

100

OC'S MOST

INFLUENTIAL

MEET THE PEOPLE WHO SHAPED OUR YEAR

With 2015 only a week away, the Register is spotlighting some of the city's most influential people of 2014.

This year's list includes people from all walks of life - an attorney who teaches high school students to be lawyers, a UC Irvine professor championing for senior citizens'

rights, and a U.S. representative who maintains her local ties.

You may recognize one or more, or maybe you are meeting them for the first time.

Their bond to one another - and to us?

They inspired their community this year.

To determine our list, Register and Laguna Niguel News editors and reporters selected worthy candidates, including those recommended by readers. Our five are part of an effort to highlight folks in each community as well as the Register's 100 most influential in Orange County.

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Toy drive becomes holiday party for Aliso Viejo company

BY CHRISTOPHER YEE
STAFF WRITER

ALISO VIEJO • For the past four years, instead of hosting lavish company holiday parties, technology manufacturing company Microsemi has used those funds to buy toys for the annual Spark of Love Toy Drive.

Microsemi employees shared lunch with Orange County Fire Authority firefighters on Dec. 18, then helped them load up all of the donated toys and gifts to be distributed to Orange County's underprivileged youths.

"Our donation event is a highly valued tradition at Microsemi, and we are always excited about the opportunity to team with this won-

derful charitable organization to help further its important mission," said Jim Peterson, Microsemi chairman and chief executive.

The donations will aid the efforts of the Orange County Toy Collaborative, through which the Spark of Love Toy Drive combines efforts with the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program, the Social Services Agency's Operation Santa Claus and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Holiday Charities program.

The collaborative distributes about 300,000 toys annually to Orange County children.

MORE INSIDE
Photos from the event, **PAGE 2**



SAM GANGWER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Orange County Fire Authority Capt. Thom Rivas wheels a bicycle out of Microsemi headquarters in Aliso Viejo.

WOLVERINES SCORE IN DEPTH

The Aliso Niguel boys basketball team suffered through a subpar season last year, but optimism is high in Wolverine-land for the 2014-15 campaign.

Aliso Niguel starts an all-senior lineup, a strong bench and very balanced scoring. Twice this season the Wolverines have won games without a double-digit scorer.

"We don't have to rely on one guy to score. We have a lot of good basketball players who can all score," said 12-year Wolverines coach Keith Barnett. **PAGE 6**

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2014's game changers in Orange County

JEFFREY BLANK

Job: Attorney
Age: 38
Bio: Blank grew up in the San Fernando Valley and spent seven years at UCLA through his undergraduate career and law school.

Why he's an influencer: In addition to working with Garcia and Sullivan LLP, Blank also coaches the Trabuco Hills High School Mock Trial team and was named the Orange County Constitutional Rights Foundation's 2014 Attorney Coach of the Year.

Biggest challenge: With all his work and volunteer commitments, Blank is constantly having to balance his schedule to make time for everything. But when he does carve out time to get something done, Blank said he likes to give it his full attention and will even shut off his phone to escape calls, text messages and emails that could interrupt.

watching the students compete. He's not allowed to have contact with them during matches, so he can only sit and watch while they present their arguments and examine witnesses.

Can't do without: His iPad. His tablet allows him to work remotely from anywhere. "I can be at mock trial practice and send someone a document for a court case in a few clicks just like if I was working from my office."

What's next: In February, Blank will become a partner with Garcia and Sullivan LLP. Despite his busy work schedule, he's also hoping for some extra personal time. "I hope to have the good fortune to continue with the things I'm already doing, but I'd like to put some emphasis on my personal life - settle down, work toward starting a family."

SHARON YANAURA

Job: Fourth-grade teacher, Malcom Elementary School
Age: 58
Bio: Yanaura left a career in corporate marketing with McDonald's and other companies to go back to school to become a teacher.

Why she's an influencer: Yanaura spearheaded the Capistrano Unified School District's Pajama Day earlier in December, through which 14,000 sets of pajamas were donated for underprivileged youths. This was held in conjunction with Yanaura's nonprofit organization, PJs from Heaven, which collects and donates pajamas to kids in foster care.

