

**COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING**

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## **TEACHING COMMISSION HONORS EDUVINA BENAVIDES SMITH ON 'DAY OF THE TEACHER'**

**SACRAMENTO** – First grade teacher Eduvina Benavides Smith was honored May 6, 2004 with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing's 'Day of the Teacher Award'. Selected this year by Secretary for Education, Richard Riordan, Benavides Smith exemplifies the dedicated teachers of this state who go the extra mile to ensure the success of their students.

Assistant Secretary for Higher Education, Anne McKinney, representing Secretary Riordan, presented the award and noted that as a former teacher herself, she has a high regard for the skills and knowledge it takes to become a great teacher like Benavides Smith.

A long time first grade teacher at Wilkerson Elementary School in the El Monte City School District, Benavides Smith teaches children who are new to the English language. She is a firm believer that all students can learn given the right learning opportunities. Wilkerson Elementary is a school in which 84% of the students are English learners and 91% of the students qualify for the federal free lunch program.

Principal of Wilkerson Elementary School, Trudy Torrence, said, "Eduvina exemplifies everything a professional teacher should be. She possesses an awesome knowledge base of curriculum and instructional strategies; she is a wonderful role model; she willingly shares her expertise and talents with others and most importantly, her passion and love of children always shines through everything she does."

Torrence shared that Benavides Smith rents her own storage space to keep her wealth of teaching materials. She provides all of her students with the supplies they need for school, including backpacks for fieldtrips and learning materials for parents to use with their children at home.

The first in her family to attend college, Benavides Smith began her teaching career in 1969 upon graduation from Texas Women's University with a major in Education and minors in Spanish and Reading. She is one of the first teachers in the country to earn a credential in bilingual education. She later earned a Master's Degree in Multicultural Studies and Bilingual Education from the University of San Francisco. She continued her teaching when her husband's job in the military found them transferred to Frankfurt, Germany where she taught GED classes to soldiers. Upon return to the States, she taught in Salinas, California before settling at El Monte City School District in 1981 where she has taught first grade for 19 years.

Her expertise in bilingual education has resulted in videotaped and televised examples of her teaching for use in professional development programs for both new and experienced teachers.

“Our honoree sets the standard through her dedication to quality instruction, her commitment to professional development, and her belief that all children can learn. Her knowledge offers insight into the personal qualities, life experiences, and specialized skills that factor into the art of teaching,” stated the Chair of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Lawrence H. Madkins, Jr.

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