

# ***GSDSEF NewsNote***

Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair

P.O. Box 120191, San Diego, CA 92112-0191

[www.gsdsef.org](http://www.gsdsef.org)

VOLUME 13

SPECIAL MEMORIAL EDITION

MAY 2002



## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **HOWARD WEISBROD**

**Founder of the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair (GSDSEF)**

**6/17/1910 - 5/23/2002**

A memorial service will be held on June 9 at 12:30pm at the United Methodist Church in Mission Valley. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair (c/o Lynne Durkee P.O. Box 120191, San Diego, CA 92112-0191). An annual award will be presented at the GSDSEF in his honor.

Who, exactly, was Howard?

For starters, listen to one of his former students:

"He was to me, first, my high school (Kearny) biology teacher and had our relationship ended there I would still be the richer, my life enhanced by the memory of 'that one special teacher.' He spurred and encouraged my interest in both science and college, interests that led eventually to a career in engineering. I remember, especially, his

ability to make learning exciting and challenging, his willingness to 'be there' when his students needed him -- in and out of class, and his obvious belief that 'kids are people, too.' In a community of low-income families and government housing, an area where the primary opportunities offered kids were those to get into trouble, he ran a youth club, involved students in the landscaping of their school, sponsored trips to southern California colleges and opened his home and his heart to youngsters seeking help, advice or simply a chance to talk."

The bare-bones facts of Howard's career are exciting in themselves:

- Thirty-seven years a science educator
- Forty-eight years a vital part of the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair

*"Dr. Watson Davis and his associates at Science Service in Washington D.C. had started several Fairs in the east and were hoping the concept could be expanded nationwide," Howard once explained. "I had held three school fairs at Kearny High and was eager to help organize a county one. With the support (financial and volunteer workers) of businesses, industry, education and other friends of science, we were soon a going concern." The first Fair, which had close to a hundred entries, was held, April 15 - 19, 1955.*

*The seeds of success were planted that first year. The students learned from observation and, spurred by participation and competition, began the evolutionary journey that led to the sophisticated projects which today amaze visitors.*

*Community involvement remains the cornerstone of the GSDSEF's success. This involvement takes many forms - from operating expenses, "the use of the hall" and prize money to uncounted hours of work by the hundreds of people (teachers, judges, advisors, tour sponsors and the dedicated team of volunteers who comprise the Fair's Management Committee).*

*The results of all this interest and effort? GSDSEF exhibitors have, through the years, amassed an enviable record of participation in and success at, among others, such renowned competitions as the London International Youth Science Fortnight, the Japan Student Science Awards, the Southern California and National Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, the National Consortium for Black Professional Development Science Fair, the California State Science Fair, the Intel Science Talent Search (formerly Westinghouse STS) and the ISEF. They have been selected as guest exhibitors at the New Zealand Science Fair, addressed a medical conference in Israel, attended the Nobel Awards Ceremonies in Sweden and taken high honors in such notable science opportunities as the Lawrence Hall of Science Research Grant Program and the Edison/McGraw Scholarship Program - all outgrowths of their involvement in the GSDSEF. They*

*are, indeed, among the elite of California, America and the world's gifted young scientists.*

- Long time worker for the California Science Fair, the California Youth Science Congress, and the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium
- Coordinator for Science Service in Washington D.C., and organizer of Science Fairs around the world
  - Instrumental in convincing both the GSDSEF and the International Science and Engineering Fair to allow girls and boys to compete on an equal footing
- Coordinator of the Meet the Scientist and Science and Technology Today! lecture programs which brought leading local scientists into San Diego County's junior and senior highs as speakers and role-models
- Chairman of the Education and Activities Department of the San Diego Natural History Museum
- Member of the Science Steering Committee of the San Diego City Schools, the Education Committee of the San Diego Zoological Society, the National Science Teachers Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Science Supervisors Association
- Recipient of many special awards, among them "National Science Teacher of the Year"
- Scout leader, Sunday School Superintendent, church elder, sponsor of youth activities
- Husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather (and by popular acclaim, the "grandfather of the science fair").
  - Dorothy Weisbrod, Howard's wife of 60+ years, who preceded him in death on April 27, 2002, described him this way: "of course, cold facts do not show how many lives were influenced by Howard through the years by his teaching, counseling, church, and Scout work. He has always been kind, sympathetic, wise, and never too busy to listen. He will never grow old because he is young at heart."

Howard retired several times, each time remaining as active than ever. His most recent "retirement" was from his long-time job as Chairman of the Fair's Management Committee. Not that he was allowed to escape. The words, "I retire," were still hovering in the air when he was named Chairman Laureate for Life and put in charge of the GSDSEF's Futures Committee and coordinating the San Diego - New Zealand Science Fair student exchange program. What else did he do to stay busy? He advised students, served as a counselor for the GSDSEF's Student Advisory Board, screened projects for inclusion in the Fair, served as both botany and Sweepstakes judge and worked to involve both individuals and community groups in the Fair's operation, etc. etc, etc.

What can one person do? How much can one person give?

See above.