

Honoring Educators

Reception

& Distinguished Alumni

Awards

2010

In recognition of National Teacher Appreciation Week, the UC Davis School of Education is pleased to honor the contributions and dedication of all educators and to present the School's annual Distinguished Education Alumni Awards

Program: 5 – 7 p.m.

(Formal program begins at 6 p.m.)

Harold Levine, *Dean of the School of Education*

Sandi Redenbach, *Chair of the School of Education Alumni Council*

Nancy Gutierrez *(Credential '02)*
2010 Rising Star Alumna of the Year

Lisa Friedman Dunbar *(BA '80, Credential '81)*
2010 Distinguished Alumna of the Year

Wesley Sever *(EdD '09)*
2010 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year



Lisa Friedman Dunbar (BA '80, Credential '81)

“(Lisa Dunbar) feels strongly that all children in this community deserve a quality education that honors their language and culture while incorporating English learning, vocabulary building and writing.” – Nominator

Now in her 28th year with the El Monte City School District in Southern California, Lisa Dunbar is the Director of Child Development Programs and has seen dramatic growth in the Head Start Preschool program she oversees. In her first year with the program, there were 92 students, a budget of \$252,000, and classes located at three school sites. Now the program has almost 800 students, a budget of over \$7 million, and classrooms situated on 11 of the district's 15 school campuses.

Dunbar began her career as a bilingual and migrant education teacher and then served as the district's supervisor of state and federal projects. Dunbar has been leading child development programs since 1992, and she is committed to developing quality educational reforms for all students.

In 2005, Dunbar approached the district's Special Education Department to create a partnership for full inclusion. Five years later, the Head Start Special Education Blended Inclusion program is a top-notch collaboration that blends regular and special education students and staff at select sites. The Los Angeles County Office of Education has recognized the partnership as a model of inclusion and includes the program in its Head Start public relations and recruitment videos. For the second year in a row, Dunbar and her colleagues will present a full inclusion workshop at the annual National Head Start Conference, encouraging other directors to implement their own collaborative inclusion programs.

Over the last several years, Dunbar has also collaborated and implemented both homeless family and foster care recruitment programs. She is currently partnering with school site principals and a local mental health agency to bring in Early Head Start, allowing for more seamless program transitions from birth through eighth grade.

**Wesley R. Sever (EdD '09)**

“I have never worked for a person who has more integrity, perspective, or ‘innovativeness.’ Dr. Sever believes that as we approach each other as learners, conversations change, collaboration increases, and education prospers. His leadership is never stagnant.”

– Nominator

A recent graduate of the UC Davis-Fresno State Joint Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, Wesley Sever has been making an exceptional impact for the past six years as principal of John Wash Elementary School in Fresno County.

With a growing English learner population to address, Sever established a system of shared accountability and collaborative instructional practices that backs up his school motto, “Every child, every day, whatever it takes.” In 2008-09, his school re-designated 31 of their English learners while 71 students grew at least one proficiency level on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Since implementing Sever's programs, the school's achievement gap between subgroups has shrunk from as high as 24 percent to as low as 8 percent in both reading and math. John Wash became a California Distinguished School in 2008 and a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 2009.

Specifically for his leadership and a number of innovations he incorporated into his school's overall operation, Sever was one of eight principals chosen from across the nation by the U.S. Department of Education to receive the 2009 Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding School Leadership. His involvement with the whole school community ensures students at all levels will be challenged with high expectations to reach their fullest potential.

Sever began his career as a primary language tutor in the Fresno Unified School District. After stints teaching fourth grade and seventh/eighth grade history, he served as a middle school vice principal before becoming principal of John Wash. Since 1998, Sever has also been an adjunct faculty member at the Fresno campus of National University, teaching graduate students in the credential program.



Patricia A. Rucker (BA '81, Credential '82)

“Patricia Rucker’s outstanding professional contributions are numerous and far-reaching in support of students, educators and the institution of public education for the state of California.” – Nominator

During the past 12 years, Patricia Rucker has worked on behalf of the California Teachers Association (CTA), initially as a staff consultant with the Instructional Professional Department and currently as a legislative advocate. Her briefings on accountability and school restructuring issues were in high demand as Rucker became the most sought after authority in her region on all aspects of the Elementary Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind (ESEA/NCLB). She has contributed to several education reform initiatives as a member of the state superintendent’s P-16 Council, as a member of the Improving Teacher Quality program advisory committee at the California Postsecondary Education Commission, and as a co-convenor for the policy workgroup of the Coalition for Linked Learning (Multiple Pathways). Rucker continues to provide leadership in policy development, curriculum and instruction, just as she did when she began her career as a young English teacher in Sacramento’s Del Paso Height School District.



Sharon Y. Tettegah (BA '88, Credential '89, MA '91)

“Sharon has long been a strong advocate for the affective environment in a classroom. She has the ability to make changes without (others’) anger and with excellent results.” – Nominator

Sharon Tettegah has worked in the spectrum of education from elementary classrooms to graduate teaching. Currently an associate professor at the University of Illinois and a part-time faculty member in the Beckman Institute’s cognitive neuroscience group, Tettegah teaches courses on social emotional learning and empathy, in addition to courses on the educational applications of games, simulations and virtual reality environments. Early in her career, Tettegah taught elementary students in the Davis, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Goleta school districts, working successfully with students whose backgrounds did not place high value on education. From 1999 to 2001, Tettegah served as support faculty for the California Teach Project while completing her doctorate at UC Santa Barbara. With an expertise in addressing emotional challenges, she currently has a book under review entitled *Simulations, Empathy and Education*.



