



Multi-Cultural Community Council

★ To Yolo County DA Jeff Reisig

Jeff Reisig
District Attorney

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tessa Smith
Chairperson

DA's Multi-Cultural Community Council Honors Citizens

Laura Valdes
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Lucinda Talkington

Jenny Tan

Clarence Van Hook

Doris Wo

Woodland, CA - September 12, 2019 District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that the Yolo County District Attorney's Multi-Cultural Community Council (MCCC) honored a dozen Yolo County citizens in five different categories at the 6th annual MCCC Justice Leadership Awards luncheon which was held today at the Yolo County's Administration Building Atrium in Woodland.

The awards luncheon focuses on recognizing individuals or organizations who promote multi-cultural relationships, acceptance and peace; forge diverse coalitions to assure ongoing community dialogue related to cultural awareness, the criminal justice system, and public safety; and ensure multi-cultural community participation in educational and informational programs related to accessing, understanding and providing input to the criminal justice system. In addition to the MCCC awards, each recipient was given a recognition award from Senator Bill Dodd, Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, and Congressman John Garamendi.

In his opening remarks Reisig stated that the MCCC was born nearly 10 years ago from discussions with Yolo County Office of Education Superintendent Dr. Jesse Ortiz. They discussed how law enforcement could do a better job of working in the community by engaging people with diverse cultural backgrounds. The mission of the Yolo County's MCCC is to enrich understanding of Yolo County's diverse population and to celebrate how cultural knowledge expands our ability to accept and appreciate differences. The MCCC is made up of individuals from throughout Yolo County.

MCCC Chair, and Health and Human Services employee, Tessa Smith talked about how the MCCC "has reached out and touched folks in the community and made us stronger together." She also said when contacting today's honorees, she couldn't believe their humility as each of them said "Who me? I am being honored?" She introduced MCCC member Larry Love who is the Pastor at the Christian Church of Woodland. He presented the "Faith Based" award to Sylvina Frausto who works at the Holy Rosary Church in Woodland. Frausto spends

countless hours working on behalf of vulnerable community members and has been called “the conscience of Woodland.” Frausto told the audience “you have to keep doing as much as you can. All of you have a call to help one another.”

MCCC member Rhea Gardner, who is the teen librarian at the Woodland Library, presented a second “Faith Based” award to Matt Van Peurse, who is the lead pastor at the Catalyist Church in Woodland and is a member of the Woodland Police Department’s Chaplain team. He is often called upon to inform next of kin that a loved one has passed away. Peurse said he often asks himself what does love require. “To give of my time and myself for someone else.”

Tessa Smith came back to the podium to honor Kate Snow in the Public Schools category. Snow is the Climate Coordinator at Davis Joint Unified School District. Charged with the continuing development, cultivation, and promotion of peak learning environments for all district schools K through 12, Snow greets this task daily with determination, dedication, and creative forward thinking. Whether it's one on one, or group engagement, Snow brings empathy and cultural humility to every interaction with students, families, and staff. In accepting the award, Snow said we don’t do this work alone, we do it with the people around us.”

Next, MCCC member, and Yolo County Communications Director, Jenny Tan presented the Human Services award to Dena Rothman on behalf of the Travis Credit Union. Travis Credit Union was recently recognized by Woodland Community College as the largest donor of the year for the Ethnic Studies Department. Travis Credit Union also launched a Hispanic Initiative and created a Diversity position in 2019 solely focused on engaging multi-cultural organizations. Rothman said that Travis Credit Union has three awesome causes which include Education, Literacy and Advocacy. She went on to say that this award is "special because it recognizes our advocacy."

West Sacramento resident Alfred Melbourne was honored by MCCC member and Chief Deputy, Jonathan Raven, in the Human Services category. Melbourne founded the Three Sisters Gardens in Broderick. The urban garden is unique in that it is based upon traditional Native American teachings of protecting Mother Earth and respecting living things. It also helps address food insecurity within the community. Melbourne told the audience that “we are grateful for the council’s recognition of programs which bring people together, promote productive labor, and provide healthy food and interactions with vulnerable communities.” He concluded that he “hopes our Yolo DA’s office continues to expand its efforts and investments in prevention, supportive sentencing for those in recovery, and reasonable sentencing.”

The last honoree was the Woodland Police Department’s Unidos Program. Interim Police Chief Derrek Kaff accepted the award on behalf of the team. The Unidos programs mission is to open the lines of communication between the City’s Spanish speaking residents and the police department. Unidos holds community meetings, which are delivered in Spanish, about community issues. This program has helped develop trust between the police department and the Latino community. “Language shouldn’t be a barrier in between us and the services we provide,” said Kaff. “We are very proud of the success of this program which was started by former Woodland Police Chief, Luis Soler.”

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