

OJUHSD's

Leader

Conrotto,

18 May 83

Barker

honored

By MARK ARCAMONTE

Staff Writer

Oakdale High School teacher Eugene Conrotto was one of 24 people honored with the School Bell Award during a dinner ceremony Friday sponsored by the California Teachers Association's Stanislaus UniServ Unit.

Conrotto, an instructor at Oakdale High School for the past 17 years, was nominated because of his outstanding contributions to education in GATE 9 and 10 course, which he teaches. The classes are part of the Gifted and Talented Education curriculum reserved for accelerated learning students.

"I enjoy young people, and I enjoy the classroom. I think it's kind of exciting teaching," said Conrotto.

Conrotto has seen a lot of students come and go during his years at OHS, and said that basically their characteristics remain the same.

"I don't think I've seen any fundamental changes, kids are kids," he said.

"The greatest thing that happened this year is that we were doing a unit on poetry...and one day this huge argument erupted in class and I thought we were going to have a riot," said Conrotto, explaining that most of the students were athletes and relatively large for their ages.

"Then a visitor came in and asked what the problem was, and a kid answered 'he said my poem didn't rhyme,' while pointing to one of the other students."

Conrotto has also been active in the Oakdale District Organization of Classroom Teachers, and is a former negotiator for the teachers' union.

"I've always been active in the union. I'm a union activist. I negotiated the last contract with the district and I believe that without teacher autonomy, public education in general and in Oakdale in particular, is in for some hard times," he said, citing the expense of maintaining a separate high school in Riverbank as "an unnecessary drain" on the district.

Riverbank High School instructor Jim Barker was also honored by the local chapter of the California Teachers Association for his outstanding contributions to education.

Barker has taught social studies, with an emphasis on history, at RHS for 21 years, and plans on teaching for another nine years before retiring, he said.

"I'm beginning to get the children of some of the students that I've had," said Barker, noting that as an interesting facet of his career.

"The honor, the humility, the satisfaction I feel as being singled out by my peers is pleasant, to say the least," said Barker of his being one of the 24 nominees who received School Bell Awards.

"As one of the other recipients said, 'There is no greater honor than being honored by your peers.'"

"Besides what we've done

academically and in our curriculum, I've been active in the CTA on the local, county and state levels," said Barker.

Barker says that students in his government classes continue showing an interest in the United States Constitution, and most often have questions about constitutionality in relation to police activities.

"I try to blend the two: This is what the Constitution says, but as long as people are bigger than you, or have authority over you, they can break your rights," said Barker, adding that he also explains to students that somewhere along the course of events they may be able to invoke their rights to a sympathetic ear.

Of the 24 who received School Bell Awards and were also nominees for the Golden Bell Award, Cornelia Leach, who teaches at Chrysler Elementary School in Modesto, won it.

In addition to Conrotto and Barker, Oakdale Union Elementary School District teachers Pam Antinetti and Linda Meyer were honored. They were featured in the Leader three weeks ago.

Others lauded at Friday's ceremony were Don and Martha Wilson, and Jeanne Cahoon, all three active in the Riverbank Teachers Association.