



EXCELLENCE  
IN EDUCATION  

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MERCED COUNTY

2018

**STEVEN M. TIETJEN, ED.D.**  
MERCED COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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Welcome to the Excellence in Education awards program — an evening to celebrate teachers, school employees and school administrators. Those honored tonight represent quality school employees throughout Merced County. Their vision and passion for education are shared daily with students, parents, educators and the community. The Merced County Office of Education gratefully acknowledges Educational Employees Credit Union's sponsorship of this event and its commitment to education.



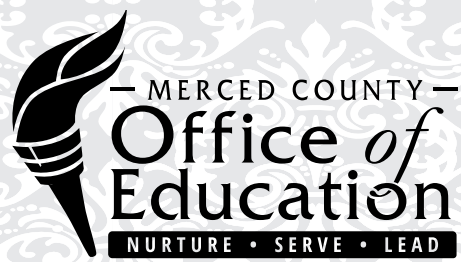
**ELIZABETH J. DOOLEY**  
PRESIDENT/CEO EDUCATIONAL EMPLOYEES CREDIT UNION

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EECU is proud to work in partnership with the Merced County Office of Education on the prestigious Excellence in Education awards program. We believe in the importance of recognizing the achievements of outstanding educators, and this special evening is a fitting tribute to their commitment to student success. In many ways, educators are some of the most influential and life-changing role models for our students. Congratulations to all of the honorees for the great work they do every day to help shape our future generations.

THIS EVENING IS  
**PROUDLY**  
SPONSORED BY



# EVENT SCHEDULE

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## WELCOME

- ◇ Dr. Steven M. Tietjen  
*Merced County Superintendent of Schools*

Elizabeth J. Dooley  
*President/CEO Education Employees Credit Union*

## NATIONAL ANTHEM

- ◇ Cossette Asenjo  
*El Capitan High School*

## FLAG SALUTE

- ◇ Lancers 4H  
*Merced, California*

## MASTER OF CEREMONIES

- ◇ Casey Steed  
*Radio Merced*

## VIDEO VIGNETTES

- ◇ METV  
*Merced County Office of Education*

## EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS CEREMONY

- ◇ Casey Steed | Dr. Steve M. Tietjen | Elizabeth J. Dooley

## RESOLUTION & CERTIFICATES

- ◇ Valley Legislators

## CLOSING REMARKS

- ◇ Dr. Steve M. Tietjen | Elizabeth J. Dooley





## EMPLOYEE HONOREES



**SUZANNE GREENWOOD**  
**Delhi Unified School District**

Suzanne is an Instructional Aide at El Capitan Elementary. Suzanne knows that keeping the lines of communication open is paramount to helping the students along with the teacher. It is her goal to show each parent how much she wants their child to succeed in life and dedicates times outside of the school day to work with her students.

**LISA CHAVEZ MISKE**  
**Gustine Unified School District**

Lisa is a Library Clerk and Instructional Aide at Romero Elementary. Students look forward to going to the library just to see Mrs. Miske. After reading time, Lisa "catches" students being polite and rewards the students with a pencil or bookmark. As a Kindergarten Aide, she is charged with helping the youngest learners begin their educational careers.



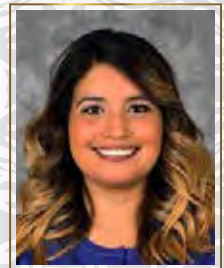
**TINA MARIE SANCHEZ**  
**Los Banos Unified School District**

Tina is the Administrative Assistant for Los Banos' newest school Creekside Junior High, but her position within the LBUSD goes far beyond that. She impacts education through her career and her volunteer roles across the community. Tina shapes the hearts of those around her with kindness, caring and the difference she makes in the lives of young people.



**MARIBELL PEREZ-AGUILAR**  
**Merced County Office of Education - Special Education**

Maribell is the Administrative Secretary for the GROW Program. Maribell's knowledge of the many functions of her program makes her important to her co-workers, students, families and the community. Maribell excels at multitasking and performs her work duties effortlessly, with positive energy and respect for her coworkers and students.



**DARON GREGSTON**  
**Merced Union High School District**

Daron is the Groundskeeper at Golden Valley High School. Coaches count on Daron to have the sports fields ready on schedule and he gets them done rain or shine. Daron approaches his work with dedication and is a reliable person whose success is largely attributed to the energetic way he approaches his work.



# TEACHER HONOREES

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**HEATHER ARNOLD**  
**Atwater Elementary School District**

Heather is a 4th grade teacher at Elmer Wood. Balancing instruction and fun in the classroom, she offers her students numerous opportunities to practice grade level standards and learn at a higher depth of knowledge. She leads a strict but fair classroom where students are encouraged to accept others for their differences and unique personalities.

**ROCHELLE COTTA**  
**Gustine Unified School District**

Rochelle is a Reading Intervention Teacher at Gustine Middle School. Rochelle is a dedicated educator who gives her absolute all for the success of her students. She is enthusiastic and vibrant in her lessons, while also maintaining a fair balance of rigor, motivation and compassion during her students high and low moments on their pathway to success.



