This year we lost one of our warriors and leaders - a friend who had been at the forefront of the struggle for the rights of English Learners and their families and the movement for high-quality programs. Lynne Aoki passed away on Sunday, November 3, 2019.

A third-generation Californian, Lynne found that she would not and could not tolerate injustice from an early age. Whether it was confronting a bully or making a public stand against prejudice, she felt compelled to act.

Since that early age, Lynne continued to take action, to intervene, to inform, to persuade, to advocate for students who are English Learners and immigrants. Lynne’s immersion into immigrant and English Learner advocacy came early just as California was opening up to bilingual education for students who were English Learners.

As a professional, Lynne wrote and collaborated with school districts across the state to submit Title VII, III and other public and private grants uplifting bilingual programs, professional development, technology, magnet schools/desegregation, arts in education, physical education, and career technical education and quality instruction. Her work in evaluating programs and helping to bring millions of dollars to schools educating California’s English Learners has touched millions of children and their families.

Her second home was Ventura County, working with several districts for decades. She was a member of the Ventura County Chapter of the California Association for Bilingual Education and was actively involved in many local Ventura County campaigns.

Lynne was also a part of the Californians Together coalition even before it was formally formed. She was “all in” to defeat Proposition 227 in 1998. As the activist she was, she held fundraisers, distributed materials to voters, made phone calls and more. With her calm, soft-spoken, can-do demeanor, she demonstrated great leadership during that difficult campaign.

Over the last 5 years she served on our Executive Board as Secretary and was the Vice-President of Californians Together at the time of her death. She was also working on finalizing new criteria and procedures for awarding Californians Together Annual Multiple Pathways District Biliteracy Award. The legacy of Lynne will be honored with the renaming of this award to the Aoki Multiple Pathways District Biliteracy Award. Lynne Aoki will always be with us and we are forever grateful to her.
IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Leonard Olguin

CABE is honored to remember the life and legacy of Dr. Leonard Olguin. Dr. Olguin was a beloved and highly respected educator at the local, state, and national levels who was a pioneer in bilingual education and was among the first bilingual education professors at Cal State Long Beach in the early/mid-70’s.

Dr. Olguin became a legend in the bilingual education community, widely known nationally for his insight, knowledge and humor at all the major conferences where he was a favorite keynote. He was a genius at making complex linguistic concepts easy for teachers to understand along with cultural implications for Spanish speaking children learning English. He was known for his book that became a staple, then a handbook in LAUSD: “Shuck Loves Chirley.”

Dr. Olguin earned his Ph. D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Southern California and was a linguist who spoke three languages fluently. In his spare time he sailed his boats throughout the world, received his pilot’s license, and sang in a barbershop quartet for 35 years.

His distinguished career included developing the Right to Read program in the 1970s for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in Washington DC. He was inducted into the California School Boards Association Hall of Fame. He served at CSU Long Beach as full professor for over 22 years where he touched the lives of many students and faculty.

Dr. Olguin’s writings and research occurred during the early years before technology could easily memorialize research and be readily accessible. He was a man before his time. Dr. Rudy Acuña wrote of Dr. Olguin that: “[Leonard] was under attributed for his very important work and contributions to the field of bilingual education.”

Dr. Leonard Olguin passed away in July, 2019 at the age of 93 after a long battle with Alzheimer Disease surround by his wife, Darlene Valdez-Olguin and a large extended family. He lived a life of impact, and it is up to all of us to remember and share his legacy.
CABE is honored to remember the legacy of Armando Rodriguez, pioneering educator from Mexico and San Diego.

Born Sept. 30, 1921, in the central Mexican town of Gomez Palacio, the seventh of eight children, Rodriguez was brought to San Diego by his parents when he was 6. He didn’t speak English. The family crowded into a cottage so tiny he had to sleep on the floor. Briefly forced back into Mexico by Depression-era deportations, the family returned to Logan Heights, where education and sports — especially wrestling — became Rodriguez’s footholds into American culture.

Armando Rodriguez pushed for bilingual classes as a way to help newcomers succeed in school. In his biography “From the Barrio to Washington” Rodriguez describes how he lobbied Randolph Hearst for funds for bilingual classrooms. In 1969 he visited Hearst in his home and started speaking non-stop in Spanish for several minutes. Seeing Hearst’s face turn red “Armando then explained that that same frustration was mirrored by thousands of Hispanic students every day except they have to endure it for several hours a day 5 days a week”. This connection with Hearst eventually led to funding bilingual programs. That funding planted the seeds for Title VII Elementary and Secondary Education Act also known as the Bilingual Education Act.

He served in the U.S. Army during World War II, as a cryptographer in Brazil, and became a U.S. citizen. After the war, he enrolled at San Diego State College (now San Diego State) and got a degree in special education. His career in education started in the 1950s at Memorial Junior High School, where he taught and sometimes worked as a truant officer, tracking down students who had cut classes and bringing them back to campus and urging them to remember how important education is.

After getting a master’s degree at SDSU, Rodriguez moved into school administration, in San Diego. He transitioned soon after to work in Sacramento and then at the national level working in the administrations of President Lyndon Johnson, who appointed Rodriguez to head the Office of Spanish-Speaking American Affairs in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. He pushed for bilingual classes as a way to help newcomers succeed in school. He also served as an assistant commissioner of education during the Nixon administration, but feeling conflicted with the politics of the time, he returned to California in 1973 and became president of East Los Angeles College, one of the first Hispanics in the state to run an institution of higher learning where he served for five years. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter appointed him as a director of the EEOC, a post he retained under President Ronald Reagan until 1983. Rodriguez remained active in education, working as a consultant and helping to start a computer-literacy program for underprivileged students.

Rodriguez is known and honored for living a lifetime of beating the odds and overcoming racial discrimination and other obstacles. He made a powerful and lasting impact in education, government and in his community wherever he served. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Beatriz; daughter Christy Rodriguez and son Rod Rodriguez along four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. CABE is honored to remember the life and legacy of Armando Rodriguez.