966. She taught full-time at nearby Woodland High School while taking her credential classes.

During that first year of teaching, Swanson knew she had found her calling. “I told my husband that I loved teaching so much, I would do it paid or not,” she said. “Tom was in grad school and very supportive, but he

asked me to please remember to pick up my paycheck!”

## AVID Origins

After one year at Woodland High School, Swanson taught English and journalism at Armijo High School in Fairfield and at Moreno Valley High School in Sunnymead. She landed at San Diego's Clairemont High School in 1970 and taught there for 17 years, eventually rising to chair the English department.

It was during her years at Clairemont that Swanson's idea for AVID was born. In 1980 the school, which had previously served a student body that was 98 percent white, prepared for an

influx of 500 minority students who were ordered bused to Clairemont by the courts. Clairemont quickly moved to create “special” or remedial classes for the new students, the bulk of whom were two or more years behind grade level.

The idea of “dumbing down” classes for disadvantaged students troubled Swanson, who was convinced there had to be a better alternative. She and her mentor, Jim Grove, who taught seminar classes for the highly gifted, began to look for a way to make integration work for their students without sacrificing excellence.

Swanson proposed that she be allowed to undertake an experiment to see if 32 of the incoming freshmen could cope with Clairemont’s college preparatory curriculum if she supplemented their education with a special period each day devoted to giving them the academic tools and motivational support they would need to succeed. Swanson would focus on the importance of note-taking, writing as a learning tool, and open discussions between students and teachers about how students learn best. If a student were having particular difficulty with a subject, Swanson would see to it that he or she received special tutoring from other students, teachers and college tutors.

Thus, AVID was born. To the astonishment of everyone but Swanson, the experiment was a smashing success. At the end of four years, 30 of the 32 students went on to college, 28 to four-year institutions and two to local community colleges. All 30 were the first in their families to attend college.



Historical photos courtesy of Mary Catherine Swanson

Mary Catherine Swanson teaching in AVID classrooms (1980s).



It wasn’t long before AVID reached beyond San Diego County. In 1992, Swanson founded the nonprofit AVID Center to disseminate the thriving program more widely. Today the AVID program operates throughout the United States and on U.S. military bases in Canada and Australia. AVID has also expanded to include the fourth through twelfth grades.

### New Challenges

Swanson retired as the executive director of AVID in 2006, yet she remains active as a member of the AVID Board of Directors. She also sits on the UC Davis School of Education Board of Advisors and three other nonprofit boards. Swanson continues to bring her energy and vision—backed by strong data—to challenge the education system.

Successfully guiding students to college from high school, AVID is reaching to a new level: post-secondary programs and community colleges.

“We no longer graduate enough college students to fill the jobs needed in this new century,” said Swanson. “We need to support getting community college students to a four-year college and even to the graduate level if we plan to continue being a global leader.”

Swanson says although the challenges in education are huge, she still loves to find ways to influence and change. “As long as I’m focused on helping kids, it’s fun,” she said. “They respond and work very hard. Teaching is the most amazing career I could have imagined.”

*For an expanded version of this story, including more details on the founding and expansion of AVID, visit the School of Education’s Web site at [education.ucdavis.edu](http://education.ucdavis.edu). ■*

# Alumni Updates

## WESLEY SEVER

(EdD '09)

Wesley Sever was selected by the U.S. Department of Education to receive the 2009 Terrel H. Bell Award



for Outstanding School Leadership. The principal of John S. Wash Elementary School in Fresno was one of eight recipients recognized at the 2009 Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., last November.

Sever earned his doctorate in educational leadership through the School's joint doctoral program with California State University, Fresno.

## PAUL MARIUZZA

(BA '77, Credential '78)

Paul Mariuzza is enjoying retirement after 26 years of service as a teacher for the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DODDS).



Crediting Coach Bob Biggs (BA '73) and former Coach Joe Carlson as his inspiration, Mariuzza's first coaching job was for the brand new football program at Winters High School. Overseas in the DODDS program, he met his wife while teaching health and physical education in the Philippines. They later resettled in Japan where Mariuzza taught health and physical education, coached varsity girls' volleyball and tennis, and served as the boys' football quarterback coach at Yokota High School for DODDS. Mariuzza retired in 2008 to his hometown in Pinole, so his teenage son—who has high-functioning autism—could benefit

from enhanced special education classes and could transition more fully to either college or vocational schooling.

## ANNE GURNEE (BS '90, MA '93)

Anne Gurnee is the education director of Southwest Charter School in Portland, Oregon. The school is in its third year of operation serving K-8 students from Portland and surrounding communities. The focus of the school is Place-based Education, a philosophy that strives to connect students to the natural world and the social community in which they live ([www.swcharter.org/](http://www.swcharter.org/)).

Involved in the science education field for nearly 20 years, Gurnee has

consulted and worked with clients nationwide to create and evaluate science education programs in schools, communities and museums. "It's great to know that other UC Davis alumni are also doing the hard work of education reform," she said.

*"It's great to know that other UC Davis alumni are also doing the hard work of education reform."*

– Anne Gurnee (BS '90, MA '93)

## Special Thanks for Gifts to Education Faculty Fund

By Barbara J. Perkes

I am the widow of Dr. Victor A. Perkes. It is with gratitude that my family and I thank the anonymous donors who contributed to the Education Faculty Fund in my late husband's name.



Dr. Victor A. Perkes

One of the driving forces in his professional life was to educate not only student teachers but also experienced elementary and secondary teachers in the use of "hands on science." At one time, "hands on science" was rarely part of classroom curricula. He conducted many teacher workshops in order to expose as many teachers as possible to "hands on science." Every summer, high ability high school students attended the Young Scholars Program (funded by the National Science Foundation) at UC Davis, generated and administered by Dr. Perkes. In the ultimate example of "hands on science," the students were actively involved in the research projects of some UC Davis staff members.

