Gibby: ‘I Just Do What I Love’

Math Chair Cheryl Gibby is Orange County’s Teacher of the Year.

Cheryl Gibby has been selected as Orange County’s community college teacher of the year by the Orange County Department of Education. Gibby is the Math Department Chair at Cypress College.

The award — which includes a $15,000 cash gift — is sponsored by the James Hines Foundation, and William and Sue Gross of Laguna Beach. Additional sponsors include the Orange County Teachers Federal Credit Union, Disneyland and the Orange County Register.

“I just do what I love,” Gibby told Orange County Superintendent of Schools William Habermehl when he informed her of the honor at a small ceremony held on Friday, May 17.

Gibby’s dean, Larry Mercadante, added, “She asked to teach entry-level math courses so students could have a foundation for all the classes that follow. She is a dedicated teacher who is admired and respected by her students.”

Dr. Lewis agreed.

In the 12 years she has been at Cypress College, Gibby has taught basic math, pre-algebra, elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, liberal arts mathematics and business calculus. She has been the department chair since October, 2000.

Student Christy Montenegro has enrolled in two of Gibby’s classes. Montenegro says that math is not her strong subject, but Gibby gives her opportunities to excel.

“She has taught me that math is not always about numbers, it is a process,” Montenegro said, in an essay nominating Gibby for the award. “I now understand why they teach math you think you won’t use later.”

Gibby, an educator for 30-plus years, has also been a part-time faculty member at Fullerton College and at Cal State Fullerton.

She was a math teacher and department chair for a decade at Mission Viejo High School and taught math at Lake Forest’s Serrano Intermediate School and Hilton D. Bell Junior High in Garden Grove.

Gibby earned her bachelor’s degree at Cal State Long Beach and her master’s at Cal State Fullerton. She also completed a certificate program in computers at UCI.

In 1996, she received the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Excellence Award and was recognized for being a California nominee for the “Presidential Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics.”

Gibby was honored as the Southern California Edison Outstanding Teacher in 1988.

She is a member of several professional organizations, including the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.
Graduate of the Year is Sarah Bitle

Sarah Bitle, this year’s Outstanding Graduate, has maintained a 4.0 GPA while holding two jobs, volunteering, and participating in college athletics.

Bitle received the MVP award for the swim team in 2001 and this year she is in the running for the MVP award and the Scholar Athlete award. After graduation, Bitle plans to attend UC Santa Barbara and aspires to be a teacher of the humanities.

Bitle says her goal is to become bilingual in order to reach more students and share the joy of learning with the next generation.

Bitle worked on campus as a Supplemental Instruction Leader and is a member of the Alpha Gamma Sigma club.

After witnessing teachers so dedicated to their courses of study, Bitle says she cannot help but follow in their footsteps.

Chief Sellers is Alumnus of the Year

Chief Michael Sellers has a 25-plus-year record of distinguished service to the community. For the last five years he has headed of the Seal Beach Police Department. He is the 2002 Alumnus of the Year.

Chief Sellers has been a captain in the Los Alamitos and La Palma police departments and is a graduate of the F.B.I. National Academy and the California Command College. He also was recently selected to be the next president of the Orange County Chief’s and Sheriff’s Association and was recruited to teach at Cal State Long Beach, where he also is a mentor to police and fire majors at Cal State Long Beach.

“I have always held the time I spent at Cypress College as an educational turning point in my life,” Chief Sellers said. “It was because of caring staff members and faculty at Cypress College that I was able to turn around any more veager high school academic record. If someone had asked me, when I finished high school, if I would go on to college and get an A.A. degree, I would have downplayed the thought. Now, many years later, with two master’s degrees and a great career, I point to Cypress College as the school that helped me realize the importance of higher education.”

Hortensia Modregon is Apple of Gold Nominee

Twenty-five years after enrolling as a student, Hortensia Modregon is the Cypress College nominee for the Hispanic Education Endowment Fund 2002 Apple of Gold Award.

Modregon began her career in the EOPS office in 1981. She is currently the program supervisor, who coordinates peer programs while reaching out into the community to recruit students.

Modregon is heavily involved within the community, encouraging Hispanic students and their families to pursue higher education.

“In English and Spanish, she talks to these students and to their parents, helping them navigate the confusing world of college admissions and financial aid applications,” Dr. Lewis said. “Countless students are college graduates because of her efforts on their behalf.”

$45,000 in Scholarships Granted to 180 Students

More than 180 students were given scholarships Monday at the 2002 Scholarships Awards Presentation.

During the presentation, $45,000 was given to students representing divisions across the campus. Throughout the year, $150,000 is given to students to assist them in furthering their education. Dr. Lewis told students that the best way to pay back the favor is to become a donor in the future.

Employees of the Year Selected for 2001-2002

Jose Siordia — “the ultimate co-worker, always kind, considerate and hard working,” according to the nominating committee — is the Classified Employee of the Year.

The Academic Senate selected Ellen Berger, Fine Arts, as the Outstanding Full-Time Faculty Award recipient. Joan King, Health Science, is the Outstanding Adjunct Faculty member. Tony Jones, Vo Tech, earned the Faculty Development Award.