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"P" Is for Pat - Orinda's Citizen of the Year

By Laurie Snyder



"We are extremely blessed," said Mayor Amy Worth of contributions to the community made by Pat Rudebusch, who was named Orinda's 2013 Citizen of the Year March 15. Photo Ohlen Alexander said Jan Coe, Orinda Union School District Finance Advisory Committee member, as she used the letters of her colleague's name to spell out accomplishments. Susie Epstein and Linda Landau recalled how Rudebusch always put children first - whether volunteering for the schools or on behalf of Orinda's Friends of the Library.

"We certainly know it takes a village to raise a child," mused OUSD superintendent Dr. Joe Jaconette. "The corollary is that it takes a village to educate a child." Sporting a baby seal-adorned tie to remind all of Rudebusch's passion for rescuing marine mammals, Jaconette described how OUSD benefitted from her service on "a very, very productive governing team" during both flush and lean times. Wading through stacks of documents on weekends, she gave up many evenings and prized vacation time as "a skilled problem solver" without any hidden agenda. "She moderated with diplomacy, courtesy, and poise" as she shepherded support for math and literacy programs. Her interactions with others always began with, "How can I help?"

Four simple words sum up one woman's life. Four words which also personify the spirit of Orinda.

"It's all about the schools," said Mayor Amy Worth as she presented a proclamation honoring Patricia "Pat" Rudebusch March 15. Worth took turns reciting the declaration with Vice Mayor Sue Severson and Orinda City Council member Steve Glazer as part of the celebration honoring Rudebusch - Orinda's Citizen of the Year for 2013.

Glazer, a frequent collaborator with Rudebusch on K-12 education ballot initiatives, emceed the event, which was co-sponsored by the Rotary Club of Orinda and the Contra Costa Times' Lamorinda Sun. Past citizen of the year honorees, Orinda Union School District (OUSD) parents, administrators and teachers, neighbors, and Rudebusch's family and Orinda News colleagues were also on hand.

The tuxedoed Glazer, who frequently roasted his longtime friend throughout the evening, began by welcoming attendees "to the friendliest city in California." Severson and Moraga-Orinda Fire District board member Alex Evans presented resolutions from U.S. Congressman George Miller and California legislators Mark DeSaulnier and Joan Buchanan. Contra Costa County Supervisor Candace Andersen rushed in from an emergency board meeting in Martinez to commend Rudebusch for keeping Orinda's schools strong.

"It's all about the ABC's and cheering on your team,"

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