



# H O M E R O O M

As we close out the decade, the history teacher in me wants to revisit this time in 2009. We flocked to see “Avatar” on the big screen or “NCIS” on the small screen: that was before cities were added to “NCIS.” The Yankees were World Series champs and we rushed out to buy the new iPhone 3GS. Michael Jackson died, and baby girls were named Isabella, Emma, Olivia, Sophia, and Ava (notice a pattern?).

I was teaching at Dover Middle School in December 2009 without any idea that Dover would be one of four schools closed six months later. I arrived there two years earlier after being one of 41 teachers involuntarily transferred to different school sites in an attempt at “union busting.”

Well, I guess that didn’t work. I’m still here, and FSUTA enters this new decade stronger and more united than any time in the past 20 years.

Challenges remain. Our members are weary from the district requiring so much of your time and energy. Managing behaviors continues to test us as we feel unsupported and spend enormous amounts of time away from curriculum to deal with disruptions. The struggle to meet the academic, social-emotional and specialized needs of our students is real.



**Nancy Dunn,  
FSUTA  
President**

Despite all this, I see our members doing fantastic things every time I visit a school. Words cannot adequately express what an honor it is for me to be the spokesperson for such a courageous, talented group of professionals supporting our students - and each other - day after day.

Our struggles to improve the learning environment for students and working conditions for teachers are ongoing. We will make gains by achieving smaller, safer class sizes when we settle our 2019-20 contract, but we will soon open a new negotiation cycle and again confront issues we have not resolved – yet.

What will the 2020s bring? It seems cliché to talk about clear vision dominating the decade, but I hope it is true for FSUTA. New leaders will emerge to move us forward as we continue to focus on what is best for our students and public education. I hope it brings new district leadership prioritizing a cooperative and collaborative working relationship with FSUTA and other bargaining units.

At some point in the coming decade, I will start the next chapter in my life with a heart full of gratitude for the opportunity to have served as your president, appreciating the friendships made along the way and taking pride in what we accomplished together.

In the words of Walt Disney, “The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.” Instead of just talking about taking some time off, actually take the time to enjoy the break and make it meaningful. It will all be here on Jan. 6.

See you in 2020 ready to envision our next decade.

# Leaving her leave alone

Her 25th year of teaching began much like the first 24 for Yolanda Martinez-Lara - at least for the first two weeks in her first-grade Dual Immersion class at B. Gale Wilson. "You're training them for the first month," she explained. "You're establishing routines, expectations and standards."

Her routine was anything but standard, however, after her 20-year-old son visited an acupuncturist in hopes of relieving the recurring pain in his right shoulder and arm. Alejandro's future of playing baseball at UC Davis and his shot at signing a professional contract will depend on his shoulder allowing him to throw a baseball without grimacing.

The acupuncturist found a lump in Alejandro's neck and advised him to have it checked. Yolanda was with her son on Oct. 3 when he learned he had thyroid cancer. And that was just two days after Yolanda's aunt passed away. Her colleagues encouraged Yolanda to take advantage of her 600-plus hours of accrued leave to be with her son during his surgery, attend her aunt's funeral and then take some time to regroup before returning to work.

She was gone for a week. That was it. Yolanda returned to work even after Alejandro underwent radiation treatment and had to be quarantined in his parents' bedroom for four days. The family prepared meals for him and left them at the bedroom door, knocking to inform him of their arrival.

Yolanda will say she returned so soon because finding a bilingual substitute for a Dual Immersion class is difficult. The real reason she came back was her students, even though she had yet to learn their names. And she did not want to continue to ask the other two first-grade teachers, Leticia Phillips and Sylvia Jurado, to continue to do her lesson plans and homework packets.

"I felt terrible. I thought, 'I'm just a taker,'" Yolanda said. "There's a lot to do in the beginning of the (school) year. You're making connections with the students and families."



**Yolanda Martinez-Lara (top) missed just two days at B. Gale Wilson after her son Alejandro, a junior at UC Davis who plays baseball, had surgery for thyroid cancer.**

**WARNING**

**TEACHERS ON WINTER BREAK**





# TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Santa's nice list has nothing on our fabulous 14 in 2019-20



Louise Craig

**Don Mosley,**  
*Armijo*

**Leticia Phillips,**  
*B. Gale Wilson*

**William Collison,**  
*Cleo Gordon*

**Angela Byland,**  
*Cordelia Hills*

**Louise Craig,**  
*Crescent*

**Alex Solomon,**  
*Crystal*

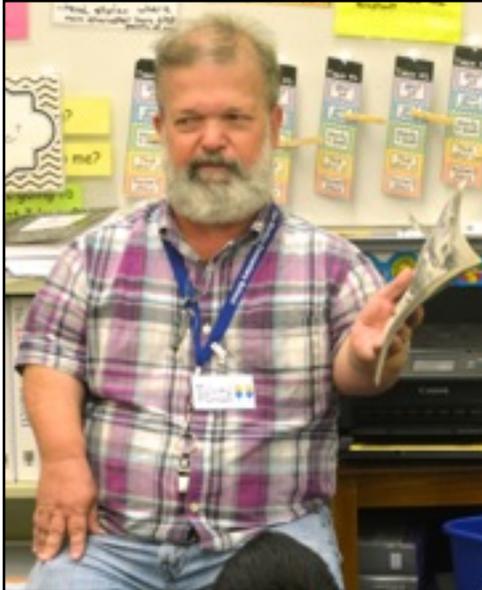
**Quintin Voyce,**  
*Early College*

**Missy Kalamaras,**  
*Fairfield High*

**Samantha Coughran,**  
*Grange*



Leticia Phillips



William Collison

**Darby Espinosa,**  
*Laurel Creek*

**Tami Gedvilas,**  
*Matt Garcia*

**Greg Aldridge,**  
*Nelda Mundy*

**Alison Ankerstar,**  
*Public Safety Academy*

**Jennifer McGuinness-Arcino,**  
*Suisun Valley*



Alex Solomon



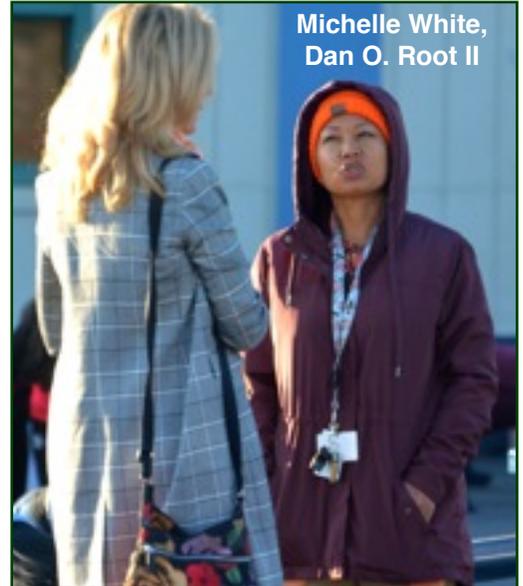
Darby Espinosa



Fairfield High



Anna  
Kyle

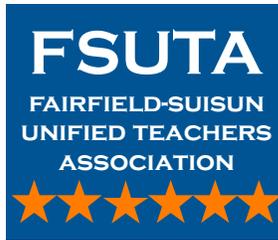


Michelle White,  
Dan O. Root II

# DECKING THE HALLS IN ORANGE



Nic Linnet (from left), Gene Bondy, Patricia Oregel and Jennifer Baker, Cordelia Hills



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