



WILDCATS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
OF OAKLAND HIGH SCHOOL, INC.

E-NEWSLETTER

FALL/ WINTER 2015



2015 FALL/WINTER Calendar

December

**15 - WAA Board Mtg
OHS Library, 6pm**

January 2016

**9 - WAA Annual Meeting
OHS Library, 10am**

February 2016

**14 - Happy
Valentine's Day!**

**16 - WAA Board Mtg
OHS Library, 6pm**

Join WAA Today

The Wildcat Alumni
Association is the
official
alumni association
affiliated with
Oakland High School.

Membership fees are:

- \$ 35 for one year
- \$ 450 for a lifetime membership

To join, go to our website at <http://www.waaohs.org> and send with a check to

Wildcat Alumni Association,
P.O. Box 11436,
Oakland, CA 94611

For More Student News

Check out the
Oakland Aegis
Oakland High's Online
Student Newspaper

<http://oaklandaegis.com/>

Editorial

As we finally slip into winter, we are thankful for the many friends and teachers who enriched our lives at Oakland High School. In this newsletter, two alumni who attended Oakland High fifty years apart, write about the qualities we all loved about the connections we made to people and ideas at our alma mater Oakland High.

--the editor



How Oakland High School Transformed My Life by Alejandro Castillo '02

Attending Oakland High School has been a highly valuable experience. When my family moved from Mexico to the United States in 1998, I found myself in a completely new and different environment with a language and culture I did not understand. Two months after our arrival, despite strong family opposition, I enrolled myself in Oakland High School. I could see that education would be the only reliable source to lead me to a successful future. Less than a month later, my family moved back to Mexico. I remained in Oakland, California because I knew that I needed to continue my education. I worked after school and weekends to support myself. The students and faculty of Oakland High School become my second family during the many times I struggled to feed and clothe myself, but no matter what the obstacle, Oakland High School facilitated me to find ways to overcome it and to never give up on school.

Oakland High School helped me develop the foundation of my professional career, though only a dream at that time. Freshman year, Oakland High School's JROTC program sparked in me a love and the desire to join the U.S. Military Service; being a part of this program allowed me to develop self-discipline and accountability. Thanks to this program, I was able to meet my longtime mentor and supporter, retired Army Lieutenant Colonel William Schwartz. Sophomore year was also a significant year as I met my English Teacher Ms. Ferrier. She was instrumental in the development of my English skills. Ms. Ferrier often took time to research, and purchase out of her own pocket, grammar and English as second language books to help me write and understand English. Ms. Ferrier also inspired my hunger for a higher education, when my only goal at the time was to graduate high school.

(Article continued on page 2)

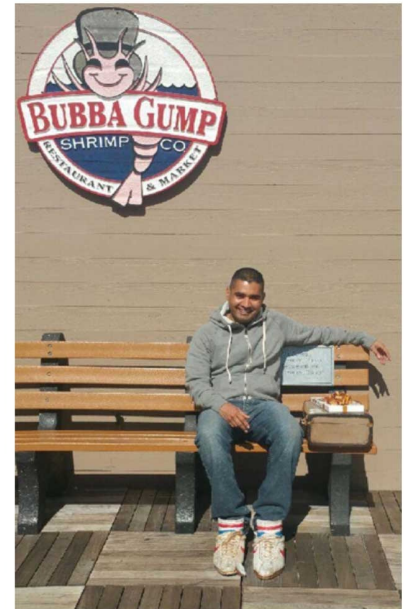
How Oakland High School Transformed My Life continued

She introduced me to Upward Bound and Summer Search, which imbedded in me a notion that college could become a reality.

That same year, I joined Track and Field with two great supportive coaches Mr. Ponas and Mr. Sutton. These two men played a key role in the development of my physical endurance and self-determination. Subsequently, I also joined the Cross Country team, which allowed me to travel within the Bay Area and see beyond the deprived streets of Oakland. Running not only kept me busy, but helped me understand that I could have a better quality of life.

Second semester of my sophomore year I met Mr. Johnson, my American History teacher. Mr. Johnson motivated me to step out of my comfort zone by expressing my ideas and developing my leadership skills. Mr. Johnson's constant moral and social order lectures helped me grow from a shy Hispanic immigrant boy to a student representative. That same year I was elected Commissioner of Education, the following year Chief Justice, and by senior year, I had the privilege and honor of being elected Student Body President of Oakland High School. Mr. Johnson's support allowed me to speak at the State Capital on several occasions to the State Senate and Assembly regarding the importance of education. I was even able to intern for two years as a congressional liaison for Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

Thanks to the support, especially of my teachers, students and staff of Oakland High School, I was able to attend college, and once again, I stepped out of my comfort zone and overcame new obstacles. I am indebted to Oakland High School, and as a Board Member of the Oakland High School's Wildcat Alumni Association and by attending Career Day each year, I work to repay that debt. I enjoy coming back to Oakland High School, speaking with the students and inspiring young leaders that dreams are a possible reality with hard work and determination.



In Memoriam: Bobby Fong (1950-2014) **by Frank Kao '66**

Once upon a time in the late 1950s, I rode a school bus to Sunday school. On this bus was a lad from Oakland's Chinatown a couple of years younger, about 10 years old, who was given to chatty conversation, Bible in hand and baseball on his mind. "Bobby" as we knew him, was the good-humored personality that this glib young man offered to all who entered the transport.

I never really knew Bobby as we got older though I did recalled him in his ROTC uniform on campus in my senior year. Bobby had a notable high school stint as student body president, much to the dismay of the student body secretary Laura Huey Chan '68 who then had to type on the typewriter his lengthy and exacting minutes for distribution to all homerooms in Bobby's commitment to truth, transparency and information.

