

DISTINGUISHED
ALUMNUS
OF THE
YEAR

Michael S. Bernazzani, Education Service District 105 superintendent, has far surpassed his initial goal as a beginning student at YVCC, which was to graduate from college. "It was important for me to graduate from college. There weren't many in my family who could go to college, let alone graduate."

A 1965 Eisenhower High School graduate, he earned his Associate Degree from YVCC in 1967 and a bachelor of arts in education from the University of Washington in 1969. He completed graduate work in 1985 with a master's degree in education from Central Washington University. He is currently in the doctoral program at Washington State University.

Upon his graduation from the University of Washington, he came back to Yakima as a history teacher for A. C. Davis High School. After three years, Mike had an opportunity to move into administration as an assistant superintendent of the Yakima School District. This move was motivated, he said, by his belief that he could effect changes for kids on a broader scale than in a classroom setting... and that is what he has been doing ever since.

Through many roles, Bernazzani has been working to affect the quality of education--Administrative Assistant for Superintendent of Public Instruction in Olympia; Assistant Executive Director of the Washington State School Directors Association, working as a lobbyist; in 1979 he returned to the Yakima School District as Personnel Officer and three years later became Superintendent for Educational Service District 105, "and I've been here ever since."

Looking back, Bernazzani noted that his student days at YVCC during the 1960s were an important period in his life. "There was a lot going on to stimulate thought." He fondly remembers the debates that took place in class, especially in instructor Paul Anderson's political science class, where there were often heated discussions over the Vietnam war and the draft. And then there were Gordon Howard and James Newbill, two outstanding lecturers on campus, "who brought history alive."

Bernazzani is a strong supporter of the community college system, where "good academic skills can be developed in a more personalized setting before going on to the larger - and often overwhelming - university setting."