Biggest challenge: Figuring out little ways to make a difference in people's lives on a daily basis.

Work philosophy: Yanaura teaches her students that people everywhere are more alike than they might seem. "I tell my fourth-graders, 'You realize the president of the United States, Kobe Bryant and Taylor Swift were fourth-graders at one time.' I want them to think about how we really are just people, not people to be intimidated by or in awe of, but we just take different paths, not that one's better than the other."

Thoughts on teaching: The best part of teaching is working with "mischievous makers," Yanaura said. She said she enjoys the challenge of figuring out what is really bothering a student and helping them work through it instead of immediately moving to punish them.

Proudest moment of 2014: While Yanaura said she's most proud of the little things she does to help people, she was also proud to find that 14,000 sets of pajamas were donated through Capistrano Unified's Pajama Day.

Can't do without: Yanaura's 28-year-old son recently introduced her to social networking site Facebook, and she's been surprised by how useful it is in helping

her reach other people. "If I want to get something out there, I post, and people respond almost right away. That's such an amazing tool."

What's next: Yanaura said she doesn't like to set too many expectations and prefers to take life as it comes. She doesn't even have a lesson plan book - instead, she plans her lessons based on goings-on at school, current events and articles in the Register.

Job: UCI professor of geriatric medicine and gerontology, founding director of the Elder Abuse Forensic Center in Orange County and founder of Aging Alliance
Age: 45
Why she's an influencer: Burnight, a Laguna Niguel resident, founded the Elder Abuse Forensic Center in Orange County in 2003. This year, the forensic center investigated its 1,000th case of elder abuse, the most of any such organization in the country.

Biggest challenge: To bring the kind of attention and money to the issues of the elderly that society spends on trying to deny and delay the aging process.

Work philosophy: "Every day, I think God is leading this and we're all just playing our part."

Can't do without: "The wisdom of those who have gone before me."

What's next: Getting volunteers for the Elder Corps, a program to have three-person teams oversee the well-being of a vulnerable older adult through the end of his or her life.

Job: Laguna Niguel city manager
Age: 51
Biggest challenge: Keeping his staff working in har-

mony with the desires of the City Council is one of the greatest challenges for Foster. He said his job is to facilitate conversation and seek compromise that keeps everyone happy and achieves the city's goals. "Getting everyone to see the same shade of blue in the sky, that's the toughest challenge when it comes to being a successful city manager."

Work philosophy: "I'm most proud that our lean staff team continues to prove that the public sector is a noble profession, an ethical profession and one we're proud to call our career."

Can't do without: Foster said he couldn't function without a City Council that's supportive, has a vision and are policy leaders. In turn, goals set by the council couldn't be done without a city staff that is ready to accomplish them.

What's next: Foster said he's looking forward to work on three major projects - the five-year Crown Valley park renovation project, the development of the Gateway Project and the development of a new retail center near City Hall where the county courthouse used to be. And with the city celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, Foster said he thinks the city's next 25 years will be even better than the first. "My hope and prayer is that when I decide I'm going to retire, I'll be able to hand it off to the next city manager and they'll continue on this upward path. That's what we owe the citizens and business owners of Laguna Niguel."

Job: Elected in November to the House of Representatives
Age: 52
Bio: A former stockbroker, Walters was elected to

Christopher Yee, Theresa Walker and Martin Wisckol contributed to this report.

Jobs: Muriel Siebert, Sandra Day O'Connor
Bio: Family. We all live within a few miles of each other!"
What's next: As House Republicans develop a comprehensive plan for the next session, Walters wants to make sure that plan includes a path toward legalization for those in the country illegally, strengthening border security and amending Obamacare.

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7 Deadly Mistakes That Will Cost You Thousands When You Sell Your Home
SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY - A new report has just been released which reveals 7 costly mistakes that most homeowners make when selling their home, and a 9 Step System that can help you sell your home fast and for the most amount of money.
This industry report shows clearly how the traditional ways of selling homes have become increasingly less and less effective in today's market. The fact of the matter is that fully three quarters of home sellers don't get what they want for their home and become disillusioned and worse financially disadvantaged when they put their home on the market.
As this report uncovers, most home sellers make 7 deadly

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