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The Revival of the Miss Rancho Cordova Pageant

Rancho Cordova, CA | By Shaunna Boyd

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - Lucinda Witte got involved in pageants at 15 years old and has maintained a passion for them throughout her life. She has been crowned Mrs. Rancho Cordova, Mrs. Greater Sacramento, Mrs. Sacramento, Miss Citrus Heights, Miss Metro, Miss California Talent, and Mrs. Roseville-City. She loves the gowns, the sparkly crowns, and — most of all — the wonderful and inspiring women. Witte's love of pageants has inspired her to bring back the Miss Rancho Cordova Pageant for a new generation of girls.

The last Miss Rancho Cordova Pageant was held in 2005. The pageant was originally run by the City of Rancho Cordova in the late 1970s and was later directed by Mary Purvis, who passed away in 2014.

As a long-time resident of Rancho Cordova, Witte has always been very involved in the local community, and she loves finding ways to get more people involved. With her extensive pageant experience, Witte is excited to take on the challenge of reviving the Miss Rancho Cordova Pageant.

Witte described many pageant directors as cold and singularly focused on the business at hand. She contrasted that to her experience participating in pageants with Purvis: "Mary wasn't all business. Mary was different. She



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The Miss Rancho Cordova Pageant is scheduled for Saturday, June 29 at the Rancho Cordova City Hall. Photo provided

had so much warmth. ... She could sense who needed the extra hugs. ... She was a mother figure, mentor, and friend. ... That's why people today still talk about her with a smile."

"She made an impression on me," said Witte. "I carry that with me." To honor Purvis' legacy, Witte plans to manage the pageant with the same warmth and care for her girls.

Rancho Cordova is a very diverse community, and Witte said that all girls over the age of 13 are welcome in the pageant. Unlike the Miss California Pageant, which has a citizenship requirement, the Miss Rancho Cordova Pageant is open to everyone. "I believe everyone should be able to participate," said Witte. Witte is also willing to waive the \$50 application fee if interested applicants have financial hardships.

The Miss Rancho Cordova Pageant is a non-profit organization. Witte is currently funding the pageant herself, but she hopes to secure sponsorships to help cover the operating costs once the pageant is established as a community asset.

The pageant will crown the top-scoring girls as Miss Rancho Cordova, Miss Gold River, Miss Anatolia, and Miss Mather. The titles are all equivalent and will be assigned based on a preference ranking system. The girls will rank their title choices on their initial applications, with the highest scoring girl getting her first choice of title.

The scores will be calculated based on four equal categories: swimwear, to show the girls' commitment to physical fitness; evening wear, to highlight their grace and poise; fun wear, to show their personality; and interviews, to demonstrate their intelligence and eloquence. An all-female panel will judge the competition and determine the final scores.

The girls who are crowned as queens will act as ambassadors for the Rancho Cordova, Gold River, Mather, and Anatolia communities. Witte said she wants the queens "to be an active presence" and serve as role models and mentors to younger children in the area. Their role as ambassadors will increase their self-confidence and help them become leaders in the community.

The associated community service work will enable the young women to interact with many different people and take on new responsibilities, which will provide various opportunities to further their personal and professional goals.

Witte said that participating in pageants "brought brightness" into her life. She hopes to bring that same illumination into the lives of local girls. For Witte, the measure of success is if the girls "flourish in all ways in their lives." She doesn't expect them all to go on to become Miss America; she wants them to serve the community, take advantage of networking opportunities, and become the women they want to be.

The Miss Rancho Cordova Pageant is scheduled for Saturday, June 29 at the Rancho Cordova City Hall. Applications are due by May 25. To apply or get more information, email MissRanchoCordova@yahoo.com or visit www.MissRanchoCordovaPageant.com.

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