

Family Tree

Fall 2021

A magazine for the extended family of Ojai Valley School



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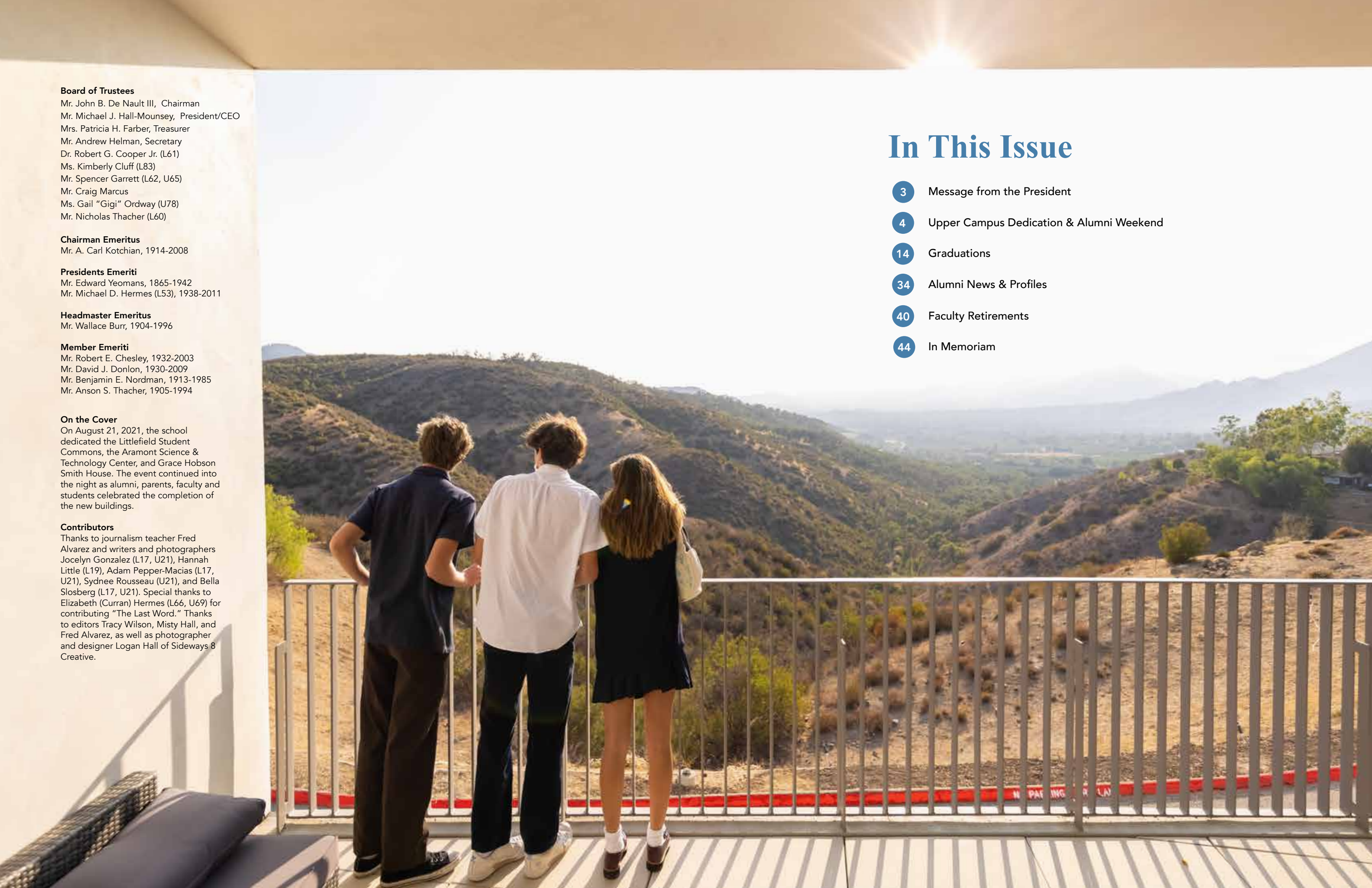
On August 21, 2021, the school dedicated the Littlefield Student Commons, the Aramont Science & Technology Center, and Grace Hobson Smith House. The event continued into the night as alumni, parents, faculty and students celebrated the completion of the new buildings.

Contributors

Thanks to journalism teacher Fred Alvarez and writers and photographers Jocelyn Gonzalez (L17, U21), Hannah Little (L19), Adam Pepper-Macias (L17, U21), Sydnee Rousseau (U21), and Bella Slosberg (L17, U21). Special thanks to Elizabeth (Curran) Hermes (L66, U69) for contributing “The Last Word.” Thanks to editors Tracy Wilson, Misty Hall, and Fred Alvarez, as well as photographer and designer Logan Hall of Sideways & Creative.

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President's Message

Ojai Valley School formally dedicated three signature buildings at its Upper Campus on August 21, 2021, nearly four years after the Thomas Fire devastated the high school community. The dedication took place during an outdoor ceremony of alumni, parents, students and faculty members and came just ahead of the opening of the 2021-2022 school year. OVS President/CEO Michael J. Hall-Mounsey led the dedication. Below is his message.



As the President and CEO of Ojai Valley School, I have the honor and privilege of welcoming you to this auspicious day in the history of Upper Campus. Thank you all for being here. What a wonderful setting. You are the first official visitors to be here and see all of this! What a treat to see the vision, plans and construction all become a reality.

Little did we know that in December 2017 the distant plume of smoke to the east of the Upper Campus would have such a widespread impact on the campus.

It was December 4, 2017 and the wind was blowing hard from the east. The next 24 hours would prove fateful and transformative; Upper Campus was about to receive its biggest challenge. Whilst the Thomas Fire took away the Grace Hobson Smith girls' dorm and the Lucila Arango Science and Technology Center, many of the buildings and infrastructure remained singed but functional.

Upon reflection, it is clear that the firestorm could indeed have consumed the whole campus. Over the next days and weeks, we benefited from great relationships with the heroic fire teams that saved Upper Campus, the numerous local and state agencies, insurance representatives, construction companies and vendors, but most importantly, our community of alumni, parents, past parents, faculty, staff, students and trustees who rallied to guarantee that this day would come. We were resolved and determined to stay open for our students. Our first big challenge! And we did! Most importantly, we were determined to rebuild. And we did!

I am standing on the place where in the Spring of 1967 OVS dedicated a new building on its fledgling high school campus. The Grace

Hobson Smith House. The home to more than 2,000 female resident students and staff until December 4, 2017. Now we gather to rededicate the new dorm on the same site. We are fortunate to have several members of the Hobson Smith and Stupay families here to celebrate with us. Thank you for joining us to celebrate the new era for Upper Campus and we have many thanks to give and people to acknowledge!

I'd like to recognize some distinguished guests with us here today. Beginning with our visionary architect Fred Fisher and his wife, Jennie Prebor. In the footprint of the fire's destruction, Fisher and his team envisioned an ensemble of buildings to meet the academic and residential needs of our community. Using a straight-forward glass and stucco construction, his design celebrates views of the Ojai Valley and blurs the lines between inside and outside. The buildings he has designed are more attractive, more environmentally sustainable, and more fire resistant than anything we have had before. They will give our high school students modern facilities that encourage collaboration, problem solving, creativity and innovation. My thanks to Fred, John Berley, David Ross, Trevor Behner and Taka Ikawa and everyone at Frederick Fisher and Partners architects.

I would like to recognize past parent and construction consultant Steve McGillivray and his wife, Patricia, who supported us after the fire in helping create the temporary Village, and who has personally led our complex rebuilding efforts as General Contractor. Thanks to you, Steve, and Will Street, Mary Williams, Russ Trozera, and Elizabeth McGillivray, Class of 2011, and all the associates at McGillivray Construction. Together we have made numerous decisions and many

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choices daily over the months and years leading to this very proud day.

My thanks go to the Board of Trustees for their leadership and generosity. It was their collective wisdom and resolve that has made today possible. They had the foresight to embrace the Master Plan opportunities, to redesign the layout and accelerate our mission for the future with what you see today. Thank you Trustees Jack DeNault, Pat Farber, Andy Helman, Kimberly Cluff, Gigi Ordway, Nick Thacher, Bob Cooper, Spencer Garrett, and Craig Marcus.

I wish to give a big shout out to my Administrative Team for keeping OVS open and viable. For their leadership, input, extra hard work and commitment over the past years, I wish to thank Craig Floyd, Tracy Wilson, Robert Cendejas, Jack McClenahan, Laurie Clark, Gina Fontana, Stephanie Gustafson, Peter Clark, Katrina Schmidt, John Wickenhaeuser, and Gary Gartrell.

Sincere thanks for all you have done for this project, along with running a busy school. I wish to give special acknowledgement to Craig Floyd for his leadership and “can-do” spirit. He and Michele have moved homes many times. We hope to complete our replacement Head’s house on the east of campus early next year. Thank you, Craig, for your patience. My sincere thanks to the Faculty and Staff for all they have done to keep OVS going, working in temporary classrooms, whilst also helping to design these new facilities. When you add the COVID pandemic to the mix, they have been amazing, creative, hard-working, resilient and above all, loyal.

To all Alumni who have rallied to volunteer to help support OVS in its hour of need with Work Days and financial support, a massive thank you. We would not be here today without your strong steadfast support. A special thank you to the students, especially the classes of 2020 and 2021, who also had to deal with graduating during the pandemic. Thanks for your pioneer spirit and resilience. Your sacrifices will not be forgotten.

It has been 1,356 days since the fire. It has been 805 days since ground breaking in June 2019.

