

Alumni Reunion and Awards Reception

2011

The UC Davis School of Education is pleased on this occasion to honor the contributions and dedication of all educators and to present the School's annual Distinguished Education Alumni Awards.

Program: 1 – 3 p.m.

(Formal program begins at 1:45 p.m.)

Harold Levine, *Dean of the School of Education*

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

Joshua Weeks (BA '08, Credential '11)
School of Education Student

Sofia Cedillo (Credential '05, MA '06)
2011 Rising Star Alumna of the Year

Gregory A. Zavala (BA '73, Credential '74)
2011 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year

Nadeen T. Ruiz (BA '76, Credential '77)
2011 Distinguished Alumna of the Year



Gregory A. Zavala (BA '73, Credential '74)

“Greg Zavala’s leadership is without a doubt a valuable commodity for Stockton and the State of California. He is a credit to his profession, his school district, community, country, and to mankind.” – Nominator

Internationally renown for his coaching achievements in wrestling, Greg Zavala has also found success in school administration and gang prevention programs. He developed a nationally recognized gang intervention, prevention and suppression program called *Street Smart* and a handbook entitled *Gangs in the Hood*, adopted by Stockton Unified School District along with other school districts and law enforcement around the state and nation.

Zavala also introduced a 10-day drug and gang prevention program for K-12 students, which included counseling, employment skills, tutoring, after-school activities, guest speakers, health services and mental health—and even a “coloring book” for K-4 students. He developed a gang guidebook (in 10 different languages) for parents, law enforcement and educators that supports a safe learning environment. His program, initially funded at the state and federal level in the 1980s, has continued without funding through Zavala’s efforts. He currently serves students, educators, law enforcement and parents on a daily basis at Jane Frederick Continuation High School in Stockton.

In conjunction with his gang prevention work, Zavala is highly acclaimed for his coaching skills in wrestling. His wrestling coaching career includes stints as United States coaching staff in the 1996 Olympics and staff member at the 2004 Olympic training camp, and he was the head coach for Peru’s Pan American Games team in 1987. He holds several awards and was most recently inducted in 2010 to the California Wrestling Hall of Fame and the Stockton Mexican Athletic Hall of Fame.

Zavala grew up in Stockton and excelled in school sports. With the help of his high school counselor, he received a football scholarship at UC Davis in 1969 and was the first in his family to attend college. With a minor in physical education, Zavala went on to earn his teaching credential at UC Davis. In 1977, he received his master’s degree in education from the University of San Francisco and went on to work for the California Youth Authority and Stockton Unified School District. In 2010, Zavala earned a master’s degree in behavioral/criminology from Capella University.

**Nadeen T. Ruiz (BA '76, Credential '77)**

“Despite a very busy schedule, Dr. Ruiz always manages to have time to mentor and inspire teachers, students and colleagues with her enthusiasm, keen intellect and advocacy on behalf of English language learners.” – Nominator

Nadeen Ruiz has distinguished herself in the development of literacy skills for bilingual migrant and special needs students. She is currently director of the Serna Center and director of the California Bi-National Teacher Education Project (Bi-TEP) at Sacramento State University. Ruiz retired in 2010 as professor and chair of Sacramento State’s bilingual multicultural education department.

As a migrant educator in Tracy, Calif., and bilingual education supervisor for UC Davis in the late 1970s-early 1980s, Ruiz found creative ways—in music and science, for example—for her students to develop their language skills. She received her master’s and doctor’s degrees in education at Stanford University and then served in education as a professor and education leader at both Stanford and Sacramento State. Ruiz received outstanding teaching awards at both institutions and was presented with the CABE Board Award: Bilingual Teacher Preparation Program (Outstanding Teacher Preparation) in 2010.

Ruiz played a key role in directing several research initiatives to investigate instructional approaches for biliteracy development in bilingual students. She has authored numerous articles and books on literacy development in bilingual children, including a curriculum guide for The Optimal Learning Environment (OLE) Project and The Bilingual Special Education Dictionary.



Sheila Folan (EdD '05)

“Sheila Folan has positively impacted the lives of thousands of students. She has taught (them) how to utilize their skills to achieve, work collaboratively with team members, produce a quality product, and how to be lifelong learners.” – Nominator

Sheila Folan has taught agriculture in the Elk Grove Unified School District for the past 28 years. As chair of Florin High School's agriculture department and coordinator of their agriculture academy, she has been instrumental in developing the largest agriculture science program in the district. Folan was a Teacher of the Year finalist for the district in 1996 and Teacher of Excellence for the California Agriculture Teachers Association in 1998; she earned National Board Certification in 2001. In addition to teaching, Folan currently serves as chair for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and as a consulting teacher for the district's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program.



