

# Long-time Sisters educator retiring

By Erin Borla  
Correspondent

After 31 years teaching in the Sisters School District, Norma Pledger is retiring.

Pledger, born in Prineville, was hired in 1986 by long-time Sisters Elementary School Principal Earl Armbruster after teaching for two years in Culver. Through her career Pledger has taught 6th, 5th, 2nd, grade 4/5 blends and most recently 5th grade.

Pledger has many positive memories of her time in Sisters.

“Working with people like Diane Jacobsen and Lori Small — we were a great team,” she said. “It was very memorable to be able to work with such outstanding teachers; I learned a lot from them.

“One of my best memories was at the elementary school when we had A-wing assemblies,” she continued. “Every classroom had a month and we had to put on a play of something the students had been studying. We had such a home and community feel in every classroom and so much ownership. I loved that.”

Pledger remembers sharing family-style meals with

the classroom.

“It was such a blessing to get to know the kids — eating lunch and teaching them manners. We had activities like treasure hunts to teach students directional skills that led up to a barbecue in the park; we gave out the Golden Garbagecan; and sing-alongs. The music programs that Elizabeth Renner put on: Those are memories that will stay with me.”

When the Sisters School District made the decision to move the fifth grade to Sisters Middle School, Pledger was tapped to be the lead teacher for that grade. She was in charge of ordering furniture and equipment and everything the District would need for this transition.

“People were nervous,” she said. “Adding fifth grade to the middle school — that was different.”

Many of her students have stayed in contact through Christmas cards, wedding and birth announcements and phone calls for advice.

“It’s neat to see how kids give back; many past students are now doctors and lawyers and generally incredible human beings. It’s amazing

when you knew them at 8 or 10 years old,” Pledger said.

Pledger has now taught around 10 second-generation students.

“To have my previous students say to me ‘I want you to be my child’s teacher because you taught me and made an impact on my life’ — I’m very proud,” she said.

One of her daughters, Stephanie (Pledger) Burke, has followed in her mother’s footsteps and is teaching kindergarten at Sisters Elementary School.

“It is really special that I was raised in this amazing community and now get to teach where my mom raised me,” said Burke. “I feel that she is instrumental to the Sisters School District. It is a huge compliment when I am told that I am following in her footsteps. She will be very missed!”

“It really has come full circle, Stephanie is now giving back to the community. Her children will be raised

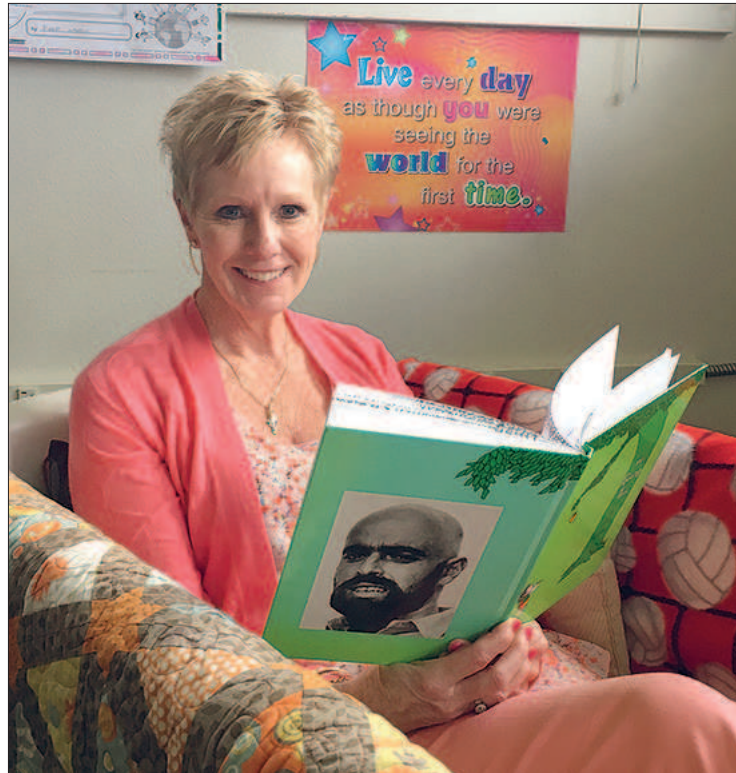


PHOTO BY ERIN BORLA

Norma Pledger is retiring after a three-decade career.

here,” Pledger said.

In her retirement Pledger looks forward to spending time with her grandchildren and golfing.

Don’t expect her to stay away too long from education in Sisters.

“I am excited to go back and substitute, help out at the

elementary school and offer support with teacher training,” she said. “I want to thank the staff at Sisters elementary, middle and high schools — they mean a lot to me. Thank you to the community for their support over the last 30 years.”

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