So, let me give you a little information about these signature buildings. We have been in a state of organized chaos as we planned for today. We are unfinished and we have not fully moved in or have formal occupancy. Our new signs are held up in the COVID disrupted supply chain. So, what is new? Regardless, we will be open for our students in a week on August 29th. It is they who will embrace and emulate the pioneer spirit of the first classes back in the 1960s as they colonize and set new traditions in our state-of-the-art school.

These new buildings intentionally blur the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces as outlined in our Master Plan. Our best demonstration yet that we are living our philosophy and advancing our sustainability goals, they are environmentally sustainable and healthy for students and staff. The new complex and landscaping have been designed with fire safety in mind. To ensure the new construction meets LEED gold standards, and be Net Zero, OVS has taken the following steps:

- We will store our solar energy. The Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) allows for excess energy produced from the existing solar panels to be stored and then used at a time when consumption outstrips renewable output, reducing the consumption of grid power at peak time. In the evening, when the solar panels are no longer producing power, we will be able to use the energy stored in the “BESS” to run the campus.
- We are reducing our energy dependence. The roof designs and materials help reduce the “Heat Island Effect.” LED light fixtures and smart room controllers/ occupancy sensors reduce the electrical consumption. All Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning systems are CFC free and natural ventilation has been designed into the building construction to reduce the need for cooling.
- We have conserved open space. At least 40% of the site has been maintained as a “Greenfield area.”
- We have reduced much of our construction waste and we have used sustainable materials where possible.

We look forward to teaching in and about our new facilities. We have not achieved any of this without major help. A special thank you to Honorary Campaign Chair, Alumnus Keith Carradine, Class of 1967, who is here today; To the families of Grace Hobson Smith, one of the school’s beloved benefactors, Barbara Smith Stupay, Class of 1968, and Jeffrey Smith, Class of 1965.

To the Aramont Foundation and Luci Arango, Class of 1984. My thanks for your early support and leadership. You gave our campaign the confidence when we needed it the most. Thank you.

A sincere debt of gratitude to Ed Littlefield, Class of 1967. Ed couldn’t be here today, but we acknowledge his significant support and leadership.

So much has been achieved in such a relatively short period of time, from alumni from every era, from parents both past and present, our fantastic staff, and many, many friends. This not only demonstrates the OVS spirit, but it speaks to the generations of people who over the past 110 years have made this school great. Today we



The mountains of the Los Padres National Forest are reflected in the windows of the Littlefield Student Commons, as Mr. Hall-Mounsey formally dedicates the new buildings on August 21, 2021.

must acknowledge the generations of benefactors who came before us, making the school better with contributions to our academic, residential, fine and performing arts, and equestrian programs. We stand on their shoulders.

And so that leaves us with a question: Who will stand on our shoulders? Who will be able to see further to chart our next course and benefit future generations of students?

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said: “The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.” I encourage you all to be part of the movement in the years to come. Let’s keep our momentum and complete our Master Plan. Let’s build our new gymnasium.

Now, let it be known that on Saturday, August 21st, 2021 these magnificent dorms, labs, classrooms and signature student commons were dedicated for the benefit of future generations of OVS students. On this, the greatest day since Upper Campus was founded, I’d like to have Steve and Fred join us to formally hand over the Key to our new facilities.

New Buildings, Classrooms, Labs, and other dedicated areas on campus

- Littlefield Student Commons
- Aramont Science & Technology Center
- Grace Hobson Smith House
- Ordway Park
- Boswell Hall
- JB Close Jr. Memorial Library
- Larry & Kathie Fisher Family Mezzanine
- Lin Family Lab for Biology & Environmental Science
- Black Family Foundation Makerspace
- The McCarthy Family Multipurpose Room
- Carol Burnett Media & Digital Arts Lab
- Garrett Family Steps
- Carl & Jody Cooper Oak Dining Terrace
- Ordway Art Studio
- Robert E. Chesley Physics Lab
- Frances & Robert Ferguson Chemistry Lab
- William H. Hair Meeting Room



Above: Guests enjoy a sunset dinner at the Dedication Ceremony on August 21.



A full moon rises over the McCarthy Family Multipurpose Room, as staff and students including Alex Alvarez (L18), Carmen Doane-Barkan (U99), Jocelyn Gonzalez (L17, U21), Lisa Boyd, John Boyd and Andy Street treat guests to live music.

December 5, 2017

Thomas Fire destroys Lucila Arango Science & Technology Center, Grace Hobson Smith House, and damages other structures on campus.

January 8, 2018

Upper Campus reopens, on time, with temporary classrooms and dorms — and no disruptions to the academic program.

July 18, 2018

Aramont Foundation contributes \$1 million to fund the new Aramont Science & Technology Center.

June 8, 2019

Ceremonial Groundbreaking Ceremony held during Alumni Weekend.

May 8, 2020

Foundation for the Littlefield Student Commons is poured.

May 17, 2021

First Milk and Crackers morning announcements held on the Garrett Family Steps.

August 30, 2021

First day of school at Upper Campus. **Buildings complete!**

April 18, 2018

Board of Trustees approves conceptual plans to rebuild, including the construction of the new Student Commons.

November 7, 2019

Grading begins.

October 2020

Framing completed. Construction continues.

August 21, 2021

New buildings officially dedicated at ceremony held during Alumni Weekend.

January 5-6, 2018

More than 200 volunteers help prepare Upper Campus for the start of second semester.

May 5, 2018

OVS launches Restore Renew Rebuild campaign at the spring Gala.

Oct 18, 2019

Ed Littlefield pledges \$2 million toward the construction of the Student Commons and initiates an additional \$1 million matching challenge.

April 3, 2020

First concrete truck arrives.

May 14, 2021

Class of 2021 gets a special tour around the construction site with Mr. Hall-Mounsey.

January 30, 2018

First "Vision Workshop" held with Frederick Fisher and Partners architects to plan the rebuild.

December 13, 2017

Community meeting held to announce plans to reopen on time for the second semester.

December 22, 2017

First temporary classrooms arrive on campus.

Dedication Ceremony



1. From left to right, Board Chairman John B. DeNault III, General Contractor Steve McGillivray, Upper Campus Head of School Craig Floyd (U83), OVS President/CEO Michael Hall-Mounsey, and architect Fred Fisher 2. Architect David Ross and associates from Frederick Fisher and Partners 3. View of Grace Hobson Smith House 4. Guests tour the Frances & Robert Ferguson Chemistry Lab 5. Grace Hobson Smith House courtyard at sunset 6. Trustee Spencer Garrett (L62, U65) with wife Nancy and daughter Cameryn (L98, U02)

Dedication Ceremony



7. Brian Miller, Carol Burnett and Tracy Wilson outside the Carol Burnett Digital & Media Arts Lab 8. Son and mom duo Evan Graham Arango (L07, U11) and Luci Arango (U84) 9. Fred Alvarez and Jeffrey Lin (L13, U17) 10. From left to right, Justin Haase, Brian Haase, Marie Haase and Kristin Haase 11. Elizabeth McGillivray (L11) and Will Street on the Commons reading porch 12. Cooper Hefner (U09) and Max Wheeler (L06, U10) 13. Mary and David Trudeau 14. Fred Fisher and Michael Hall-Mounsey

Alumni Weekend

Alumni Weekend is traditionally a June event, but due to the pandemic the reunion was postponed to later in summer in hopes of providing the best possible health conditions for all. The event took place on August 20-22, 2021, which also provided an opportunity for alumni of all eras to join in the dedication of the rebuilt Grace Hobson Smith House, the Aramont Science & Technology Center, and the new Littlefield Student Commons. Next year, Alumni Weekend will return to its traditional early summer dates with a celebration at the Lower Campus on June 10-12, 2022.



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1. Marti Phillips and David Philips (L78, U82) catch a sunset selfie from the reading porch. 2. Classmates Jess Brolin (L87, U91) and Sally (McClenahan) Dyer (L87, U91) 3. Caitlin (Black) Cooper (L97), Ali Fortier-Weller (L11, U15) and Laurel Colborn 4. Darcie George and Jacob Tadlock (L14, U18) 5. Cathy Herz (L51) and her son, Robb, celebrated the 70th anniversary of Cathy's graduating class at Alumni Weekend

Alumni Weekend



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6. From left to right, Tom Simpson, Carol Ekker (U71), John Enders (U70), Marcy Berg, Cheryl Hockaday (L67) and Michael Milligan (L67, U70) 7. Barbara Smith Stupay (L65, U68), center, with son Douglas Stupay and Mark Bradley 8. Michele (Whipple) Floyd (L84) and Craig Floyd (U83) 9. From left to right, John DeNault IV (L89, U93), Cole McIntosh (L10, U14) and Tracy Fryer (U93) 10. Carl Cooper (L64, U68) and Cooper Hefner (U09) 11. From left to right, Paige Muller (L18,) Corbin Muller (U20) and Hilgard Muller (L88, U92) 12. Ryan Blatz (L95) and Richard LaGraff (U81)

Congratulations Spuds!

Class of 2021





"There is a saying in independent schools that your school will only be as strong as your senior class. The Class of 2021 is leaving us an enriched, more empathetic and closer community, and for that we are truly grateful ... The bar you have set is a very high one and future classes will have to follow in your big footsteps."
— President/CEO Michael Hall-Mounsey, speaking at Graduation Ceremony



Upper Campus Head of School Message

By Craig Floyd - Head of School, Upper Campus

Behind me sit 18 individuals and three others are remote. They run the spectrum – artists and engineers, athletes and outdoor enthusiasts – who have become an integral part of the Upper Campus community. Collectively, they are the Class of 2021.

