

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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Media Alert

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**Tulare County Office of Education Announces:
Educators of the Year to be Honored at the 16th Annual
Confucius' Birthday Celebration at Chinese Cultural Center
September 24, 2009 • 6:00 p.m. • Chinese Cultural Center • 500 S. Akers St., Visalia**

Colleagues, family members and dignitaries invited to the 16th Annual Confucius' Birthday/Educators of the Year Celebration, September 24, will join in honoring three of Tulare County's best teachers. The ceremony – which will be held at the Central California Chinese Cultural Center in Visalia – continues the long tradition of celebrating the careers of educators on the birthday of China's great philosopher and advocate for universal education — Confucius. “Each year, we have the privilege of recognizing three outstanding teachers for their compassion, creativity and dedication,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “As a community, it is so important that we take time to honor the men and women of Tulare County who devote their lives to teaching our children.”

Each year, the Tulare County Office of Education and the Chinese Cultural Center work together to select one elementary, one middle and one high school teacher for the award. This year's honorees include: Linda Warner from Three Rivers Union Elementary School; Dean Miller from

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Palo Verde Union Elementary School and Nancy Wills from Lindsay High School.

Elementary School Teacher of the Year – Linda Warner Three Rivers Union Elementary

Linda Warner is a third/fourth-grade teacher at Three Rivers Elementary. She was first employed by the Three Rivers district from 1976 -1978 as a teacher's aide. She returned to the district in 1986 and has served as a teacher's aide, a bus driver and a teacher. Mrs. Warner's classroom is an engaging place where students are challenged and nurtured. Her love of nature is evident in her involvement in the school's garden and a trout care program. "Our future as a society depends on youth who can reason, problem-solve, communicate, and feel," says Linda Warner. "As teachers, we have the responsibility to cultivate a love of knowledge and self-worth in all children."

Middle School Teacher of the Year – Dean Miller, Palo Verde Union Elementary

Dean Miller is a seventh/eighth-grade science teacher at Palo Verde Union Elementary in Tulare. His goal is to convey an excitement that will increase students' interest in future science classes, competitions or careers, as well as help them make their education a higher priority. "When students become life-long learners, everyone benefits," he says. "Producing good citizens is one of my primary teaching goals." In addition to his responsibilities as a science teacher, he continues to be a trainer and support provider for beginning teachers and is his school's Science Olympiad coach.

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High School Teacher of the Year – Nancy Wills, Lindsay High School

Nancy Wills is a music teacher at Lindsay High School. She is respected within the community for her ability to reach students who have had limited success in school and – through her guitar ensemble class – draw out their personal best. "My hope is that as students learn through self-discipline and diligence that their efforts will result in continuous improvement; they will begin to apply those same traits to other areas of study and life; and they can, indeed, learn more than they believed possible," she says.

For information on the Educators of the Year honors, contact Robert Herman at (559) 733-6606.

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