It was many years later that I overheard a 1968 classmate that say that Bobby would not be able to attend the joint '66, '67 and '68 class reunion in 2011 and that he would be in Oakland earlier in the year to meet with family and friends.

While some of us knew that Bobby Fong was a product of an Oakland Chinatown whose immigrant parents dreamed of greatness for their children while toiling in the restaurants, food/deli shops and sewing factories for meager wages to support those dreams, Bobby's life was more difficult and challenging than most beyond issues of culture, language and economics. His family life had its share of tragedy and difficulties. Perhaps it was possible to see the greatness in a young man from these humble beginnings and personal hardships. Matriculating from OHS to Harvard, then to UCLA for his doctoral studies, Bobby became a teacher, a mentor, administrative educator and president of colleges. Since Dr. Fong spent his adult life and his professional life back East, his achievements were not known to many of us locally, myself included. It was not until the 2010 NCAA basketball finals on TV that I learned that "Bobby" was the President of Butler University in Indianapolis, IN and his team of "Blue III", "Trip" short for their English Bulldog mascot, was in the finals against the national collegiate basketball powerhouse famed Duke University Blue Devils. I rooted madly for "Bobby Fong U" much to the chagrin of my Duke alumni friends. Though Butler lost, it had placed itself on the national map of notable institutions of higher learning, and college basketball as well. Later that year Dr. Fong left Butler to head Ursinus College in Pennsylvania.

"Bobby" was very early on a "people person": he listened well and he was committed to his faith and to the well-being of all the people he touched.



For a more complete understanding of the man and the educator, please see the following:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bobby_Fong

This video is a very complete view of "Bobby" and his early life in Oakland.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNtc8cA00qE&feature=youtu.be>

I would like to express gratitude to Bobby's friend and classmate, Dr. George H. Fong OHS '68, for granting permission to use their private writings for this tribute.

Dr. Fong was close to Bobby; here is a bit of his tribute after Bobby's passing:

"I remember our musing well during recess at Lincoln playground. While other's played, we dreamed. I think Bobby, in his brilliance, gave me copies of many of his writings with an unspoken understanding that, perhaps when he is "gone", I would act as a "curator" of his thoughts such that his words will continue to inspire us who know him.

The Quality of Greatness.

My musing: When you conceptualize "greatness" mathematically... I think Bobby (who loved mathematics) conceptualized the calculus of human potentiality ... What emerges from this process is the transformation of "human potential energies" into a true "human force." ... an infinite # of possibilities for individual and collective human achievement.

Enjoy his speech below delivered at Westlake Junior High in 1965, when Bobby was 15 years young."

George Fong, Lincoln Elementary '62,
Westlake Jr High '65, OHS '68

As written and presented by Bobby Fong, commencement speaker at Westlake Jr High graduation, June 10, 1965, transcribed from hand written copy gifted 1965 to George Fong "in Friendship and in the name of God"

To be a leader, a pathfinder, a brave man and woman. To many, this is greatness. To be successful, to be rich. To some, these are the earmarks of the great person.

To be great, this is a dream that has been dreamt by each man and woman, a dream that will be in the hearts of his or her descendants. But what is greatness? What is this elusive quality that beckons to all mankind, but which is truly claimed by so few?

According to Webster's, the quality of greatness in a human being is a combination of nobility of mind and purpose, eminence, importance, illustriousness, superiority, impressiveness, and so on. It's true that many great persons are eminent, important, illustrious, superior, and impressive, but these characteristics are in actuality just results of recognized greatness. These adjectives are applicable to the great man or woman only if the world itself recognizes their greatness. One can be insignificant, and still be great.

(Westlake
Middle School,
Oakland
2015)



It has been mentioned, however, that a characteristic of greatness is the nobility of mind and purpose. This alone is the real thing! This alone is greatness in the human person. All other earmarks of greatness are merely products of this single thing. Yes, the nobility of mind and purpose; in other words, goals, endeavors, and dreams! These things, and the reaching for what these goals, endeavors, and dreams dictate, is the fabric of greatness itself!

But what kinds of goals are the goals of the great? What nature of dreams make a great man, a great woman? The answer is that the greatest goals, the highest endeavors are the dreams entirely devoid of self (yet paradoxically starts from the core of the self in initiation)! Yes, the ambitions of the truly great has [sic] always been, and will always be entirely without thought of personal gain! This is the difference between successful people and great people. Great people are always successful, whereas successful people are not necessarily great.

Merely successful people usually have already achieved their goals. Great people, however, are always fighting for something better. Rarely, if ever, has a great person succeeded in reaching the summit of his or her endeavors. Always going up, no mere man or woman who was deserving of the label "great" has ever been able to say, "I am finished." "My job is done." "My goal is reached." Successes to the great are merely rest stops along the way to the ultimate summit, a summit he or she can never reach. Why? The truly great aim high, and the only satisfying stopping point in this man or woman's life is "Perfection," this world's unattainable goal. It is the symbol of the ever upward struggle.

A great man or woman is always a servant. Their master may be their Country, Mankind, or God, but he or she is always the servant. They are ceaseless in their work, always trying to please that Master, and thus, satisfy their "self." In this life, the great man and woman is never finished in service. The country will always need them. Mankind will always need them. And because of the first two, he or she will always be of use to God.

This then is greatness and the great man, the great woman. The servant, the one who put's [sic] God, Mankind, and Country before "self." He or she is always striving, going, living for their God, helping fellow Man, serving Country. This is the great person.

Now, the choice is put before you, graduates, you, the man or woman of tomorrow, a leader of the future world. Are you willing to continue the upward fight? Are you willing to give up your property, your happiness, your very life for the Master you serve? Are you willing to pay the price of greatness? May each person here tonight truly be able to say, "I am willing." "I am not afraid to be a great man." "I am not afraid to be a great woman."