This is a special group. When I addressed the Board of Trustees this past April, I referred to this year as the year of “disruption, destruction, and construction.” I think that statement holds true describing the high school career of these seniors. They have overcome the obstacles thrown in their path. From entering as wide-eyed freshman, then the Thomas Fire, to maneuvering through the rebuilding efforts, being impacted by the pandemic and finally having the school reopen for in-person learning, but having a few classmates unable to attend.

The Class of 1965 was exemplified by its “pioneer spirit.” This class has demonstrated their version of the “pioneer spirit.” For the Class of 2021, I like to call it “Pioneer Spirit 2.0.”

The resilience that these seniors have shown is remarkable. Each graduate has his or her unique interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Those qualities distinguished these students throughout their high school careers. Whether it was academics, outdoor education, athletics, performing arts, or community service, they all set the bar high for those that will follow.

To say this class accomplished much would be an understatement. They organized camping trips, participated in CIF playoffs, created service organizations, led the Robotics teams, wrote countless articles for the school newspaper, performed a musical that was pre-recorded due to COVID restrictions, and



ultimately performed live on this stage at the Festival of Talent.

As they began their senior year, they were met with the continued challenge of online learning. They were not deterred in their pursuits. They began their college applications and AP classes, a small group was able to take an outdoor education trip to Santa Rosa Island, and they looked for ways to engage and involve the school community in some form of normalcy.

Through the challenges, 17 of them applied Early Decision/Early Action. As a group, they earned 121 college acceptances with more than half getting into their top choice schools. The colleges clearly saw what we know about this group: they want to be challenged and they fully immersed themselves in all aspects of school life.

When the opportunity came to open school for in-person learning, those who returned eagerly resumed athletics and joined outdoor education trips, including a senior class trip rafting down the San Juan River in Utah. As a school, we want to see our students push beyond limits. We want them to discover their potential and develop the work ethic and confidence to take on any challenges that life may throw their way.

It's reassuring to know that this group leaves here having learned those skills. These seniors will be successful in life as they are equipped to tackle all that lies in front of them. I'm confident this group is ready for the next chapter. Their paths will lead them all over the globe, but their actions have bound them together. Above all else, we will long remember their sense of community.

The colleges clearly saw what we know about this group: they want to be challenged and they fully immersed themselves in all aspects of school life.

The New Pioneers

Senior Class Message

by Adam Pepper-Macias (L17, U21)

Let me begin by just saying thank you — to this school, to this community, and to this class that I've grown into. I want to talk today about a specific characteristic of the Class of 2021 that has come to fascinate me. I think our class embodies some of the unique energy that lies at the heart of Ojai Valley School's philosophy, not just Integer Vitae, but a certain vibrancy — a grit, a willingness to make the best of any situation.

And that is essential and core to this school, and more specifically this hill. It stems from Integer Vitae. But it's more. It is living life with the pioneer spirit.

I worked a lot with Ms. Wilson this year, and I had occasional small glimpses into the book she is writing about OVS. I always knew bits and pieces about the students who made this school, slices of life, stories and traditions, but as I read the book, I could feel the vitality of these students as if they had only just graduated a few years ago. You can feel their voices reverberating under the oak trees in this amphitheater and resonating through the campus.

Spencer Garrett (L62, U65), OVS' first Student Council president, for whom the steps where we now hold Milk and Crackers are named, said those first years of the Upper Campus could be characterized by the “pioneer spirit.” Somehow, they made the laborious process of building their campus fun. They slept out on slabs of concrete, flew through the Sespe in VW buses, and gave their all to work on a school that they would never see completed. Their work still serves as the foundation of this school — their legacy, still palpable. They built this amphitheater, the same one my class helped rebuild after the fire. The more I read, the more striking the similarities between these early classes and our own became.

In 2017, when Ojai Valley School was engulfed in flames, when buildings, memories, and history were reduced to ashes in the warm Santa Ana wind, this community made it clear that OVS is more than just buildings, more than just land.

OVS is us, the people.



We hear this often; constantly, we are reminded of the strength of our community — every hammer blow and tile saw scream is proof that OVS is more than just stone and steel.

Our class had the campus taken from us, twice, and in that negative space we have built community.

We rebuilt in the wake of the fire, inhabiting The Village, making it home. And we rebuilt during the pandemic, organizing online events, sending emails — not just getting through the year, but building a community online where there wasn't one before.

There was a school remade in the emails where life was happening. We built a virtual community held together by satellite connections: tangible and real. For a couple of months, there was a website where you could log on and hear the heart of this community beating quietly ... unflinchingly. Every email that was sent began to sound more and more like a part of something. Viewed in a vacuum, each was just an announcement, but taken together, they began to form the semblance of a community, breathing and moving and alive. More than just emails.

When I returned to this campus for in-person learning, I could feel the vibrance, the life that this school exudes, coursing through the cinder block walls and the big

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green wooden beams. We are the source of that energy. We do that, because we are Spuds. Gritty, focused, prepared to change, ready to adapt. That's who we are, that's who we've always been: innovators, ground breakers, pioneers.

In 1961, Upper's first school year, students felled trees and leveled ground to help the contractors who would build a school around them. They raced a school bus named Petunia down Reeves, clinging to its gutters, standing on its bumpers. And they still sing this school's praises.

We were born into the spirit of students who simply had to adapt, students who were able to find joy in every aspect of life. And we too are Spuds, so we made the best of it.

We are the Class of 1965 who,

without a campus, were able to construct a community around themselves. We did it down in The Village after the fire, and we did it during COVID.

We bring vibrancy into everything we do—not merely persevering but truly making the situation our own, and in that we are quintessentially pioneers, quintessentially OVS. This moment is the passing of the last burned class at OVS — passing into memory, passing into impressions left on lowerclassmen, passing into a long legacy of pioneers.

Lowerclassmen: Embrace this spirit. Get gritty. Feel the dirt under your fingernails and build. The buildings are there, but the space is empty. Fill it with your voices, your passion and your connections to one another, because two years from now, this year's sophomores

will graduate and the COVID Class will move on, and two years after that the first class to inhabit the new buildings will move on.

Someday soon the class before you today will be nothing but a yearbook and a few alumni to bolster it. Will we be remembered for the impressions we left on these noble oaks, for stories told by old-time teachers who gave their lives to grow with this school? Will this hill remember us when we are no longer able to climb it? Will the green beams and white walls work us into their fibrous frameworks? Will we pass on the pioneering spirit?

I think we will. I think that classes generations from now will feel it when they walk this hill. They'll build and then they'll rebuild, because they'll be Spuds. And that's what we do.

Tim Chadwick - University of Oregon

Take a second to look at the world through the viewfinder of his video camera and you'll quickly learn what this young man is all about. As he demonstrated through video footage for his Senior Capstone project, Timothy possesses the soul of an artist and the spirit of an adventurer. His Capstone was ostensibly a recap of the senior trip down the San Juan River, but as with all things regarding Tim, it was so much deeper than that. He tied it into the years he spent and lessons he learned as a student at the Lower Campus, especially as part of the outdoor program. He talked about the ecology of the river, and raised questions of water rights and equity, especially for the indigenous peoples who reside along its banks. At this young man's core is a brain at work, and OVS was the better for it. In his senior year, he took a Humanities class, a course usually reserved for freshmen, simply because he was interested in exploring some of history's great books such as *The Odyssey* and *Siddhartha*. He plugged in and put his all into his Law and Society Class, and at the year-end Mock Trial delivered a performance that was voted best witness by the jurors. Determination and intellectual curiosity are qualities that have earned Timothy the respect of his peers and teachers.



Bob Chen - UC Berkeley

On the basketball court, in the dorms, on outdoor excursions, and in the classroom, Bob has done it all. Steady and self-assured, he is full of strong opinions and good conversation. Bob challenged himself in the classroom, and was a regular on the Honor Roll and the Headmaster's List, which recognizes those students with our highest GPAs AND effort grades. He was dedicated to developing deep understanding in a broad range of courses. At our year-end awards ceremony, Bob earned awards for academic excellence in AP Physics and AP Computer Science. He served as a dorm prefect, he loves to play basketball and was a key member of our varsity squad. He also ran cross country and is a 400 meter specialist in track. But here's a great story that says much about Bob — at the league final in track his sophomore year, the school needed a runner to fill in on the 4 x100 relay. That's a tough sprint, but it was made tougher yet by the fact that his event — the 400-meter dash — directly followed that relay race. Bob showed his selflessness by volunteering to anchor the relay, likely giving up a chance to place in the 400 meter final and perhaps advance to CIF preliminaries. It says a lot about the size of his heart and about his willingness to contribute to the greater good. We will miss his contributions.



Oliver Chen - New York University

A leader, an innovator and a go-getter in his four years on our campus. What we've come to understand about Oliver is the way he does one thing (advocacy for a weight room) is the way he does all things (academics, community service and mentorship). He was key in prodding his peers to put down their phones, put away their video games and get out of their rooms to do good work for others. He raised money for cancer survivors, won election to the Student Council and served as a mentor for our younger students. Through leadership and persistence, and because it was important to him, he petitioned the administration to establish an afterschool training program centered on weightlifting and fitness. And when fire came through in 2017 and forced the weight room to close because we needed that area for classroom space, Oliver took it upon himself to reestablish the program, raising money and recruiting fellow bodybuilding enthusiasts to take part. He even based his Capstone project on his bodybuilding efforts. Oliver's drive and tenacity were apparent in the classroom, where he took a range of challenging Advanced Placement classes. He was recognized as an AP Scholar with Distinction. He understood, in particular, the importance of mastering English, as it held the key to success in so many other classes, including a basic and advanced journalism class that became one of his passions. When OVS switched to virtual learning last March, Oliver returned to his native China and continued reporting and writing from there, essentially becoming the school's Beijing correspondent and providing insight into life there that you couldn't find in many mainstream publications.



