

## **Karen Philip Receives California Schoolmasters' Club Educator of the Year Award**

When David Nigel, secretary of the California Schoolmasters' Club and retired Burlingame teacher, asked Jim Cannon, San Mateo County School Board trustee, to recommend a San Mateo County educator to receive the California Schoolmasters' Club award, Cannon without hesitation suggested Karen Philip, retiring deputy superintendent at the San Mateo County Office of Education.

"It was a no-brainer," says Cannon. "Karen has done an amazing job and taken the position to a new level. She has set very high standards and we have tremendous gratitude for the work she has done at the County Office."

On March 4, 2011, Philip was honored at the California Schoolmasters' Club Annual Awards dinner in Napa as the San Mateo County educator of the year. Present at the dinner were 180 attendees from nine counties in Northern California, including 15 other honorees from districts across Northern California. Anne Campbell, San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools, gave a brief introduction and showed a short video, highlighting Philip's achievements as an educator in San Mateo County for 38 years. Philip in turn spoke, thanking the County Office staff, the prior districts in the county where she has served and her family for this honor.

Philip has had a long and illustrious career in San Mateo County, starting out as a teacher and then speech and language specialist in the South San Francisco School District. After earning a second master's degree, she became a principal. She later joined the Millbrae School District as assistant superintendent and then superintendent, a post she held for 15 years.

In 2007 she became deputy superintendent of student services at the San Mateo County Office of Education with responsibility for special education, court and community schools, foster youth and the Regional Occupational Program (ROP). She has also served on various boards, commissions and committees throughout San Mateo County. "She has handled the transition seamlessly, going from an executive position in Millbrae to a support position at the County Office," notes Cannon. "She has been very supportive and loyal to both Jean Holbrook (former County Superintendent) and Anne Campbell, and to the board as well."

The California Schoolmasters' Club, established in 1893, is California's second oldest educators' association. Its membership is open to all Northern California educators. "It began as an organization for elite educators from UC Berkeley and Stanford, and in the early years no women were allowed," says Nigel, who is currently secretary and served as the club's president in 1984. He is the only San Mateo County educator on the club's board of directors. "In 1929 the club expanded to include a larger group of teachers, and hosted meetings with dynamic speakers. Then in 1984 the focus changed to honoring educators at an annual dinner."

Changing the focus to honoring educators was the brainchild of Dr. Virgil S. Hollis, Marin County Superintendent of Schools from 1959 to 1982. Dr. Hollis realized that education did a poor job of publicizing its successes and recognizing outstanding educators in the profession. He was also disturbed by the tendency of the media to report negatively on education, while ignoring the positives.