Michael Holt (BA '94, Credential '95)

“Michael (Holt) actively worked with community members...hosted innumerable events, and tirelessly committed to showing administrators, students and parents that multi-leveled, diverse classrooms provide the best possible educational experience for all involved.” – Nominator

For the past 13 years, Michael Holt has taught GATE Language Arts at California Middle School, a high-poverty urban school in Sacramento. Growing up in East Oakland as the oldest of 12 siblings, Holt saw many of his elementary classmates excluded from high-achieving classes in high school; this motivated him to increase the diversity of Cal Middle's GATE and advanced program classes. He also created a theater program and directed 12 Shakespeare plays, coached a national award-winning debate team, and taught a high-level writing curriculum that serves multiple levels of learners. Holt was awarded News10 Teacher of the Month in 2000, Sacramento City Schools Teacher of the Year in 2004, and an Urban Fellow scholarship in 2010 to earn his master's degree at Harvard University's School of Education.



Ting L. Sun (PhD '00)

“Dr. Sun's passion for closing the achievement gap and seeing success for all students inspires the educators she works with. She is continually striving for improvement in education, is always willing to take risks and take on tasks for the betterment of our students...and goes above and beyond to mentor teachers to be all they can be.” – Nominator

Ting L. Sun has more than 23 years in the field of education and has been actively involved in the charter schools movement for over 18 years as a teacher, administrator, and school operator. The co-founder and educational programs director of Sacramento-based Natomas Charter School, Sun is also chair of California's Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and serves on numerous committees and boards. From 2003 to 2006, she was vice president of leadership and quality for the California Charter Schools Association, where she established quality assurance strategies now used by charter schools throughout the state. From 1997 to 2000, Sun was an educational programs consultant in the California Department of Education's Charter Schools Unit; she participated in the development of charter school administrative policies and regulations and the administration of the federal public charter schools grant program. Sun has also served as a senior consultant for Cambridge Education, an international school quality review and educational consulting firm.



Education Alumni Awards Selection Committee

Patrick Bohman (Credential '07, MA '08)

Susan Davis (BS '72, Credential '73)

Fadia Desmond (PhD '04)

Michele Fortes (MA '99, PhD '01)

Judy MacDonald (BA '92)

Sandi Redenbach (BA '72, Credential '73)

Sharon Rose (BS '60, Credential '61)

The *Rising Star* Alumni Award

The selection committee established the **Rising Star Alumni Award** to recognize alumni distinguishing themselves within the first 10 years of their career. The 2011 awardee and honorees are dynamic educators to watch in years to come.

RISING STAR ALUMNI AWARDEE

Sofia Cedillo

(Credential '05, MA '06)

“In addition to holding the California BCLAD Multiple Subject Credential, Sofia Cedillo also holds a prestigious National Board Certificate for Teachers after only five years of teaching. This is a remarkable achievement, which reflects her commitment to the profession as well as her leadership in the field.” – Nominator

Sofia Cedillo, who has been teaching kindergarten for almost six years, has assumed a strong leadership role at Will Rogers Elementary School in the Santa Monica/Malibu Unified School District. Teaching a student population comprised largely of children who are bilingual and English learners, Cedillo serves as the district’s professional development liaison for her site and assists other teachers with developing expertise in the use of assessment data to guide instruction. Guiding a team of her colleagues to draft technology standards based on the national standards, Cedillo is the lead teacher assisting others with the implementation of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) curriculum. She organizes parent-teacher nights focusing on science, math and literacy, and she teaches a similar curriculum with a social-emotional learning component during the summer to provide uninterrupted learning opportunities for “at-risk” students.

Refining her skills by seeking National Board Certification, Cedillo assumed leadership roles and demonstrated evidence of mentoring colleagues while involving community members and families in the mission of her school. She is a shining example of how Will Rogers has become a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and a California Distinguished School.



RISING STAR ALUMNI HONOREES

Aman Dhanda

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

“Aman Dhanda has high expectations for all her students. Anyone who observes her teaching is immediately struck by her apparent commitment to engaging each learner in the topic of study. She is truly a gifted educator.”

– Nominator



Serving in the Woodland Joint Unified School District for the past six years, Aman Dhanda is currently a fifth grade teacher at Whitehead Elementary School. Staying connected with the School of Education, she is a teacher-consultant with Area 3 Writing Project and specializes in the use of technology in classroom instruction. Dhanda explores the use of educational software to academically assist her students who are from diverse backgrounds, and she serves as a resource for her colleagues by assisting them in the implementation of technology in their classrooms. Dhanda also volunteered to start and maintain Whitehead’s web page and web-based parent communication tool.

Mondana Paymanian Tang

(BS '97, Credential '05, MA '06)

“Mondana (Tang) advocates for strong, hands-on education for her students... she pursues continued strong science education in the elementary schools in spite of colossal budget constraints.”

– Nominator



After seven years of working as a chemical engineer, Mondana Tang changed her career to teaching and never looked back. She teaches science to 800 elementary students at two schools in the San Francisco Bay Area’s Newark Unified School District (NUSD). Tang has successfully sought grant funding to enhance her science programs and solicits local engineers and scientists to interview her students and judge a science fair competition that she initiated. During her six years of teaching, Tang has been awarded Schilling Elementary School Teacher of the Year, Lincoln Elementary School Teacher of the Year finalist, and twice awarded NUSD Science Teacher of the Year.