

NEWSLETTER

WILDCATS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
OF OAKLAND HIGH SCHOOL, INC.



OCTOBER



Under construction: Jackie Jensen Football Field and Mike Marcoulis Baseball Diamond currently being renovated.

2013 Alden McElrath Wildcats Alumni Scholarship Recipient, XiaoDi Li, donates \$1000 back to WAA Scholarship Fund

Class of 2013's Alden McElrath Wildcats Alumni Scholarship Recipient, XiaoDi Li, generously donated \$1000 to the scholarship she was awarded almost 12 years ago. We recently caught up with XiaoDi, who also gives back to current Wildcats by supporting Oakland High's Kiwanis Club.

What have you been up to since graduating from OHS?

I attended the University of the Pacific and graduated with a degree in Business Administration in 2016. During my last semester, I studied abroad in Verona, Italy — a truly life-changing experience (I recommend it to any college student who has the opportunity to go see the world)! After college, I moved

back home to Oakland to pursue a career in tech and have since worked on operations teams at Facebook, AngelList, and now Udacity as a Program Manager. Outside of work, I am part of the Kiwanis Club of Oakland and have had the privilege of advising students from Oakland High KIWIN'S since 2018. It's been such a full-circle experience giving back to the same club/organization that once gave me mentorship, confidence, and lifelong friends. In my free time, I love traveling, dragon boating, and going to concerts.

What do you remember most about being a high school student?

Ms. Dellefield and her classroom — Room 239,

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2025 OHS FOOTBALL HOMECOMING GAME:

**FRIDAY OCT. 17, 2025
AT TECH VERSUS TECH**
(while our field is under construction)

REGULAR SEASON TICKETS
[HTTPS://GOFAN.CO/APP/SCHOOL/CA23009](https://gofan.co/app/school/ca23009)
(GAME WILL APPEAR CLOSER TO THE DATE)

In this newsletter you can expect:

XiaoDi Li
donates

Support our
OHS Lady
Wildcats

Alumni
Spotlight

2025 WAA
Scholarship
Recipients

XiaoDi Li continued

the Leadership room — were my safe haven in high school. I was deeply involved in Class Office and ASB, and some of my favorite memories come from planning events like Homecoming, Winter Ball, Club Fair, and Food Fair. I loved staying after school to paint banners, decorate hallways, and bring those events to life — it made me truly appreciate my time at OHS.

Leadership also became my escape — a reason to stay on campus a little longer when I didn't want to be home. I'll always remember Ms. Dellefield, my Leadership teacher who felt like a second mom, for letting me stay late and for offering the warmth, guidance, and care I couldn't always find at home.

How did OHS prepare you for your future?

I thought I wanted to be a graphic designer, but after college, freelancing made me realize that getting paid to design turned something I loved into a chore. I felt lost for a while. When I started interviewing for entry-level roles at tech companies, I discovered my true passion was in project management, operations, and planning — all thanks to the skills I developed at OHS through Class Office, ASB, and KIWIN'S. The planning, problem-solving, people management, and soft skills I learned back then shaped the career path I'm on today.

What made you decide to donate to the scholarship?

I received the WAA Scholarship my senior year, and it was a small but powerful glimmer of hope after a tough college admission and scholarship season. Nearly every dream school and scholarship I applied to had rejected me, and the WAA award reminded me that I was capable — that I wasn't too shabby after all. It helped cover college supplies when I really needed it.

Over the years, I've had the joy of mentoring some of the most incredible students from Oakland High through KIWIN'S. Watching them grow and hearing their stories has been deeply fulfilling. Donating to the scholarship felt like the natural next step — a way to pay it forward and support the next generation of Wildcats the same way someone once supported me.

Send Our Lady Wildcats to the Tournament of Champions!

Dear Wildcat Family
& Community Members,

I'm Coach Nita Simpson, the Head Coach of the OHS Girls Varsity Basketball program. Our Oakland High School Girls' Varsity Basketball Team has been invited to one of the most prestigious high school basketball events in the country: the Nike Tournament of Champions in Arizona this December 2025. This is more than a tournament—it's a national stage, a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the incredible talent growing right here at Oakland High. We are also fundraising for 2 additional in-state tournaments.

To make these trips possible, we're aiming to raise \$55,000 to cover expenses: flights, hotel, meals, tournament registration.

As of October 1st, over \$30,000 has already been GENEROUSLY donated to our cause and we have purchased flights and hotel for Arizona!

