Yolo librarian honored as ‘Woman of the Year’

Senator Lois Wolk honored Patty Wong of Yolo County and PJ Davis of Solano County as the 5th Senate District’s 2009 Women of the Year Tuesday at a private ceremony at Wolk’s District Office in Vacaville.

“These are strong, smart women who have profoundly affected this community,” said Wolk, who honored the women’s contributions as part of the Senate’s celebration of Women’s History Month. “I am proud to honor their ongoing service and dedication.”

Every March, the state Senate celebrates Women’s History Month by honoring women whose contributions improve lives in their communities—a tradition dating back to 1987.

Wong, Wolk’s Yolo County honoree, is a 26-year veteran in the field of library services who has dedicated her life to improving library access.

“Libraries are the heart of a community. They are a community institution,” Wong said. “I’ve made it my priority to build bridges and work with community leaders to ensure that everyone in our diverse community, especially the underserved have the opportunity to enjoy all that our libraries have to offer.”

Wong has been instrumental in overseeing the construction and opening of two new libraries in Winters and West Sacramento as well as major renovations at the Stephens Davis Branch Library since being appointed Yolo County Librarian and Chief Archivist in 2008. Under her direction, close to $500,000 in grants have successfully enhanced library operations. In addition to her work with the county, Wong works as a part-time faculty member at both the School of Library and Information Science at San Jose State University and at the iSchool at Drexel University in Sacramento and consults libraries on techniques for fundraising and working with local communities to improve access.

Wong also works in a variety of capacities with library groups including the California Library Association, Chinese American Librarians Association, and REFORMA—an association that promotes library services to Spanish-speaking Americans. She served as president of the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association in 1999, and is currently providing frontline advocacy for the value of librarians and library staff as co-chair of the American Library Association Presidential Initiative Planning Committee, under President Camila Alire.

PJ Davis, Wolk’s Solano County recipient, left a successful career in banking to work in social services. She worked for 15 years with Dixon Family Services, and is currently the Executive Director of the Community Action Partnership of Solano, a nonprofit that provides administrative support, including grant writing and green certification, to other nonprofits in Solano County.

“Through our efforts, we strengthen agencies moving people out of poverty,” said Davis, who has acquired almost $500,000 in federal stimulus funding for the group, started a career building program, and added additional staff to expand services. “We improve the sustainability of nonprofit and faith-based organizations in Solano County so they can successfully and creatively provide services to the county’s homeless and low-income residents with dignity and honor.”

Davis is also the owner and CEO of the consulting firm PJ Davis & Associates and provides courses in nonprofit startup and management and offers technical and administrative assistance.