



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Teacher of teachers honored with CSU award

By Triveni Sheshadri

UNION-TRIBUNE COMMUNITY NEWS WRITER

July 3, 2005

SAN MARCOS – Laurie Stowell found herself teaching middle school mostly by accident rather than design.

"I was one of those who drifted into it," said Stowell, who began her career teaching elementary school. "I was a little nervous at first."

As time went on, she was less intimidated and more comfortable among sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders. Before long, she felt she truly belonged in middle school.

"I just loved that age," Stowell said.

She is still involved in middle school education, though in a different role. She is a professor of education at California State University San Marcos, where she instructs students preparing to become middle school teachers.

On campus, Stowell is known as an accessible, sought-after adviser. She also directs a writing program for teachers and is involved in literacy programs in local schools.

Her innovative work has earned her the 2005 Wang Family Excellence Award. She is one of five winners.

Established in 1998 by former CSU trustee Stanley T. Wang, the award recognizes exceptional faculty and administrators in the California State University system. Stowell, the first recipient from CSUSM, received \$20,000.

When she was nominated for the award, Stowell knew she would be competing with faculty members at Cal State campuses with a lot more experience.

"I didn't think we had a chance," she said. "I have had a long career, but not at CSU. I was humbled and surprised."

Stowell said the award was not just a recognition of her, but all faculty members at Cal State San Marcos.

"I have so many colleagues doing a lot of good stuff here. There are so many good folks. And we all work as a team."

Stowell knew she wanted to be a teacher early on.

"I was one of those children who played school all the time," she said.

She became an elementary teacher and later found herself teaching at the middle school level. She earned her doctorate and taught for several years in Ohio before coming to CSUSM in 1992. It was an exciting time at the fledgling campus, she recalled.

"Everybody here created everything."

At the College of Education, Stowell's previous experience as a middle school teacher was a valuable asset as she worked with a faculty team to start the middle level credential program.

Stowell said the goal of the program was to motivate and train teachers who work in the often overlooked middle school grades.

"It's the time of greatest growth. You can have the most impact," she said.

She was one among a faculty team instrumental in establishing the Gateway Center for Middle Level Education at Woodland Park Middle School in 2003. Stowell and her colleagues secured \$275,000 in grants to open the center, dedicated to training student teachers in a middle school environment.

Stowell is recognized as an expert in teaching writing. She directs the San Marcos Writing Project, part of the National Writing Project. The program was established at CSUSM to help K-12 teachers build on their skills in teaching writing.

She received the Cal State San Marcos Brakebill Award as Outstanding Professor in 1997 and was named the county's Educator of the Year by the California League of Middle Schools in 2003. She is coauthoring a textbook on teaching writing.

As she reflected on her career, Stowell said she felt fortunate.

"I feel very lucky to be able to do the work I do."

Find this article at:

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/northcounty/20050703-9999-m1m03tfsm.html>



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.