How You Can Help:

- 1. Donate Today – Every contribution large or small pushes us forward.**
- 2. Spread the Word – Share this campaign with fellow Wildcats, community members, and local businesses.**

Donate via the link:

<https://gofund.me/722d2387>

We also ACCEPT CHECKS

Make all checks payable to: Oakland High School Memo: Girl's Basketball Program

Mail Checks to: Oakland High Girls Basketball, c/o Nita Simpson Head Coach, 1023 MacArthur Blvd. Oakland, CA 94610

2025 Wildcats Alumni Association Scholarship Recipients

OHS alumni again helped three graduating seniors pay for their first year college needs. WAA scholarships are made possible each spring by donations, large and small, of OHS alumni and their families. We are proud of these 2025 graduates.



Ojiugo Egeonu

received the \$4000 Alden McElrath Wildcats Alumni Scholarship Award and has started her freshman year at University of California at Berkeley with a goal of majoring in Biomedical Engineering.



Michelle Wong

This year, Gee-Baranco Family Scholarship set up by Barbara Gee and Gordon Baranco, (both OHS '65) awarded 6 scholarships in total.

Michelle Wong received \$500 and is studying psychology & public health at the University of California at Berkeley.



Bill Young

who is attending University of California at Berkeley received the John Curtiss Memorial Scholarship of \$1000 for a student interested in pursuing a career in communications.

The John Curtiss Memorial Scholarship is donated by Curtiss' family in recognition of his years in journalism.



Leah West

The Class of 1970 Scholarship of \$1000 scholarship awarded to Leah West who will attend Howard University and will be majoring in nursing.

Gee-Baranco Family Scholarship

This year, Gee-Baranco Family Scholarship set up by Barbara Gee and Gordon Baranco, (both OHS '65) awarded 6 scholarships in total:

- Huan (Katie) Mei Liang received \$500 and is studying nursing at the University of Pennsylvania.
- Michelle Wong received \$500 and is studying psychology & public health at the University of California at Berkeley.
- Valentina Garcia received \$250 and is studying political science at Lewis & Clark College.
- Walter Jones received \$250 and is studying communications at Temple University.
- Vannya Saechao received \$250 and is studying sociology at Macalester College.
- Bianca Zhu received \$250 and is studying business at New York University.

You can view these scholarship recipients and past recipients on the WAA website under **SCHOLARSHIPS** (<https://www.oaklandhighalumni.org/scholarships.php?action=recipients>).



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Shirley Muramoto (OHS '72) has been as busy as ever, and her exploits continue to amaze.

This is a must-see video of Shirley playing the National Anthem on the koto, a traditional Japanese instrument, at the SF Giants game against the Colorado Rockies on May 17, 2024 for Japanese Heritage month. The music had to be played within a 90 second window. She had to write the music herself because, hey, no one plays the anthem on a koto. After she finished, one of the Rockies' players commented, "Well, that was different."

An extra highlight for Shirley at the game was getting the autograph of Masanori Murakami, the first Japanese pitcher in MLB, who threw out the first pitch. Shirley got his autograph when he played in 1964 and got his autograph again 60 years later on the day she played the national anthem.

See and hear [Shirley's anthem here](https://youtu.be/wzLdUn8xht0?si=4zOZYTOFwwBIZe-E) (<https://youtu.be/wzLdUn8xht0?si=4zOZYTOFwwBIZe-E>).

Shirley was invited to apply for a Taproot Fellowship by the organization, which supports traditional arts and knew of Shirley's work as a performer and teacher of Japanese koto music. If you are an alumn from the early 1970s you may remember Shirley at an assembly on stage in her kimono kneeling before the stringed koto.

Shirley was one of 25 artists to receive a \$50,000 award. The organization said she can do anything she wants with the award. She figured it was for the arts so that is what she plans to use it for in her business, Murasaki Ensemble. Her business gives classes on how to play the koto, gives performances for various organizations, and Shirley gives lectures at schools.

See more on the [Taproot Fellowship](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10230315924455736&set=a.3145518470640&type=3) (<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10230315924455736&set=a.3145518470640&type=3>).

William Gee Wong (OHS June 1958) has written a memoir, *Sons of Chinatown*.

It is an excellent telling of one family's story and an excellent account of the community of Oakland's Chinatown in most of the first half of the 20th century.

Many Wildcat alumni from mid-20th Century will get a behind the scenes look at familiar people and places in this book. Well worth reading, it can be purchased at Amazon. More about Bill Wong's career and other books at <https://www.williamgeewong.com>.

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