

NEWS*NEWS*NEWS

SANTA MARIA JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

December 15, 2021

The Santa Maria Joint Union High School District Board of Education named the newest high school campus the “Mark Richardson Career Technical Education Center & Agricultural Farm” during a school board meeting on Tuesday night.

Former Superintendent Dr. Richardson, who was instrumental and the driving force behind the institution, unexpectedly passed away at 59-years old on November 15th. He began his career at the SMJUHSD in September of 2012 and retired in June of 2019.

“On November 10, 2021, we dedicated the CTE Center and Ag Farm,” said school board member Dr. Jack Garvin. “Staff, community leaders, former superintendents, our school board, and students were present. Mark Richardson was also in attendance, spoke to the crowd, and visited classrooms. His vision had become a reality. He saw his dream come true. Sadly, he passed away several days later. Tonight, we honor his memory by naming the Center the Mark Richardson Career Technical Education Center and Agricultural Farm. His vision, leadership, and pioneering spirit, leave a legacy for future generations of students to discover for themselves through the pathways offered at the center, what could very well be their life's profession.”

A committee to name the institution was recently formed with members representing the various pathways offered at the center/farm and the District Administration. Earlier this month, they enthusiastically supported the proposal to name it after Dr. Richardson. The center opened in the Fall of 2021.

The 25-acre property, which is north of the Elks Rodeo Grounds and east of Highway 101, will eventually accommodate about 800 students and staff. Presently, students are engaged in construction and machine shops. Diesel mechanics and culinary arts are coming soon. Students are also busy with a variety of student projects involving animal pens, livestock corrals, a barn and farming land.

The institution was paid for through C-2004 Bond Funds and Measure H of 2016 as well as state funding. Students are bused to the facility from SMHS, PVHS, ERHS and DHS for two-hour blocks.

Dr. Richardson’s thirty-plus years in education included time as a classroom teacher, administrator, high school principal and Superintendent of the Taft Union High School District for five years prior to coming to the SMJUHSD. In addition, he held a variety of administrative, teaching, and coaching positions in the Kern High School District.

Born in 1961, he grew up outside Bakersfield in the small farming community of Shafter. He had the idea of a career in public service instilled at an early age by his father, Steve, an industrial arts teacher, and his mother, Pat, a nurse.

Dr. Richardson is survived by his wife, Kelly, two sons, Vaughn and Val, and a daughter, Sherah.

SMJUHSD Media Contact: Public Information Officer Kenny Klein
[805-709-1454](tel:805-709-1454) or kklein@smjuhsd.org

XXX