**SONIA FALASCHI**  
**Los Banos Unified School District**

Sonia is an Agriculture Teacher at Los Banos High School with more than two decades of experience in the role. She works with students to ensure they reach their highest potential. Sonia's students create floral arrangements for weddings and school activities in addition to agricultural awareness posters and presentations to elementary schools.



**CAROLYN RODRIGUEZ**  
**Merced County Office of Education - Educational Services**

Carolyn is a Career and Technical Education Medical Pathways Instructor. She has been a tremendous asset for the Delhi Medical Academy of Science. This Academy includes both college and career courses and she has played a pivotal part in ensuring that students are highly qualified when preparing for medical careers.



**LETICIA VILLA**  
**Weaver Union School District**

Leticia teaches 4th grade at Pioneer Elementary. Leticia believes there are many rewards in teaching but the most satisfying for her is watching a student's confidence change from the day they first enter the classroom to the day they leave. Changing a student's attitude about school and raising their confidence is what makes her love going to work everyday.





## ADMINISTRATOR HONOREE



**JENNIFER L. EUKER**  
Merced Union High School District

Jennifer is the Associate Principal for Guidance and Counseling at Golden Valley High School. Jennifer's work ethic, positive recognition for students and staff, school spirit for all activities from athletics to theatre to decathlon and her positive attitude resonates not just in the counseling office, but in the entire school.

## ABOUT OUR ARTIST

Clement J. Renzi loved his family, Central California and the art of sculpting. A Visalia native and graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, he studied in Vienna at the Academy of Applied Arts, under Franz Knezl. From Vienna, the casting of bronze sculptures took Renzi to Italy, Spain and Mexico. He was especially fortunate to use the foundry of Lester Harry, a Central Valley bronze caster. Clement passed away on December 1, 2009 at the age of 84. Pictured below is Renzi's final work: a life-sized, three-figure sculpture titled "Commencement" that was installed in 2011 and adorns the entryway to the Merced County Office of Education.



**CLEMENT J. RENZI**





# EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



**JENNIFER RIVERA**  
**Atwater Elementary School District**  
**Elmer Wood Elementary School**

For two years, Jennifer was the Community Outreach Coordinator for Elmer Wood Elementary. Promoting academic success while fostering a safe, caring and supportive environment is extremely important to her. Jennifer has worked in education for nearly 10 years and has held positions in the after school program, as an instructional aide and now as a teacher. As the Community Outreach Coordinator, Jennifer felt it was important to create experiences that would inspire school spirit and pride.

One of her greatest joys was giving the 6th grade students a big send-off to junior high. The 6th grade students walk down the hallway one final time as elementary students, as the teachers and other students cheer them on. Her pride about this event comes from the joy on the faces of the students making that transition and knowing they are supported and loved but also from the excitement of the other students looking toward their future. When asked about Jenny, staff said "She does it ALL with a great attitude and smile. She loves children, and the feelings are mutual."





# ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR



Rosa is a Program Manager for the Early Education Department at MCOE. Rosa feels that working in the Early Education Department Administration is like going on an adventure every day. Each day brings new information, families, child care providers and opportunities to make a difference. One of Rosa's strengths is her ability to bring the community together around the programs that she has developed, like the Parent Leadership Training Institute. The PLTI is a 20-week civic engagement program to equip families with the tools to support their children both in school and in the community.



**ROSA BARRAGAN**  
**Merced County Office of Education**  
**Early Education**

Rosa organized the first Merced County Parent Institute and in five years, the Institute grew from 150 parents to more than 500 parents. Rosa was selected as the 2018 Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Latina Woman of the Year where she was recognized for her exemplary service to the community. Rosa is humble, genuinely kind and the type of person that people gravitate toward. Coworkers and colleagues want to be part of her passion for serving and advocating for children and families.





# TEACHER OF THE YEAR



**JANIS EDWARDS**  
**Merced Union High School District**  
**Livingston High School**

Janis is a Teacher Librarian at Livingston High School. Janis believes teaching should be a labor of love: love of the students who may not have it from anywhere else, love of the subjects and content as they must show their passion to inspire the students; and love of the pride the students show when they are successful. Janis loves her job and strives to find the "ah-ha" moments every day. Through LCAP funding, Janis was able to expand the Library Media Center to include a Maker Lab with tools that might not normally be accessible to her students.

The excitement at being immersed in the virtual reality system, designing and creating content with 3D printers, using a laser or sewing machine to create a unique piece, or learning how to edit videos are concepts that students can explore with wonder. Janis' message to other educators is to be vulnerable. "Be open with your students. Fail with flair and own it, then use that failure to grow."



# SPECIAL THANKS

## SELECTION COMMITTEE

Steve Roussos | Irene Beattie

## AWARD ARTIST

Clement J. Renzi

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Casey Steed

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