Major Awards

WALLACE BURR AWARD

Adam Pepper-Macias
Established to recognize the student who has made a significant impact on the OVS community by giving unsolicited service.

ROBERT G. COOPER AWARD

Jocelyn Gonzalez
Honors the senior who has demonstrated the most growth during his or her senior year.

A. CARL KOTCHIAN AWARD

Ethan Gao
Awarded to the most outstanding scholar, not only for academic achievement but also for this student's level of effort and intellectual curiosity.

ANDREW KILLE AWARD

Gabriel Weisiger
Given to the senior who has demonstrated himself or herself to be a leader with a strong sense of community; one who has been consistently hard working, helpful, friendly, and who has exhibited a good sense of humor.

DOROTHY BURR LITERARY AWARD

Jocelyn Gonzalez
Recognizes the student for outstanding writing based on the submission of written work.

SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

Ryan Farrell and India Getty-Pruss
Given to the athletes who have most demonstrated integrity, leadership, and, above all, good sportsmanship.

JB CLOSE AWARD

Andrew Thacher
Recognizes the student, or students, who have exhibited the most enthusiasm and active participation in the outdoor program.

CARL S. COOPER AWARD

Brody Moller
Recognizes the underclass student, or students, for their leadership and character. It is an award that neither dwells in the past nor predicts the future. It honors the individuals for who they are, here and now.

Senior Profiles

James Choi - Purdue University

In his short time with us, James made the most of his opportunities, joining us on camping trips as part of our outdoor education program and participating in resident life, athletics, and of course college preparatory academics. He became a key member of our varsity soccer team, helping that squad make CIF playoffs for the first time in school history. Fast and dedicated to bettering himself, James also prepared hard to take part in his first track relay season in his junior year, and he was poised to play a pivotal role on the 4 x 100 meter relay team. He also played a key role in the award-winning journalism program, continuing to report and write from his native Korea when COVID concerns forced him to return home last March. As a boarder, he learned the independence that comes from living away from family. He has also learned how to ask for help and to advocate on his own behalf, skills that will serve him well as he takes the next step along his academic path. James is ready for that next step, and is well prepared to pursue his developing interests in the fields of health and medicine. Even in his short time here, he has learned much in the classroom and through our program, and he has learned much about himself in this process.

Meline Ellwanger - Montana State University

She has an infectious positivity and a warm, welcoming spirit. She approaches academics, the arts and our outdoor curriculum with the same joy and curiosity — but then adds a dose of singular focus and unflagging determination that comes through in all she does, on campus and off. Meline came to OVS as a sophomore and immediately took advantage of our small class sizes and nurturing learning environment to carve a path to academic success. She took a range of AP courses — AP Studio Art, AP Statistics and AP Environmental Science. She won several academic awards, including two at the year-end awards ceremony in environmental science and video production. She has immersed herself in our outdoor education program, hiking and camping in the Sierras and Sequoias, rafting the San Juan River, and rock climbing in our local mountains. But perhaps Meline's best work can be seen through her exploration of the arts. She is a gifted photographer, and demonstrated her talent as part of the academic curriculum at OVS, and beyond. Her AP Art 2-D concentration focused on endangered species in Africa, and the portfolio she assembled for submission was nothing short of breathtaking. She showcased those same skills and interests in her Senior Capstone presentation. And she extended those passions this year through courses in journalism and video production, both of which are classes in which she stands out due to her knowledge base and enthusiasm. Indeed, she has become a mentor for younger students in these fields, lending her talent and expertise to those who share her interests. In this way, she shows others what it means to be truly kind, patient, accepting, and supportive.

Ethan Gao - UC Berkeley

He's an innovator, a self-starter, and an originator of movements big and small. Along with a classmate, Ethan launched a competitive Math Club, providing a home for students who otherwise might not have found their niche at our campus. Because there was not a sport he liked between cross country and track seasons, he launched the Hiking Club during winter session, securing a faculty supervisor and a group of students dedicated to exploring the rugged wilderness that surrounds our school. He was a captain of the award-winning Robotics Team, putting his programming expertise to its highest and best use. But he also has loaned his technical expertise to helping stage our school musical and various other performances, always volunteering to do so rather than waiting to be called. Ethan worked his way into a scoring member of our varsity cross country squad, through sheer force and will. Those qualities that made him run long and hard were the same qualities that made him an exceptional student and outstanding contributor to the OVS community. His resume will also tell you he is a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist, a HOBY leadership conference selection, and a Boys State nominee. It will show that he made the most out of our rigorous college prep curriculum, taking 16 honors and AP courses, while supplementing his studies with internships and college courses in math, computer science and engineering. Fittingly, at graduation, he was recognized as the outstanding scholar at the Upper Campus, presented with the A. Carl Kotchian Award for his many academic achievements.

Senior Profiles

Jocelyn Gonzalez - UCLA

Jocelyn is an exceptional student and citizen, self motivated and driven at all times to perform at her highest level, no matter the task in front of her. She demonstrated her academic grit with perpetual placement on the Honor Roll, and recognition last summer by the College Board as an AP Scholar with Distinction. At the year-end awards ceremony, she was recognized multiple times for her academic excellence in courses including AP Psychology and AP English Literature. She extended many of her academic passions beyond the classroom. A student artist of rare talent and initiative, her talent was recognized through scholarships and internships provided by the Ojai Arts Commission, the Ojai Studio Artists and the Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation. Jocelyn maintained these high-powered pursuits while holding a variety of leadership positions and actively engaging in virtually every aspect of the school's co-curricular and extracurricular program. She wrote for the school newspaper, and served as a student leader and on the OVS Leadership Council. She was chosen to serve as a Day Student Prefect and as a delegate to the HOBY Leadership Program. She also launched a program to make blankets for kittens at the local Humane Society, raised money for cancer research through Relay for Life, and helped support environmental efforts that included cleaning up the local watershed. She performed in the school chorus and in every school musical, and to cap her senior year she put on quite the show for her final exam in Voice class. At graduation, she was presented with the Robert G. Cooper Award, which goes to the student who demonstrates the most growth during his or her senior year. It was an honor well earned and well deserved.

Zela Henderson - UC Santa Cruz

She is an independently motivated young woman who possesses a keen intelligence and a fierce curiosity for knowledge. Zela made the most out of our rigorous college prep curriculum, challenging herself with a half dozen honors and Advanced Placement courses in her years here. At the year-end awards ceremony last year, her AP Psychology teacher honored her with an award for academic excellence. Zela embedded herself deeply into the fabric of our high school community, dedicating herself to service work and to improving our high school campus in many ways. She contributed to beach cleanup, participated in wildland restoration and cared for abused and neglected animals at local shelters. Her peers recognized that no one played harder than her on the soccer field. More recently, she expanded her athletic pursuits to include cycling and triathlons. She is an avid outdoor enthusiast, and for her Capstone project she chronicled the challenges that come, and technical expertise required, to tackle backcountry skiing. As she will readily tell you, it's not as easy as it looks. It is clear that it was in the outdoors where she learned some of her most valuable lessons: That improvement comes through hard work, and that it takes guts and grit to be any good at what you do. Zela embraced those lessons and is now ready to put them to work.

Justin Huang - Santa Clara University

A strong thinker and a solid student, Justin made the most of his time at OVS, engaging in the wide range of opportunities offered in outdoor education, resident life, community service and athletics. He provided volunteer service to the Green Schools Coalition, a federation of local schools dedicated to environmental stewardship and sustainability. Having attended British schools, Justin also took great pleasure in introducing cricket and rugby to his American peers, the latter of which he played at a high level in his native Hong Kong and in which he earned multiple awards in tournament play. He displayed that same athletic prowess on the OVS soccer and flag football teams, becoming a force to be reckoned with. Always open to new opportunities, he joined the baseball team his senior year, learning the basics of the game and becoming part of the squad that would go on to capture a league title and compete in the CIF playoffs. Through that experience and beyond, his peers will tell you that Justin is a good friend, one who is loyal and who could be counted on to lend a helping hand. While he is outwardly friendly and easy going, don't let that calm, quiet demeanor fool you. Underneath that tranquil exterior is a young man who wants to achieve and excel, and that he did at Ojai Valley School.

Senior Profiles

Amy Kweon - UC Irvine

Whether it was lending her talent to the school's dance team, returning a hard serve on the volleyball court or contributing her time to the robotics program, Amy was fastidious in her work from start to finish. She grew from a quiet, reserved newcomer to an involved, committed and caring member of our student body, making the most of the many academic and extracurricular opportunities. At various points in her high school career, she could have been found serving alongside her classmates to pick up trash for Earth Day initiatives, raising money to battle homelessness through the Empty Bowls project, and taking to the streets to demand action on Climate Change. Additionally, she served as a Student Leader and dorm prefect. In the classroom, Amy demonstrated tremendous academic growth during her high school years. It was in mathematics and the sciences where Amy truly excelled, taking on a number of challenging Advanced Placement classes and performing at a high level. In her junior year, she was recognized as the top student in AP Computer Science Principles. And last year she teamed with a peer to create a memorable Senior Capstone project, in which they created their own clothing company, sold their products on the web and donated proceeds from those sales to a group that supports firefighters and other first responders. Most importantly, Amy was kind, and a good friend to all.

