



Jim Shelby Class of 2020

Jim taught in the Oroville Union High School District (OUHSD) for 36 years, all at Las Plumas High School (LPHS). Most of his career he spent teaching social studies and serving as department chair. He also taught psychology, United States History and government and coached freshman football and wrestling. Throughout his career, Jim served as mentor to many new LPHS staff and Chico State student teachers. He was widely known as an outstanding master teacher and it was considered an honor by student teachers when they were assigned to Jim. Kiwanis International recognized Jim for 25 years' service to OHS Key Club, a student group known for its community service.

One of Jim's most significant contributions to LPHS was his work with the Mock Trial Team, which he founded and coached for 27 years. Jim, and different colleagues over the years, worked with students after school and on weekends preparing them for local and state debates. His teams had memorable debates with Pleasant Valley High School of Chico and the school teams were most definitely arch-rivals over the years. His teams were perennial champions at the Butte County level and competed at the California State level numerous times under his tutelage. Jim continues to be involved with the Mock Trial Team, even though he officially retired in 2001.

Jim was widely honored and recognized over his 36 years at LPHS. Among the honors he received were, "Favorite Teacher of the Year" and "Teacher of the Month", nominations he received from his colleagues. Students often asked him to speak at their commencement exercises as he was known for his humor and wit.

One of the criteria for an OUHSD employee for Hall of Fame nomination is that the nominee has led an exemplary life of community service and Jim most definitely has, and continues that service. He is an honored member and docent for the Bolt Antique Museum in Oroville and recently had his book "A History of the Bolt Antique Tool Museum" published. He also finds time to serve as editor and writer of the Oroville City Museum's Newsletter, something he's done since 2006. Other books he has written and published are "One Teacher's Journey", actually written while he was still teaching, and "For Billy".

Jim served on the Board of the Butte County Mosquito Abatement District and was president of the Oroville Area Democratic Club, and known as a leader of that party for many years. Jim is also widely requested to speak at local lunch clubs and organizations, and along with docent duties at the Bolt Museum, also donates time at the Butte County Historical Museum. He also once co-hosted book review shows on KRBS FM radio, is a member of Write-On, an Oroville writers' group, and has taught Sunday School at his church.

A few years ago, Jim became involved with Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), an institution celebrating 25 years of lifelong learning and established at California State University, Chico (CSUC) in 2007. It schedules classes for people either retired or over age 50. In addition to his being a peer leader and public relations person for OLLI, and speaking to groups about the program, he also teaches classes about the formation of the United States Constitution and never lets the discussion turn into partisan politics.

Ten of Jim's colleagues stepped up and wrote letters of support for his OUHSD Hall of Fame nomination. Colleague Cristian Bruce, LPHS English teacher and highly successful Academic Decathlon coach wrote, "*Jim Shelby is everything an educator should be: a community leader, an inspiring mentor, a consummate professional, and a trusted colleague. Our school, community, city, and county are better for having him in it.*"

Nannette Walker, retired OUHSD teacher and trustee wrote, "*I met Jim on my first visit to LPHS as a student teacher. He was highly recommended to me by my college advisor. As I sat in his class, I realized what a gem Jim was. He was relaxed, totally in-control of his classroom and had the respect and admiration of his entire class.*"

Tin Chew, retired LPHS teacher, and Mock Trial Co-coach with Jim, wrote: "*In my 35 years as a public educator with the Oroville Union High School District, I know of no teacher, administrator, or staff personnel that has been more active and hands on with young students, both as an active teacher and in retirement, than James Shelby.*"

Jim makes his home in Oroville with his wife Bridget.