

Who was Margaret Keating?

August 14, 2024



Last week, the Del Norte Unified School District (DNUSD) announced a name change for the Margaret Keating Elementary School, in Klamath. The new name is O’Me-nok Learning Center Elementary School, named after the village that was part of Klamath.

The O’Me-nok Learning School is and remains under the Administration of the DNUSD.

When covering this name change story, The Triplicate wondered who was Margaret Keating?

Legacy records within the DNUSD are limited, but the District provided The Triplicate a relic pamphlet written by County Superintendent Harland McDonald (1951-1965) entitled Del Norte County Public Schools and Districts, 1854-1965. Who was Margaret Keating? The short answer is Margaret Morrison Keating was a dedicated, well-respected and well-loved teacher whose educational career traversed over forty years. Keating’s career spanned from the late 1920s to her retirement in the mid-1960s, according to Superintendent McDonald.

When inquiry was proffered to former students of Ms. Keating, those students of Keating wished anonymity and were reluctant to share their names for fear of alienating Yurok Tribal members. Those feelings were honored. All respondents spoke glowingly, with profound reverence and with deep admiration for Keating. Upon her retirement, the newly formed DNUSD honored Keating with the name change.

“She was a great teacher who loved us all, unconditionally,” mused one former student. Another student inserted, “She was a kind lady who always greeted us outside the school before class started.”

Yet another student shared how the school and her family secretly arranged a This is Your Life (Ralph Edwards production) presentation when it was learned this legendary educator was retiring from what was once known as the Riverside/ Terwer School District, then becoming the Klamath Union District.

Most of her former students, now well into their 70s, said they believed Mrs. Keating would have welcomed and embraced the school name change.

The mood and sentiment of America, California and Del Norte County have most certainly changed over the decades since Mrs. Keating taught 4th and 5th grade. No one doubts the dedication and devotion of this magnanimous woman, whose efforts shaped the minds of her students.

Another former student shared, “ Margaret Keating’s name may be removed form the school and children she so dearly loved’ but her accomplishments and impact on those she taught will be indelibly imprinted on the generations of children, like me who grew into adulthood.

As one former student remarked, “Diversity is a good thing. The past is behind us. Let’s move forward embracing all cultures. That’s how we went to the Margaret Keating School, 60 years ago.”

An era long past. The Margaret Keating Elementary School, Klamath, California.