Derek Mendoza - Oxnard College

What a journey this young man had. An active, adventurous student, he steadily found his stride as a student and contributor to our community since arriving freshman year. He served in Student Leadership, and was elected by peers to serve on Student Council. But what's most important about that achievement is that Derek ran for office not to pad his resume, but because he truly loves his school. In the classroom, he worked hard to master the material. Sometimes, this did not come easily to him. But there is no quit in Derek, and as evidence you only needed to look at the seriousness he infused to his role as defense attorney in this week's mock trial. He took advantage of co- and extracurricular activities outside the classroom. Whether it was backpacking, mountain biking or rock climbing, Derek was in his element when exploring the world around him, and he emerged as a quiet leader, helping his younger, less experienced peers find the same wonder and joy he does. That's even more true in the sports arena, where Derek established himself as leader on our varsity basketball and flag football teams. But make no mistake about it, baseball is this young man's passion. He pitched and played first base for our varsity squad, helping lead the team to the CIF playoffs. It was a particular joy to see him on the mound, and it's safe to say we will all miss the Derek grunt, and the follow-through fist pump, when he threw a pitch that turned sport into art.

Adrian Ortiz - Ventura College

When he crossed the stage in the amphitheater in June, Adrian became the first in his family to graduate high school. In a year full of highlights and milestones, Adrian's accomplishment was significant and loudly applauded by friends, family and faculty members in attendance. Adrian probably learned as much about himself during his OVS years as he learned in the classroom. He spent his time at Ojai Valley School trying to improve himself as a scholar, an athlete and a member of this community, which by his own admission he was a bit nervous to join. In his years at OVS, he took to the outdoors, coming to understand the myriad lessons waiting to be learned on the trail or around a campfire. He was a dedicated athlete throughout high school, playing flag football and basketball and baseball, and drawing praise from his coaches for his hard work and dedication to improvement. He was a tough competitor, playing power forward in basketball and most often catcher in baseball, and helping his team two years capture the league title and a CIF berth. But it was in the academic arena where he experienced the most growth, learning what it's like to confront and conquer tough educational challenges. This year he took on the rigors of his first Advanced Placement class, setting the tone for the academic pursuits that lie ahead. Adrian, you might have been nervous about coming to OVS, but look at you now.

Senior Profiles

Adam Pepper-Macias - Wesleyan University

Creative, committed, cerebral and curious, Adam is full of spirit, opinions, and conversation. He is a remarkable advocate for the issues that mean the most to him: diversity and inclusion, environmental safeguards, human rights and racial justice to name a few. He is a rare learner who will surprise you with the depth of his thought and the power of his perception. Academically, he is drawn to history, political affairs and languages. Last year, Adam was awarded the school's poetry prize. He served as publications editor for the school newspaper, and contributed greatly to the OVS Journalism blog and "On The Hill" Instagram page. He possesses a thirst for learning and intellectual curiosity rare for one so young. When issues/questions of diversity and inclusion bubbled up, Adam took it upon himself to meet with members of the administrative team to talk through these issues and to lay the groundwork for addressing them. In those conversations he was poised, confident, knowledgeable and well-reasoned. He did not blame or point fingers — he laid out issues worthy of contemplation and correction, and asked how the faculty and student body could work together to make life better. He is a founder and leader in the Ventura County Green Schools Coalition, a partnership with local student leaders developing ways to make schools more sustainable, and to expand those initiatives into the community. Fittingly, he is the two-time winner of the Wallace Burr Award, recognizing the student who has made a significant impact on the OVS community by giving unsolicited service.

Mark Pindur - Georgia Tech

He is a leader in our community and passionate about his interests. He is a doer, a go-getter, and an innovator of the serious and the silly on our campus. He was a driver and coach on our Robotics team, co-creator of our first-ever competitive math team, and the most-improved runner on the cross-country team. When we shifted to virtual learning, Mark took it upon himself to create a series of weekly online mini-games as a way of holding the community together as the pandemic forced us to be apart. A look at his transcript will reveal a superior student. He has taken 15 AP and honors courses over his high school career, and so many extra courses outside the OVS curriculum that they did not all fit on his high school transcript. For his performance on the AP exams, the College Board bestowed upon Mark its highest honor, naming him a National AP Scholar. Even in the midst of a global pandemic, he took part this past summer in UC Santa Barbara's Summer Research Academy, exploring various wearable technologies and mastering 3D modeling, all in an effort to learn more about modern technology. To end this school year, Mark co-MC'd the Festival of Talent, which was the campus' first live event, and organized a campus-wide Dodgeball tournament that was wildly popular. As a dorm prefect, as a member of the school's Leadership Council and as our student body president, he made Ojai Valley School a better place, and he's certain to do the same for his college community.

Sydnee Rousseau - Santa Barbara City College

Aside from a short detour in middle school, Sydnee is essentially an OVS lifer. She is an incredible talent: a hard worker, extraordinary equestrian, veteran of the award-winning journalism crew, gifted writer, outstanding photographer and good friend. Sydnee demonstrated tremendous growth in her years at OVS, taking on all challenges and mastering multiple subjects. She is a leader in the athletic arena, emerging over the years as a standout equestrian. Few people know that she is a mechanic of the highest order, proving this to be true in her Senior Capstone project when she put a lot of hard work and plenty of elbow grease into fully restoring a 1992 Jeep Wrangler that wasn't running and was in desperate need of some TLC. In fact, she drove that Jeep to her graduation ceremony. Sydnee embedded herself into the fabric of the life of OVS, thriving in the outdoors and in service endeavors. She was selected over the years to serve in various leadership capacities, including this year as Senior Class representative where she learned that leading her peers is a lot like herding cats (steer clear of asking her about the difficulties of ordering Senior swag). What is true about Sydnee, in ways big and small, is that she has been an outstanding member of our Ojai Valley School community, and her contributions and good cheer will definitely be missed.

Senior Profiles



Bella Slosberg - Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

A master of the triathlon. A steward of the environment. A wordsmith extraordinaire. Bella has been a powerhouse in so many ways at OVS. She embedded herself into the fabric of the Upper Campus, serving on Student Council, as captain the cross country team, and as editor-in-chief of the student newspaper. She set a high academic bar, challenging herself with tough AP courses like AP Physics, AP Environmental Science, and AP English Literature. Just as impressively, she emerged as a student leader, one committed to service worker by volunteering her time with the National Parks Service, the local Humane Society and a variety of other causes. Outside of school, Bella has developed and excelled in a range of interests. She is a fierce and determined athlete, becoming a nationally-ranked triathlete for her gender and age group. She served as a lifeguard, wrote stories for the community newspaper, and interned at the law office of a local immigration attorney. Through that last endeavor, last year she helped organize and execute an Asylum Advocacy Conference, and then organized OVS students and faculty to attend to learn more and take action on that pivotal issue. Bella is committed to the idea that a better world can be shaped through contribution and positive change, and she spent her years at OVS proving that to be true.



Carson Strassman - The New School

A naturally curious student and strong thinker, Carson regularly demonstrated his intellectual precision and impressive motivation to further his knowledge and understanding of material. In his time at the Upper Campus, he made the Honor Roll and the Headmaster's List every year, and earned class awards in history and English. But anyone who knows Carson knows this much: music is his first love. For his Senior Capstone project, he invited us into his world as a musician, sharing with faculty and his fellow students how he came to love the guitar, and his process for songwriting. It was a master class, and one that does exactly what we want the Capstone to do — demonstrate the students' depth and passion for what they've learned in their OVS years. In other areas, Carson made the most of his time at OVS, engaging in the wide range of opportunities offered in outdoor education, robotics and especially in the arts where in recent years he has been a key member of our Garage Band and performed for the first time as a solo act at the recent Festival of Talent. He was a stand-out performer in school musicals, and was recognized at the year-end awards ceremony as one of two students who performed all four years in those school productions. And none of us will soon forget his signature flips during those shows. Those we will miss.



Kanna Terunuma - UC Davis

Whether it was lending her talents to the video production program, charging down the basketball court on a fast break, or contributing her support to the Robotics program, Kanna was fastidious in her work from start to finish, and delightful to work with at all times. When she first arrived from her native Japan, she was shy, quiet, and reserved. Over the past four years, she grew to be an involved, committed and caring member of our student body. At various points in her high school career, she could have been found serving alongside her classmates to raise money for cancer research, supporting the homeless through an annual ceramics project known as Empty Bowls, and befriending abandoned and neglected animals at the local Humane Society. Always pushing herself to be better, Kanna's commitment to excellence is never clearer than when she is on the athletic field. A fierce and formidable opponent, she is at home on the soccer pitch as she is on the basketball court, but it is volleyball that is her true love and the game she seeks to master. While she began at OVS in our ESL program, she quickly demonstrated comfort in participating in all facets of our program, growing into a responsible and hard-working student while finding success in a range of challenging classes. Kanna also emerged as a committed and effective student leader, serving this past year as the Weekend Representative to Student Council. Kanna returned to OVS as soon as we reopened for in-person learning, knowing her job as Weekend Representative would be more vital than ever to engage the resident community and keep it strong.

