

Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield

Dolores “Dee” Whitley



Dolores “Dee” Whitley has an amazing heart of boundless service—service in the classroom, service in the community, and service in her church. Dee brings passion to her insightful vision and ardent dedication in the vast arenas that enrich lives in our community.

Dee knew from the beginning of her education in the Berkeley Public Schools that she wanted to become an elementary school teacher. She attended the University of California, Berkeley and received her Bachelor of Arts and California Life Teaching Credential from Cal. Dee began her teaching career as a first grade teacher in the Richmond School District. Her husband’s service in the Army took Dee to Chinon, France, where she taught Army dependent children on an Army base in the beautiful Loire Valley.

Returning from France, Dee resumed study at University of California, Berkeley before being hired by University of California, Riverside as a Supervisor of Elementary Education. After the birth of her children, Dee taught first grade and later both she and her husband Jim joined the staff at California State University, Bakersfield—Jim as a professor and Dee as supervisor of elementary education, assisting student teachers all over Kern County. It was during these years that Dee completed a Master’s Degree in Reading/Language Arts and an Administrative Credential. Her love of young children took her back to the classroom as a fourth grade teacher in the Panama Buena Vista School District. She taught primary grades and became a mentor teacher, combining the joy that comes in helping both primary students, as well as teachers. Dee served as principal of Van Horn School and Christa McAuliffe. McAuliffe School became a California Distinguished School and Dee was awarded Principal of the Year by the Association of California School Administrators. Dee also provided field supervision for the student teachers of

La Verne University. After 34 years of service in education, Dee retired.

Retirement meant serving as a three-term Panama Buena Vista School District trustee, as a member of the Delegate Assembly, California School Board Association, and continuing her service in education as a prolific community volunteer. Dee serves as a classroom volunteer at Pioneer Drive School, on several CSUB advisory committees, on the Women’s and Girls’ Fund grants allocation committee, as Director of Education and Government of Kern County League of Women Voters, as Social Service Chairman of PEO, and as Sustaining Member of Junior League. A member of Grace Episcopal Parish, Dee belongs to the Daughters of the King, whose Rule of Life is prayer and service. She is a Lay Eucharistic Minister, serving at the altar and taking Eucharist to home-bound parishioners. Dee actively engages in projects supporting the Bakersfield Homeless Center, Ricky’s Retreat, and emancipating foster youth at the Dream Center and Covenant Community Services.

Dee met her future husband Jim in a speech class at Cal and at a fraternity/sorority party. Married in 1954, they have traveled the world together and have a son, Scott Sackett Whitley, and a daughter, Colleen Anne Whitley. Dee’s favorite indulgences are chocolate and travel and more travel!