

Local Nurse Honored

By Bobbie Dodson



On the 50th anniversary of the School of Nursing at the University of Florida, from all the graduates over those years, four were chosen to receive Nursing Leadership Awards. Linda (Becky) Jenkins of Lafayette was one of the four, honored for her exemplary efforts in the field of community outreach.

Jenkins and her husband, Don, flew to Gainesville, Florida for the two day celebration which in-

cluded dinner at the University President's home and a ceremony at which she received a large crystal sculpture. "I felt humbled and that it was strange to be honored for activities in which I feel I've received much more than I have given," Jenkins says.

Perhaps best known for the small, intimate Lamaze classes she teaches, Jenkins was one of the first in this field. She served as a consultant for the first alternative

birthing center in the East Bay located at Mt. Diablo Hospital. Her book, *Pregnancy, Birth and You* became a favorite among new mothers. For more information about her Lamaze work visit www.birthprep.com.

A defining moment in her career came when a physician asked her for a list of childbirth educators to teach the pregnant Spanish speaking population. Finding none, Jenkins decided to get her book translated into Spanish. In contacting a publisher the answer was, "There's no money to be made in it. If you want it, honey, you'll have to do it yourself." So she did, beginning with learning Spanish.

Jenkins followed this with scripting, acting in, and producing five Spanish language videos about child birth. She also helps the Spanish speaking of other countries. She served as a surgical nurse in Guatemala twice, treating the poorest of the poor. "Of

the operations with which I helped I think cataract surgery was the most rewarding. People who were literally blind one day could see the next," she observes. Also, an invitation came to visit the Amazon jungle where she taught doctors and nurses the importance of getting patients out of bed after childbirth.

Members of the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) funded her work on mission trips to Guatemala where she taught health education. On another journey to this Central American country, she served as camp nurse for 35 high school kids. Through LOPC's involvement with the Monument Crisis Center she now teaches ESL classes in this Pleasant Hill facility.

"As a two time cancer survivor I so appreciate the love, care I've received. One way of showing my gratitude is finding ways I can love and care for others," Jenkins says