Senior Profiles

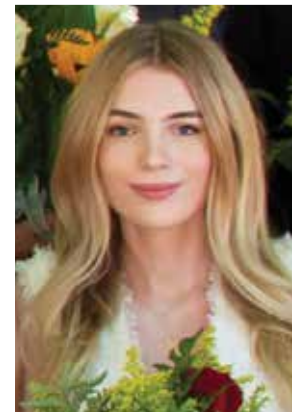


Andrew Thacher - Oregon State University

A tenacious student and athlete — helpful, insightful, and passionate in pursuit of his interests. Andrew ran cross country and track, and played soccer and baseball. He spent a great deal of time serving the local community, plugging into a range of diverse experiences that included habitat restoration on the Channel Islands, fundraising to fight cancer as part of the school's annual Relay for Life campaign, making Meals on Wheels deliveries to shut-ins during the pandemic, and volunteering to socialize abused and abandoned animals at the local Humane Society. This past year he served as the Outdoor Education representative, no easy feat in these pandemic times. In the second week of school, he organized and carried out a safe, socially distanced, multi-day outdoor trip to nearby Santa Rosa Island, recruiting five of his fellow seniors — and two faculty chaperones — to join. His goal was to keep the outdoor experience alive and well at OVS, but also to create a model by which students could organize and lead their own trips when we returned to in-person classes. His efforts were groundbreaking for OVS, and say much about how this young man matured during his OVS years. When the school returned to in-person learning, he was integral in helping the Outdoor Education program get over 20 trips off campus this year. At the final award ceremony, he was justly presented the JB Close Award as the outstanding outdoorsman for this academic year.

Chloe Warren - Columbia University

A leader, a trailblazer, and a young woman committed to living her most authentic life. Chloe is a superior student, a gifted linguist, and a leader in our community in so many ways. If there was a chance to volunteer, Chloe was among the first to raise her hand. When we needed leadership in the dorms or in the student community at large, Chloe was there, as she possessed the maturity and wisdom to understand that her ultimate gift is that she makes everyone around her better. Chloe served on the school's Leadership Council and as a dorm prefect. She has a genuine curiosity and love of learning she brings to the subjects she studies. The College Board named her an AP Scholar with Distinction, joining a short list of our best and brightest for her performance on those exams. At the year-end awards ceremony, she earned academic awards in AP Physics and AP Spanish, marking the fourth year in a row she earned that language award. And yet all of those accolades don't go nearly far enough to sum up who Chloe is and what she contributes. She truly and honestly has designs one day to change the world, and we would not bet against her. In fact, she has started already. Her Senior Capstone project demonstrated the range of her caring, as she worked with a peer to create a clothing brand that designed and sold its own products, and then donated the proceeds of those sales to support first responders. Integrity, determination and intellectual curiosity are all qualities that have earned Chloe the respect of her peers and teachers.



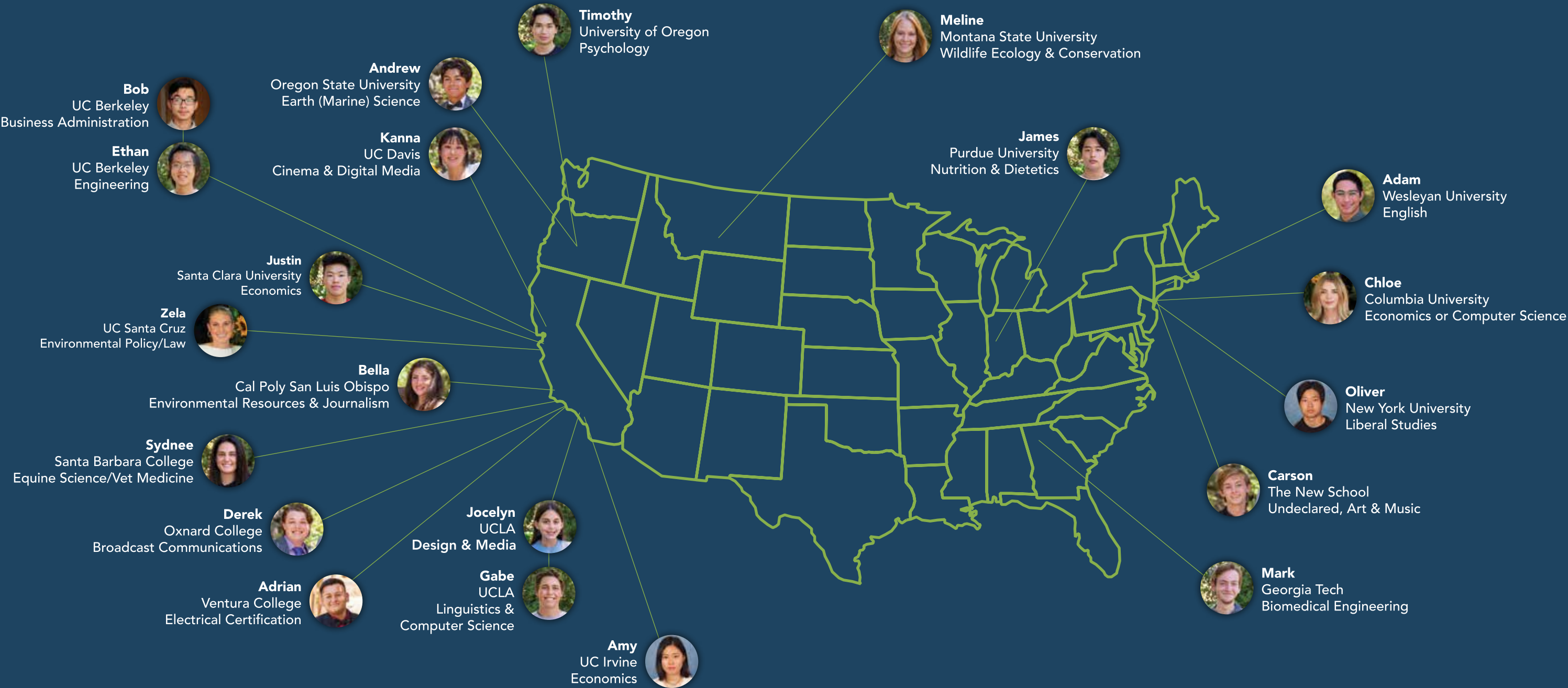
Gabe Weisiger - UCLA

Gabe set a high academic bar in the classroom, proving himself to be a curious and conscientious student, one dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge not for a grade, but for his genuine interest in the subjects he explores. He took full advantage of our most rigorous academic course offerings, taking 11 honors and AP courses, and excelling throughout the curriculum, so much so that the College Board last summer designated him as an AP Scholar with Honor. He was a leader in cross country and track, and played soccer and most recently baseball. Off the field, he served in many roles of Student Leadership including Student Council vice president. In so many ways, he has been the heart and soul of our efforts this year to get students invested and keep them engaged. That is the kind of respect he engenders among his peers and teachers. On graduation day, he was presented with the Andrew Kille Award, given to the most outstanding member of the senior class. He is an aficionado of the outdoors, having taken full advantage of the range of Outdoor Education opportunities unique to our school. He's hiked in Yosemite and the Eastern Sierra, worked to clear invasive species from the Channel Islands, and joined the Honors Camping trip to Utah. He is a barrel of fun in the outdoors, but more importantly he is kind, responsible and reliable, possessing a maturity that goes well beyond his 17 years.



Small school.

Big outcomes.



Class of 2021

Primary & Elementary Promotions

6th and 7th Grade Promotions



Eighth Grade Graduation



Lower Campus Head of School Message

By Laurie Clark - Head of School, Lower Campus

It is my pleasure to welcome you here for the commencement of the Lower Campus Class of 2021. We all know this year had some challenges and I am very proud of how OVS handled our pandemic year. We followed the research, contacted other schools, submitted waivers and re-opening plans, attended meetings (a lot of meetings) and we were one of the few schools in the valley that opened up on time. We were one of the only schools that stayed open with safe and healthy students and staff.

I have to admit it was a rough first year for me — new town, no friends, couldn't even go out to go meet friends. Peter and I became empty nesters with our daughter, Amelie, going off to college and starting up a new job during a pandemic. There were a few times I wanted to run. But when I stop to reflect on the year, I don't see or remember the tough things. I remember amazing staff members who were so supportive and welcoming; every one of them had stories to tell me about how great OVS is and how awesome the kids and families are, and told me, "You are going to love it here."

I remember how devoted the administrative team was to open the school and give the students as "normal" of an experience as possible; that showed how much they



care. I remember how kind the families were when we arrived and some even stopped by the school to meet me and show how appreciative and supportive they were once we were open. That showed how supportive the community is!

Once the students were on campus, I remember how loud they were compared to when they were online, but also how adaptable they were. The students were kind, friendly, respectful, well-spoken and smart — all the attributes you want in a school when you are new. Bottom line: it has been a tough year for all of us, but there are so many shining moments that came out of this year and I am honored to work at OVS and be a part of this community.

Students, I also want to thank you for welcoming me this year to OVS; for your strong leadership as 8th graders and for setting positive examples for the younger students, especially during COVID. You kept your heads up high and should be proud of yourselves.

Today we look ahead with confidence, knowing that we have positioned each of you well for the next part of your journey. You will be an OVS 8th grade graduate, and you are well prepared for whatever your future may hold.

Major Awards

SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

Mary Moses

The highest honor we can give an eighth-grade student. Its purpose is to commend the student who, with his or her actions and attitude, contributed to the school community in a sensitive and constructive manner in all phases of school life.

HEAD OF SCHOOL'S AWARD

Benjamin Scordamaglia,
James Larkin

Given for the significant contributions an eighth graders, or eighth graders, have made during their years at Lower Campus.

MICHAEL J. HALL-MOUNSEY AWARD

Meixuan "Rory" Liu

Honors the boarding student who has consistently served as an outstanding role model for his or her peers and who has demonstrated initiative, leadership, and responsibility.

JB CLOSE AWARD

Pako Rilling

Given each year to the student who best exemplifies the goals of the Ojai Valley School Outdoor Education program. His or her consistent contributions to camping, backpacking, and rock climbing trips, love and respect for nature, and commitment to helping others in the face of adversity set this student apart.

MICHAEL D. HERMES AWARD

Austin Haase, Prudence Currey-Schafer

Given to the most outstanding eighth-grade student athletes.

