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PHOTO BY CLAUDETTE LANGLEY

Sharon Davis listens to Angelina Solano and Amanda Fleig read while paying a visit to their classroom on Tuesday.

Governor's Wife Visits Madison

Sharon Davis learns ropes of school's Microsociety system

By Claudette Langley
San Leandro Times

Court was in session at Madison Elementary School Tuesday and the First Lady of California was in the audience to view justice being done.

Sharon Davis made a trip to the school Tuesday afternoon to learn about the unique learning system Madison has instituted. Madison is San Leandro's first elementary to become a

Microsociety school.

Microsociety sets up real life institutions including a court — complete with district attorneys, public defenders and judges, a bank, a post office and its own publishing house.

Students have jobs in each of the institutions and all students earn Microsociety bucks for attending school. They also pay out those bucks for such indiscretions as missing school.

Davis looked delighted as she watched the proceedings against
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Davis: Wife of governor says she was very impressed with Madison's Microsociety

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a defendant who was charged with cutting into the tether ball line.

"I can't tell you how impressed I was with the Microsociety," she said. "It's a great example of how to enhance learning opportunities."

But the Microsociety wasn't the only thing on the First Lady's mind; she came to the school also to promote reading and literacy.

As she stepped up to the microphone to address the rapt students who sat before her on the multipurpose-room floor, she took the opportunity to encourage reading.

"Do any of you know what you want to be when you grow up?" she asked.

The answers were as varied as you could imagine. The elementary school students had visions of being everything from doctors to entomologists to models.

As each profession was called out, Davis was able to tell them why each would require a lot of reading.

The only one that seemed to stump her was the young man who professed his desire to be a Sumo wrestler.

But the quick-thinking First Lady responded that even that profession would require reading if you wanted to learn how to do it correctly.

She was given a tour by two very professional guides, the school student body vice president Charlie Ruiz and the treasurer Jade Smith-Williams, both 10.

They took Davis to visit several classrooms during their reading hour and then on to view the Microsociety institutions in action.

Having to be shushed more than once was the entourage of elected officials who trailed behind the First Lady.

Representatives from both the San Leandro and San Lorenzo school boards were on hand, as were San Leandro City Council members, the Alameda County Superintendent of Schools, Sheila Jordan, members of the Alameda County Board of Education and Isobel Dvorsky from the Chabot/Las Positas Community College District Board.

As the tour wore down and the crowd moved in for punch and cake, Mayor Shelia Young looked dismayed.

"I was going to announce each elected official here, but as you can see there are so many of you, that I will just let you introduce yourself to Mrs. Davis," she said.

For at least one of the elected officials coming to Madison Elementary was like old-home week. Board of Equalization member Johan Klehs took the microphone at the start of the program and said, "It's great to be back in



PHOTO BY CLAUDETTE LANGLEY

Sharon Davis, wife of Governor Gray Davis, visited Madison Elementary School at the behest of Mayor Shelia Young, right.

CLASSROOM VISIT



D. ROSS CAMERON — Staff

California first lady Sharon Davis (right) visits San Leandro's James Madison School on Tuesday to see a work program that gives students hands-on experience in government, banking, publishing and the court system. Angelina Solano (left) and Amanda Fleig, both 7 and second-graders at the school, receive a little tutoring from Davis.