

Latest high school building dedicated

By Earlene Ward - Special to the Sierra Star

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The Jack and Jane Gyer Building was dedicated at Yosemite High School Monday. The building houses art and home economics classrooms and the Badger Art Gallery.

Renovation of the building was completed earlier this year as one of the last major projects of the school's expansion and modernization program.

Jack and his late wife, Jane, were active in the efforts to form the Yosemite Union High School District in the late 1960s and early 1970s and they have continued to support the schools in the district over the years.

Jane designed the mural on Road 426 and spent countless hours helping YHS students complete the project, which was initiated by a group of YHS students. At the dedication ceremony, Jack donated the working design Jane painted for the mural to the school.

The 15-foot full-color miniature of the mural will be displayed at the school. YHS Principal Steve Raupp called the donation "a real treasure."

In his remarks during the dedication, Raupp praised the Gyers for their dedication to the school and the community. He recounted the many things in which they have been involved over the years.

Jack, along with Cal Ragland, founded the Sierra Star in 1957; Jane was also instrumental in the publication of the paper.

"As co-founder of the Sierra Star in 1957, and publisher until 1969, Jack's coverage of the events that led to the formation of the new district was significant," Raupp said. "He continued to work toward the new district after he sold the Sierra Star."

Raupp also mentioned the Golden Chain Theater, Sierra Mountaineer Days and the Fresno Flats Historical Park as just a few of the things Jack and Jane Gyer helped found in the Oakhurst area.

Jack became the executive secretary of the Yosemite Natural History Association after selling the Sierra Star and he helped it grow from no members to about 1,000 members. In 1972 he was appointed Yosemite National Park curator.

Jane is known throughout the art world for her paintings of Yosemite National Park. She was Artist in Residence at both Yosemite and the Rocky Mountain National Park.

She received the first National Park Service Director's Award for her illustrations of the book, "Discovering Sierra Trees," and she received the award a second time for her poster design created for the Yosemite Fund.

Jack and Jane Gyer were co-recipients of the Yosemite Award in 1991.

Jane first came to the Oakhurst area in 1934 and was quoted in a Sierra Star article in 1991 as recalling driving down Deadwood in 1942 or 1943 and seeing seven lights in the area that is now downtown Coarsegold.



Jack Gyer stands with Yosemite High School art teachers, Carol Hendrickson, left, and Rivka Schaffner, under a portrait of his late wife, Jane, during the dedication of the Jack and Jane Gyer Building at Yosemite High School.

Photo by Judith Ann Durr

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"And those weren't stoplights," quipped Raupp.

Jack moved to Oakhurst in 1953 and was one of two realtors in town.

"Jane died in 2004," Raupp noted, "but her influence lives on throughout the Mountain Area and Yosemite National Park and in the art world. Jack, at 90-plus-years-young, continues to inspire people and continues to contribute to the area.

"We are proud to name this building in honor of two such outstanding individuals."



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