PAUL PITTMAN MEMORIAL AWARD

Maisie Shanks

Recognizes the student, or students, who have exhibited the most enthusiasm and is an active participation in the equestrian program.

OVS roots yield green harvests

By Adam Pepper-Macias (L17, U21) and Bella Slosberg (L17, U21)

Two Ojai Valley School alums are making a big impact by staying small.

While their approaches are very different, farmers and businessmen Evan Graham Arango (L07, U11) and Jason Goldman (L01, U05) have both taken on the immense challenge of creating profitable and sustainable farms, all while having a positive impact on the earth and the community.

Graham Arango began Ojai Valley School in eighth grade and graduated high school in 2011. He then attended Chapman University, where he majored in Spanish and a minored in history, and then studied law at UCLA, having recently passed the bar.

While agriculture and the environment weren't his motivation for attending law school, his interests changed midway through when he developed a passion for gardening and agriculture.

"I began tailoring the second half of my law school experience towards my interests," Graham Arango said. "I specialized in environmental law and took a lot of classes on food and agriculture law."

Slowly, Graham Arango began building his farm, Ojai Roots, dedicating nearly all his time away from school and studying to his vision.

"It was one section at a time, built by hand, blood, sweat, and a lot of

hard work," he explained.

Currently, the farm consists of six main blocks, 35 feet long by 30 feet wide, and two greenhouses. Graham Arango and one other employee manage the farm and sell produce to local restaurants such as Azu and Farmer and the Cook, in addition to selling to a local distributor and now at the midweek Farmer's Market in Ojai.

What sets Graham Arango's farm apart from so many other operations is the large crop yield produced on the small acreage of his farm and the positive environmental impacts that come from his farming practices.

He is committed, for example, to small-scale sustainable farming and the local food movement, which results in lower carbon emissions due to the reduced distance food travels from farm to table. However, the most significant sustainability perks come from the farming itself.

In traditional large-scale agriculture, farmers use methods such as tilling and plowing along with monocropping, which creates mineral-depleted and damaged soil. Large amounts of fertilizers are then applied directly to the plant to allow it to grow.

Graham Arango takes a decidedly non-traditional approach.

His farm is plow free and pesticide free. The soil is never tilled and he uses no fertilizers, yet the farm produces picture-worthy produce in extremely large quantities.

The key to this is regenerative agriculture, where the soil is disturbed as little as possible. It is kept covered as much as possible — whether that's with compost, mulch, or ideally living plants — and is planted with a wide variety of diverse crops, maximizing photosynthesis by having living plants in the soil at all times.

"In a sense it is a science, but it's a really different science than what large-scale agriculture is doing," Graham Arango explained. "They focus on chemistry (chemical fertilizers), and all I focus on is soil biology. I'm leaving the soil in a better place than I found it."

Graham Arango grows a plethora of crops including tomatoes, cucumbers, arugula, onions, chard, pea shoots, corn, and much more. His crop yield is similar to that of much larger farms due to the extremely fertile soil and the innovative methods he uses to get the most out of the space he has.

"It's all about maximizing production per square foot," Graham Arango said. "You grow things vertically, That's how you maximize production in a small space."

Despite the immense amount of work it takes to run his business, Graham Arango goes above and beyond by helping people learn how to farm sustainably. He gives talks to students and adults on regenerative agriculture and runs the

Continued on page 36



Evan Graham Arango (L07, U11) in one of his greenhouses.

Instagram page @ojairoots in hopes of inspiring many other people to pick up the practice of sustainable farming, to realize the importance of healthy soil, and to eat locally grown produce.

"If I don't sell you a lettuce head because you grew it yourself, that's fantastic," Graham Arango explained. "I love helping other people grow their own food."

Maybe it is the silhouettes of the mountains in the evening or something so sweet about the scent of orange blossoms that fills the summer air, but there is something about the Ojai Valley that has drawn OVS alumni back to the earth.

Alum Jason Goldman has found a passion in the backbreaking labor of tending the soil. Like Graham Arango, his business originated from a love of the outdoors, the earth, and the need for a challenge, which led him to the imperfect yet beautiful art of farming.

Goldman needs a problem: he needs a project, something to learn, something to deconstruct, somewhere to focus his immense appetite for learning. For reasons he still can't exactly pinpoint, he has been learning how to be a citrus farmer since 2018.

Goldman attended Ojai Valley School from 1998-2005 where

he found a deep love of the outdoors, from which his passion for farming sprouted. He then went to Pepperdine in 2005, and then focused on law at Ventura College of Law where he started in 2015 and graduated in 2018.

During his studies at Ventura College of Law, Goldman had played with the idea of farming. Initially he dreamt of rolling fields of lavender, but his neighbor, friend and eventual landlord, Judy Mercer, steered him toward reality. And thus farming became a skill set that Goldman had to master.

But it was only after he graduated from law school as the valedictorian that he had to get serious. "I needed to get a job," Goldman said, smiling.

He couldn't simply sit under fluorescent lights. Instead, he employed his knowledge of contract law and leased a 25.5-acre rectangle just outside of the Ojai city limits. The Goldman Family Farm has put 3,397 trees in the ground, in 27 perfectly spaced rows, including mostly Lisbon lemons with a couple rows of Moro blood oranges.

Because of Goldman's natural tendency for the audacious, some question the seriousness of his farming endeavours. Some even question his sanity. But the hours spent tending his land have proven that Goldman is all about business.

"They just think I'm just playing in the dirt," Goldman said.

When things go wrong on the farm, Goldman has no choice but to step up, do his research, and fix the problem. When he wanted to install new wind machines Goldman had to lay natural gas plumbing and operate an old excavator.

He has set up miles of irrigation, and fought battles with gophers, earwigs, and wind, in the middle of a complicated water case, all while contending with a citrus psyllid that has the potential to demolish Ojai's already waning citrus industry.

"I've had like seven once-in-a-lifetime horrible things happen out here," Goldman said. "By the third one I realized that, 'Uh-oh, I think this is just farming.'"

As older longtime farmers retire, there is a striking lack of a new generation waiting to fill in.

But Goldman is one of the very few green farmers actively taking part in Southern California agriculture. In converting an old Mercer Hay field into a working farm, Goldman has bet on the viability of farming in Ojai in an enormous way.

"I had to get a job at a law firm," Goldman said. "But I'd just sit and daydream about being outside again like when I was a kid at OVS."



This year marked the 25th annual Pons Dinner, which celebrates the bridge between middle and high school. It is also a time to recognize those Lower Campus graduates, now in their senior year, as they prepare to transition from high school to college.

President/CEO Mike Hall-Mounsey welcomed students to this year's event, which marked the first time that students from both campuses were able to gather during the COVID-19 pandemic. They enjoyed boxed dinners served picnic-style outside at tables socially distanced on the Hermes Quad.

Middle school teachers Duncan Wallace and Matt Inman gave a keynote address focused on Outdoor Education. They highlighted the ways Lower Campus students and faculty members had demonstrated adaptability during the pandemic and ventured outside for day hikes and other trips.

"While most schools were 100% virtual, and kids were sitting alone at home staring at a computer screen, we have taken out thirteen Outdoor Ed trips so far this year," Inman said. "Cohort by cohort, every student, 1st through 8th grade, has been out in nature. Next year, we are going all-in again, and we already have reservations for five coastal camping trips in the fall, and we've pulled our backcountry permits to climb Mt. Langley. The outdoors teaches us to plan well, adapt as needed, and when all else fails, just go with the flow!"

Mr. Inman and Mr. Wallace shared anecdotes of past

trips that the students in attendance could relate to, such as gazing up at the giant General Sherman tree in Sequoia National Park, sitting in the stinky water of Willett Hot Springs and jumping off Muir Rock into the Kings River.

"Looking back now on all of your adventures, we hope you have gained a wealth of knowledge, experience, and confidence," Inman said.

And what are some of their fondest memories as trip leaders?

"Doing jumping jacks on the bank of the Escalante River to stay warm, mountain biking the Cuyama badlands in a snowstorm ... plummeting down water slides and swimming packs down a secret route to find the 'Perfect 10' swimming hole," Wallace said, concluding with the time they listened to Tigran Nahabedian (L19) sing the Quadratic Formula song "to prove that he was not hypothermic."

"Outdoor Education is one of the pillars of the OVS experience," Inman said. "Getting into the wilderness is a great way to become well rounded ... find balance, and symmetry. With us today, we have backpackers of the Sespe Creek, the Sisquoc River, the Fishbowls, Madulce Peak, and pack rafters of the Escalante. We have individuals who learned to work together in a variety of environments for the benefit of themselves, and more importantly, they helped their group as a whole."

Alumni News

Pons²¹



Jason Goldman (L01, U05) points out his rows of lemons and blood oranges in the East End of Ojai.

➔ Alumni: Save the Date!! ➔

We are looking forward to gathering with OVS Alumni in the year ahead!

Please save the following dates for alumni events:

January 17, 2022 OVS Day of Service

February 12, 2022 Alumni Soccer & Basketball Games

April 30, 2022 OVS Gala and Auction

May 14, 2022 Alumni Baseball Game

June 10-12, 2022 Alumni Weekend



Alumni work Summer Camp

Nineteen alumni spanning five decades worked during OVS Summer Camp as counselors, lifeguards, dorm parents, and teaching assistants for our robotics, performing arts, fine arts, academic, and equestrian programs. Thank you for serving as positive role models and ensuring our campers enjoyed a safe, fun, and enriching summer experience!