Thank you once again to the donors who decided to honor the work of Dr. Perkes by contributing to the Education Faculty Fund in his name. ■

More information about the Education Faculty Fund can be found at [education.ucdavis.edu/giving](http://education.ucdavis.edu/giving)

## MARINA BARCELONA

(BA '08, Credential '09)

In her first year of teaching, Marina Barcelona is working at Sequoia High School, a large school in Redwood City, California, that has been listed in the top three percent of



high schools in the nation by *Newsweek*. She is teaching three different levels of Spanish in classes exclusively for native Spanish speakers. "With more than 160 students total," said Barcelona, "I know that there's no way I would have been able to handle this school year without the training and experience I got as a student teacher in the School of Education, without my supervisor Laura (Dubcovsky), and without the support and encouragement from the rest of my cohort."

**TERRI A. DEMITCHELL** (MA '90)

**TODD A. DEMITCHELL** (MA '90)

Terri's second children's mystery, *Jigsaw*, was recently published by Mayhaven Publishing. It is a sequel to *You Will Come Back* in the Olde Locke Beach Mysteries. In addition, she co-authored "Assessment, Accountability, and Malpractice," which was published in the *New Hampshire Journal of Education*.

Todd is chair of the Department of Education at the University of New Hampshire. His fifth book, *Labor Relations in Education: Policies, Politics, and Practices*, was recently published by Rowman & Littlefield Education. He gave an invited symposium address at the Boston University School of Law, and recently had articles published in

## BETTY MULLER BROWN

(BA '59, Credential '61)

Betty Muller Brown fondly remembers participating in UC Davis' Intern Program, guided by Larry Newberry and Doug Minnis, while teaching college prep English at Dixon High School. After later studying at Victoria University in New Zealand, Brown developed and operated summer session programs for San Francisco State College and managed professional development programs internationally. She also taught ESL classes for 10 years to a range of students, including 60-plus high school English students in Bolivia with five different home languages.



"In Cochabamba, Bolivia, ... (there was) no curriculum, no text books, so we drove across the Altiplano to La Paz (nearly 200 miles away) for cast-off anthologies—same editions as those used in Dixon nearly 20 years earlier—and no budget other than \$200," recalled Brown. "Those dollars bought paperback novels at a special warehouse in Oakland, California. Students' families paid for SAT study books and dictionaries that we shipped."

"As you might guess," Brown added, "those were some of the most challenging and exciting teaching years any person could hope for."

When her husband's work brought them back to the United States, Brown completed her master's degree at Colorado State University and co-founded a business communications company. Now retired, she enjoys helping the spouses of international students with their English language skills and serving on international community projects with the Rotary Club of Fort Collins. ■

the *Boston University Public Interest Law Journal*, *Teachers College Record*, the *Education Law Reporter*, and the *Brigham Young University Education and Law Journal*.

## SUZANNE BLACK

(MA '80 Zoology, Credential '84)

Suzanne Black is the science department co-chair at Inglemoor High School in the Seattle area. In May 2008, she was inducted into Aragon High School's Teacher Hall of Fame (in San Mateo, California, where she spent the first

10 years of her teaching career). "To this day, I still use techniques and philosophies acquired in my credential program," Black said. "I still look up to Vic Perkes and Maryann Gatheral, and to my master teachers Paul Moreau (then at Luther Burbank High School) and Phil Coleman (now retired from Sacramento City College). I have had four outstanding student teachers of my own and in those years I always found myself asking, 'What would Paul or Phil do?' Teaching is the best job in the world!" ■

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## Calendar

### Picnic Day

April 17, 2010

Visit the School of Education at our new location on First and A Streets

### Honoring Educators— in recognition of National Teacher Appreciation Week

Thursday, May 6, 2010

5–7 p.m.

School of Education Courtyard,  
UC Davis. RSVP required to [education.  
ucdavis.edu/honoring-educators](mailto:education.ucdavis.edu/honoring-educators) or to  
Doreen Strnad at (530) 754-2131

### School of Education Graduation Celebration

Wednesday, June 9, 2010

4–6 p.m.

Jackson Hall, Mondavi Center  
UC Davis



For more about all the School of  
Education's events, visit our Web site  
at [education.ucdavis.edu](http://education.ucdavis.edu)

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## Alums Share Advice With Future Teachers

What is it really like to be a teacher? In November, three alumni of the School of Education shared their professional experiences and advice with UC Davis undergraduate students interested in a future teaching career.

The alumni teachers, who all have well-established careers in the Sacramento region, represented a variety of subjects and grade levels. Heidi Haugen (BS '86, Credential '88) teaches science at Florin High School in Sacramento, Laura Anderson (Credential '00) is a third grade teacher at Patwin Elementary School in Davis, and Kris Harvey (BA '80, Credential

'82, MA '88) teaches French at Oliver Wendell Holmes Junior High School in Davis.

Although each teacher had her own unique career path, they all agreed on attributes needed for a career in teaching. "Flexibility is really important since no one day or minute is alike," said Haugen. "Having a good awareness of your kids' energy and moods will help with classroom management," added Anderson. "You've got to have a passion for what you do," said Harvey.

Alumni interested in participating on a future panel are invited to contact Doreen Barcellona Strnad at (530) 754-2131 or [dastrnad@ucdavis.edu](mailto:dastrnad@ucdavis.edu). ■



## Teacher Education Alumni Career Panel

Left to right: Heidi Haugen, Laura Anderson, Kris Harvey. The Teacher Education Alumni Career Panel was hosted by the School of Education and the UC Davis Internship and Career Center.