

CANDIDATE TO VISIT VACAVILLE

FSUTA members invited to attend May 24 - Page 3



HOME ROOM

Living her father's Legacy



Laura Rodriguez and her husband, Jeff Kranz



Public speaking is hardly a popular pastime for Laura Rodriguez, but the Laurel Creek Elementary School teacher found the nerve to do so in 1999 at a Governing Board meeting as the district was deciding on a name for its third high school.

Rodriguez led a campaign to have the school named for her father Angelo, a Fairfield High teacher who drowned in 1986 when he dove into the ocean off the coast of Spain to save

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‘Priceless’ event for new teachers

“Great Beginnings” was just that for three teachers at Sheldon Academy of Innovative Learning. Raquel Christian, Elaina Michalski and Hazel Quintanilla met for the first time in August at the orientation conducted by the district and our association for new teachers.

Once the three figured out they would be teaching at the same school, they realized they would be better off by sticking together and became fast friends. As Quintanilla said, “They’re my life lines.”

Their bond was strengthened when they attended the CTA’s New Educator Weekend in February. Each came home “significantly more knowledgeable,” Michalski said, “and ready to disseminate our newly acquired skills. As an educator, these events - in my opinion - are priceless.”

Michalski also brought home a copy of Jon Pearson’s “Drawing on the Inventive Mind” after going to his workshop and raising her



Raquel Christian

Hazel Quintanilla

Elaina Michalski

hand when Pearson asked for a volunteer to list five things he or she did well. Her five things were being a mother, friend, accessorizing, brushing her teeth and volunteering.

Quintanilla, who attended Sheldon as a child, and Christian returned with newfound confidence. “I learned new ideas and a strategy of thinking outside the box that I can bring into my classroom,” Christian said. “It was very inspiring.”

“There’s so much to learn as a first-year teacher,” added Quintanilla. “These were actual teachers who know what they’re talking about. They gave us tools that we can use in the classroom.”

Have a ball with FSUTA for Day of the Teacher

Join your colleagues and their families on Saturday, May 12 at Raley Field in Sacramento as the River Cats face the Tacoma Rainiers at 7 p.m. A fireworks show will follow the game. Tickets have been specially priced for FSUTA at \$20 per seat and must be purchased online by Saturday, May 4. Purchase tickets at

<https://groupmatics.events/event/Fairfieldsuisun>



THURMOND TO SPEAK

Tony Thurmond, our endorsed candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction, will speak at the Vacaville Teachers Association meeting at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 24. FSUTA members are invited to attend. The meeting will be in the Will C. Wood High School library at 998 Marshall Road in Vacaville. Take advantage of this opportunity to hear why Tony is our candidate.



MINORITY AT LARGE

The Redwood Service Center Council is conducting an election for a Minority at Large Representative to the State Council. Interested minority members must fill out a Declaration of Candidacy form and mail it to the RSCC at 2490 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa CA 95403. The form must be received by 5 p.m. Friday, April 27. The form is on the Forms/Documents page at www.FSUTA.org. Voting will be Thursday, May 4 to Tuesday, May 22. Ballots must be returned by 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 23.

STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS

Learn about student loan forgiveness by attending a workshop sponsored by the California Teachers Association and Cordelia Regional Resource Center. You must be a FSUTA member to attend. “Generation Debt: Student Loan Forgiveness” will be 4:30-6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 1 at 4751 Central Way in Fairfield. A light dinner will be served. The RSVP deadline is Tuesday, April 24. To reserve your spot, please contact Chrissy Lyons at 864-0305 or clyons@cta.org. If you have Stafford or Perkins loans and teach in a “high needs school” or “teacher shortage area,” you may be eligible for a portion of student loan forgiveness. If you have consolidated your student loans, you may not be eligible. That will be discussed during the workshop.



EVALUATION TRAINING

Your site needs a volunteer to attend two hours of paid training in May for the Bilateral Evaluation program. Once trained, he or she will present training with administrators during the 2018-19 school year. Our Bilateral Evaluation Committee also needs a volunteer to assist in planning the training. The volunteer will be paid for two to three planning meetings and two hours of training. If interested, contact Bilateral Evaluation Committee Chairperson Christina Kling at cmkling76@att.net.

Father's legacy ...

two children whose raft had drifted far from shore. They survived, but the rescuers were too late to save her father.

Rodriguez was on vacation with her parents at the time and shared in the unenviable task of bringing her father's body home. Two weeks later, she followed in his footsteps by signing a contract to teach at Fairview Elementary.

Rodriguez was working at Bransford Elementary in 2001 when more than 1,000 teachers in the district went on strike in a dispute over pay raises. Teachers formed picket lines at every school, including the new high school still under construction.

That the district had decided to name the school after her father did not deter Rodriguez from joining several of her colleagues to picket at the construction site. Rodriguez said many of the trucks delivering materials to the site honored the line and turned away.

Rodriguez did not need to speak to send a message to the district with her action. "We thought (district) business as usual should not happen for the nine days of the strike," she recalled. "We wanted a presence at every school, even a future school."

Had her father been alive, Rodriguez has no doubt he would have joined her in the picket line. That is why she put aside her aversion to public speaking at the 1999 meeting to make a case for the school on Red Top Road to be named in his honor, in his memory and in his legacy.

And that is why in 1996 she married Jeff Kranz, who retired from teaching in 2016. They first met when both served on our Political Action Committee. Kranz reminded Rodriguez of her father because of his passion for unions.

Kranz was on our Bargaining Team during the strike. He and his fellow committee members slept overnight on the lawn at the district office when the office was located on Pennsylvania Avenue to prove they could negotiate at any hour. As a precaution, Kranz asked his wife to be ready to post bail should he happened to be arrested.

Her father never resorted to such tactics, but the son of immigrant farm workers provided countless lessons for Rodriguez and her three siblings over the years that showed his willingness to take action for the right cause.

Lettuce and grapes were forbidden in her family's home when Rodriguez was a child because her father refused to buy produce from any farm where he believed workers were being mistreated.



Laura Rodriguez can stand out in a union crowd.

Once her father became an English teacher at Fairfield High, he supplemented his income in the summer by working at a grocery store. When teens working at the store were told to stay an hour after their shifts to clean the store without pay, Rodriguez said, her father took it upon himself to meet with the store manager to express his concerns with such a practice. Subsequently, he lost his job.

Her father also wrote letters to the editor of the newspaper in hopes of convincing the district to add college prep and advanced placement (AP) classes to benefit students.

Rodriguez was among the students who benefited once those classes came to be. She took her father's AP English class as a senior.

"He wanted all of (his children) to go to college," she said. "He wanted us to have choices in life. That's what education does. It gives you choices."

A choice of careers is what Rodriguez had after graduating from UC Berkeley. She opted to become a teacher like her father. That led to a second choice for Rodriguez. She could join our association and become an advocate for teachers' rights as her father did or play it safe by staying on the sideline.

"I can't do that," Rodriguez said, "because I'm his daughter."