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Lamorinda bids a fond farewell to local retiring teachers and staff

The following is a list of additional retirees from the Acalanes Union High School District, the Moraga School District, and the Orinda Union School District. The Lafayette School District would not release the entire list of names of retirees without their consent, but we included one retiree's submission.

AUHSD Retirees

Acalanes High School

Robert Barter came to Acalanes High School in 2003 where he has taught Social Science for the last 14 years and has been active with the BTSA program, an advisor to the Model UN Team and participated in teacher committees to review and recommend new textbooks. Students benefited from outside guest speakers from areas such as economics, law and public policy.

Bear Begelman came to Acalanes in 2005 after teaching woodshop at Foothill Middle School in Walnut Creek. Mr. Begelman joined the Acalanes Union High School District with 25 years' experience in woodworking and teaching. He has worked with the department to setup, equip, design and modernize the fabrication lab.

Bruce Downing served the students at Acalanes High School for the last 18 years. Mr. Downing has been very active in extra-curricular activities by coaching volleyball, and an advisor for Academic Decathlon, a teacher advisor for the Acalanes Science Bowl for 15 years. In addition, notably, the Acalanes Science Bowl competed in the National Science Bowl Championship in Washington, D.C.

Susan Lane was assigned to Acalanes High School in 1999 to teach digital design. Susan also taught at the Acalanes Adult Education Center. Susan furthered her knowledge of technology by earning a Designated Subjects Vocation Credential in Technical Illustration, Computer Applications & Office Occupations by attending Diablo Valley College, Contra Costa County of Education, Mac World Expo, UC Berkeley, and various online courses.

LeeAnn Martini started with the district in 2007 as the Testing Technician at Campolindo High School. In 2010, LeeAnn was promoted to school administrative assistant at Acalanes High School, working with three principals during her tenure.

Campolindo High School

Vicki Erlan has been a fixture in the Campolindo High School community for the past 31 years and supported students as the study hall instructional assistant since September 1986.

Anne Hebert taught English and social science. Ms. Hebert's dedication to Campolindo went beyond the classroom as she actively participated in Sunshine and Staff Development. She attended workshops and conferences for professional development and participated on the leadership team and advisory board for the California History-Social Science Project.

Patricia Purvis-Thielman began her career with the district in February 2002 as a transition assistant in the Workability program. She quickly found a place to apply her technical knowledge within the technology department. In October 2002, Patty was promoted to district technician. She then became the district's web development and technology support specialist, better known as the "HELP desk."

Las Lomas High School

Ellen Smith was hired in September 1994 as the school improvement secretary at Las Lomas High School and in October 1995, she was promoted to career center coordinator, now known as college and career center advisor.

Mallorie Wilkerson joined the Las Lomas High School teaching staff in 2000 with 26 years' experience teaching Spanish in the Bay Area, and incorporated personal experiences from her studies abroad and props to capture her students' interest and enhance lessons.

Miramonte High School

Vince Dell'Aquila came to the Acalanes Union High School District in 1997 to teach physical education at Miramonte High School and has been very involved as a P.E. teacher, department chair, athletic director and head baseball coach.

Barbara Denny joined the Miramonte High School faculty in 2001 where she taught for the last 16 years, and attended workshops and took advantage of extra training in the biotech area for the benefit of her students. She modified the biotechnology labs to fit into the 50-minute periods, and was instrumental in the development of the AP Environmental Science course.

Aileen Gell taught drafting at Skyline High School for 12 years before joining Miramonte High School staff to complete her 35-year career in education. She served as department chair for Vocational Education, a WISE Mentor, and attended a multitude of workshops and conferences to improve technology in the classroom.

Deborah Hovey-LaCour joined the Acalanes Union High School District in 2001 and hired as a permanent teacher in 2002. For the past six years, Ms. Hovey-LaCour taught all levels of art and digital photography at Miramonte.

Patricia Richards finished her 14 years with the Acalanes Union High School District teaching French at Miramonte High School. She has been engaged in professional growth and development by attending workshops with focus on the French language and culture, and by traveling to French-speaking countries.

Maria Valente was promoted to Cafeteria Manager in 1999 and has served Miramonte students, staff, and AUHSD for a total of 32 years.

OUSD retirees
Rebecca Bertacchi,
District Office Account Clerk

Bronwen Horton, OIS Core Teacher

Kathy Marshall,
Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Hillery Paterson, District Art Teacher

Sally Thompson, OIS Core Teacher

MSD retirees
Joan Caraska (Rheem) Third Grade Teacher

Don Read (Joaquin Moraga) French Teacher (Teacher of the Year - 2015)

Jeanie Wieden (Los Perales) First Grade Teacher (Teacher of the Year - 2004)

Mary Bruzzone (Camino Pablo) Classroom Aide

Lorie Forshay (Los Perales) Assistant Secretary

Nancy Magdoff (Rheem) Classroom Aide

Lynn Middlebrook (Rheem) Instructional Assistant, Intensive

Cheryl Moore (Los Perales) Instructional Assistant, Learning Center

Linda Wu (Rheem) Assistant Secretary

LafSD retirees
(listed is the one submission Lamorinda Weekly received)
Susan Comber concluded 25 years of teaching music at Lafayette Elementary School last June, completing a 42-year Music Teaching career. She began teaching Graduate Music Theory classes at Holy Names University and, she says, "have been working my way down ever since."
- information compiled by John T. Miller

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