Nancy Wimmer Veatch (BA '89, Credential '90, MA '91)

“Nancy is living evidence of the Evergreen School District’s vision statement ‘All Children Can Learn and We Make the Difference.’” – Nominator

Currently a sixth grade teacher at Evergreen Middle School in Cottonwood, CA, Nancy Veatch has 19 years of teaching experience in Northern California public schools. Previously serving as bilingual program coordinator for her rural district, she earned National Board Certification in 2001. Veatch has won numerous grants to develop learning interventions for struggling students, including a \$15,000 EISS Grant (Early Intervention for School Success) that provided literacy support for parents and students in the form of workshops and literacy nights. In addition to sixth grade instruction, Veatch teaches literacy development to pre-service teachers as an adjunct faculty member at Chico State. *Literacy in Context (LinC)*, a book that Veatch recently co-authored with a Chico State professor, will be available in Fall 2010. The book will focus on supporting teachers with literacy instruction for adolescents.



Education Alumni Awards Selection Committee

Susan Davis (BS '72, Credential '73)

Fadia Desmond (PhD '04)

Roy Engoron (BA '62, MA '65, Credential '66)

Michele Fortes (MA '99, PhD '01)

Sandi Redenbach (BA '72, Credential '73)

Sharon Rose (BS '60, Credential '61)

Introducing the *Rising Star* Alumni Award

The selection committee was overwhelmed by the quality and quantity of nominations for early career alumni. In response, the committee established the Rising Star Alumni Award to recognize alumni distinguishing themselves within the first 10 years of their careers in education. The 2010 honoree and finalists are dynamic educators to watch in years to come.

RISING STAR ALUMNI HONOREE

Nancy B. Gutierrez (Credential '02)

“Nancy Gutierrez is not one of those educators with good intentions who will not impact the community. She is the product of an environment that has underestimated her, and she is back in the neighborhood kicking down doors and asking questions. She intends to become a national voice for middle school reform.” – Nominator

Early in her career, Nancy Gutierrez is shining as a teacher, leader, academic visionary, and advocate for youth. Starting out as an elementary substitute teacher in her old school district—Alum Rock in San Jose—Gutierrez knew she had arrived at her life’s work. Having once felt anonymous and ignored as a young student herself, Gutierrez realized she wanted to be the teacher who would instead engage, advocate, and be a leader for change.

After two years of teaching at the elementary grades, Gutierrez began teaching the middle grades, her favorite level. She introduced controversial community issues to make her lessons more rigorous and relevant, and she began to see her classroom becoming a sanctuary for learning. Advocating for change, Gutierrez met with parent-leaders, educators and students to talk about what they wanted from their schools. All wanted more academic achievement and opportunities for students to succeed.

In 2004, garnering the enthusiasm of young adolescents and the tenacity of parent-leaders and teacher-leaders, Gutierrez co-founded and led Renaissance Academy of Arts, Science and Social Justice (180 students) to become the highest scoring middle school in the Alum Rock School District and a California Distinguished School in only two years.

Since 2006, Gutierrez has served as principal of Clyde L. Fischer Middle School, once the lowest performing middle school in the Alum Rock district that covers the urban, under-served East San Jose neighborhood where she was raised. She was named the Santa Clara County Middle School Principal of the Year in 2009-2010 for her school culture-changing leadership at Fischer, which is now a safer and more stable environment for both its students and staff.

Recognized locally and nationally for her skills and achievements, Gutierrez was recently accepted into Harvard University’s prestigious new Educational Leadership Doctorate (EdLD) program. She is ready to create and lead a groundbreaking, sustainable and replicable school-based project.



RISING STAR ALUMNI FINALISTS

Adam J. Gelb

(BA '03, Credential '05, MA '06)

“I think the most notable thing Adam does is help his fellow teachers as much as he helps his students...he spends a great deal of time collaborating not only with teachers in his school, but others within the district, state and across the country.” – Nominator

Teaching fourth grade for the past five years at Fallon School in Dublin, CA, Adam Gelb is now the lead teacher for his elementary school and an animated inspiration to students contemplating a career in teacher education. He is involved in several district committees in an effort to improve the effectiveness of new teachers entering the field. Gelb often visits tutoring centers, homes of students, and school-wide extracurricular activities to form relationships with his students and families. He has been recognized as 2005-2006 California First Year Teacher of the Year, 2005-2006 Dublin First Year Teacher of the Year, and 2007-2008 Coach of the Year at Fallon. In 2009, Gelb memorably spoke at the UC Davis School of Education graduation ceremony and—always seeking opportunities to collaborate—taped his business card underneath the seats of teaching credential graduates.



Rajeev K. Virmani

(BA '99, Credential '05, MA '06)

“Rajeev certainly created learning environments in his classroom that allowed all students to succeed and learn.” – Nominator

Rajeev Virmani is a math teacher at Henry M. Gunn High School in Palo Alto, teaching AP Statistics and trigonometry/analytical geometry to a diverse group of learners. He began teaching geometry at Sacramento’s St. Francis High School eight years ago, and he developed an interest in the effect of math journaling on student learning while a School of Education graduate student. His efforts in connecting with students and relating their personal histories with math make a significant impact as his students become more focused on school and learning. In a short amount of time, Virmani has become a strong leader in his department. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in education at the University of San Francisco.