Ojai Valley School welcomes new Director of Development

Ojai Valley School is pleased to welcome Brian Schlaak as our new Director of Development! Brian previously served as the Head of School and Academic Dean at Woodside Priory, a day and boarding school in Portola Valley, CA. Brian graduated from UC Berkeley, served in the US Navy and the Peace Corps before returning to the Bay Area to teach history and become a school administrator. He earned his MA in administration and policy from Stanford. Prior to COVID-19, Brian, his wife and son planned to travel Europe after his retirement from Priory and volunteer at the Daraja Academy, an all-girls tuition-free boarding school in Kenya where he serves on the board. But the pandemic changed plans and they decided to spend time in Ojai where they recently purchased a house and a small avocado ranch. We are thrilled to have Brian join our Advancement team and bring his school leadership and fundraising experience. Brian can be reached at bschlaak@ovs.org.



Senior to Alumni Dinner

In the past six years the school has invited young alumni back to serve as guest speakers for the Senior-to-Alumni Dinner, an informal event held just before graduation to welcome the seniors into the Alumni Association. This year Leila Giannetti (L14, U18) talked about the transition from high school to college. Leila attended George Washington University, and, like so many college students, was displaced by COVID. She now plans to transfer to a West Coast school. Her word of advice: Don't be afraid when circumstances change your plans. OVS has prepared you well to adapt to challenges and opportunities alike.



Eleanora Burrignt

The Queen 'B' of weekends & summer camp

By Sydnee Rousseau (U21)

For the past 36 years, there's never been a time when Eleanora Burrignt wasn't busy.

In her years at Ojai Valley School, she has been barn manager and weekend coordinator, dorm parent and OVS Summer Camp director. But come this September, Mrs. Burrignt will be adding some much-needed free time to her formerly busy schedule.

Retirement is the next big milestone for Mrs. Burrignt, providing her at long last the opportunity to take time for herself and enjoy the world of travel, spend more time with family, and even take up the pastime of bird watching.

Throughout the years, Mrs. Burrignt has been a key individual in building the OVS community and brightening the days of countless students and faculty.

It all started back in May of 1985, when Mrs. Burrignt was searching for a new job to dive into and came across an opportunity to work in the stable at the Lower Campus. She got the job, becoming the stable manager and a beginning riding instructor. She spent approximately two years working in the stable, making it one of the most desired places for the Lower Campus kids to spend

time, which inspired her next position.

"Dok Smith, (former Head of the Lower Campus) at the time said we need somebody like you to organize weekends and have great ideas and be refreshed to come in on the weekends to keep the kids happy and healthy and doing fun things," she said. "So he created the job for me and at that point, I started the weekend activity director for the Lower Campus."

Because of Mrs. Burrignt, the weekend coordinator job was created, and she pioneered the "new" OVS position which would shape both Upper and Lower campuses for years to come.

"Mrs. B has been a pillar of OVS for over 35 years," said Myr Slosberg, the Dean of Studies and Learning Center Coordinator at the Lower Campus.

"I've been inspired by her creativity, energy, and kindness," Mrs. Slosberg added. "She goes out of her way to take care of the people she works with. I appreciate that. I'll miss her because she is one of the people who makes OVS a special place."

See Mrs. B, continued on page 41

Linda Gartrell

A facilitator of firsts:
Pre-K and penguins

By Jocelyn Gonzalez (L17, U21)



Hundreds of students around the world can attest to the magic that happens in Linda Gartrell's Pre-Kindergarten class.

And they have the memories to prove it.

There were the leprechaun traps and Easter bunny sightings. There was the annual visit of Witchy-Poo at Halloween and the annual transformation of the Pre-K classroom into Antarctica.

To be sure, for the entirety of a 37-year teaching career at OVS that officially ended with her retirement at the end of last school year, Mrs. Gartrell has created a lasting legacy that has impacted the lives of generations of students and faculty alike.

"Mrs. Gartrell watched me grow up at OVS and has always supported

me, from the time I was in Pre-K until now," said Avery Colborn (L16, U20), who was in Mrs. Gartrell's class nearly 20 years ago and is now a student at Colorado College. "She was such an important person throughout my time there and for so many others as well."

Added Sydnee Rousseau (U21), who just graduated from the Upper Campus: "Her class was the first sense of community that I ever had. It was the beginning of my part in the OVS family."

Mrs. Gartrell started her OVS career as a dorm parent. Four students at a time, the overflow from the dorms at the high school would live in the house she shared for decades with her husband, former Lower Campus Head of School Gary Gartrell. She started teaching preschool more than three decades ago and has been involved in numerous

endeavors including leading Student Council, coaching soccer, helping with musical productions, organizing High Teas, working summer camps, and much more.

But through it all her primary passion has been the classroom and the hundreds of students who have flowed through it over the years.

When asked about their fondest memories of the Pre-K class, many of Mrs. Gartrell's former students talk about the annual transformation of the classroom into Antarctica. That annual lesson included one of the school's most memorable moments: the Pre-K students dressing up as penguins and taking to the stage at the All-School meeting to teach the audience all about the lives of their South Pole pals.

In those presentations, the young students provided instruction about

how penguin parents trade off babysitting so the other one can go "fishing," how penguins feed their babies, how they keep warm in icy weather, and how they have unique calls for each other. And, of course, they taught the audience how penguins walk.

But as cute as those presentations were, for Mrs. Gartrell they were designed to teach her young charges some of life's most important lessons. Throughout her year at OVS, she has emphasized the importance of teaching young kids to be comfortable on stage, and she has dedicated herself to fostering what kids do well and helping them develop their talents.

"Penguins teach good values. They work in teams and take turns caring for their young, and it is so important and relevant to preschoolers," Mrs. Gartrell said. "It's a gift that keeps on giving. After overcoming their

Not only was she the Lower Campus barn manager and weekend coordinator, Mrs. Burright also took on the position of the Ojai Valley School Summer Camp director starting in 2000.

Upper Campus senior Ryan Farrell reminisced on his times in Summer Camp and Mrs. Burright's impact.

"She brightened everyone's day from the second you stepped on campus," Ryan said. "She was easily one of the best parts of the camp."

Not only has OVS been a place of work for Mrs. Burright, it also has been a place where a sense

fear of performing, the kids would start fighting to get on stage."

Long a pillar of the OVS community, her contributions to the community have not gone unrecognized by her coworkers.

"When you think of how many important 'firsts' Mrs. Gartrell has facilitated for students and families, you begin to see the impact of her career," said Lower Campus Assistant Head of School Mike Mahon. "First friends, first letters and numbers, first words read, and possibly most important, first jokes told, Mrs. Gartrell's impact on OVS students is felt long after they leave the Pre-K yard."

Former OVS Kindergarten teacher Dana DeYoung worked with Mrs. Gartrell for 25 years.

"When Mrs. Gartrell had the Tators Tots and I had Pre-Kindergarten, we

of family has blossomed. "OVS is pretty much a way of life, and it became my family, a place that I love and my family has loved through the years," Mrs. Burright said.

Mrs. Burright has touched the hearts of many faculty at OVS, such as Gary Gartrell, former Head of the Lower Campus, who spent years working at her side.

"Mrs. B has always had a knack for creating fun and excitement for students, campers, and staff," Mr. Gartrell said. "She has a spark that can inspire and get even the timidest of students to join in. I have so many fond memories from

had a blast!" she said. "She has a wonderful sense of humor that kept me laughing every day."

The Gartrell family has been involved in OVS for decades, and will continue to be for years to come. Next year the Gartrells will have four grandchildren attending Lower Campus, where daughters Kelsey Bailey and Nicole Ferro are teachers.

As they settle into retirement, the Gartrells plan to travel the United States in their vintage trailer and meet up with old friends.

"It is inspiring to think about how many children have had the chance to be educated, cared for, and loved by her," Mr. Gartrell said about his longtime partner. "They never forget about their time in Pre-K. All of these facets of Mrs. Gartrell come together to create a pretty amazing legacy."

my many, many years working side by side with Mrs. B. I wish her well in retirement and thank her for making OVS a better place."

Come September, Mrs. Burright plans to get back out into nature where she will spend time hopefully working with horses and even picking up some interest in bird watching.

Overall, OVS really has been a place of significance for Mrs. Burright, and she will always have a special place for it in her heart.

"It was the perfect career for me," she said. "I just felt like this is where I was supposed to be."



By Jocelyn Gonzalez (L17, U21)

Jody Cooper (L71, U74) built the OVS ceramics program from the ground up.

The original ceramics classroom was created just for her in the carport alongside the house where she and former Headmaster Carl Cooper (L64, U68) lived at the Upper Campus. And when the Thomas Fire tore through the campus in 2017, destroying several key buildings including the one in which Mrs. Cooper launched the program in 2001, she kept ceramics alive by opening a temporary classroom in the art room at the bottom of the hill.

But for the first time in two decades — even as a new, permanent space is being carved for the program at the top of the hill — Mrs. Cooper won't be around at the start of the

school year when the clay is brought out and pottery wheels start to turn. Effective at the end of the 2020-21 school year, the OVS alum officially retired, having established one of the school's signature programs and leaving behind a long legacy of student-artists who have been shaped by her love and passion for this artform.

That legacy will be carried forward in the new ceramics studio being established at the western edge of Wallace Burr Hall, and as she settles into retirement that's one of things for which Mrs. Cooper is most grateful.

"Working with clay has always brought me so much pleasure," she said. "I am excited for the ceramics program to continue at the Upper Campus."

Mrs. Cooper attended OVS as a high school student, graduating in 1974 and going on to study at UC Santa Barbara. She began her journey with clay in 1982, working for a local potter and taking classes at Ventura College and Santa Barbara City College. She also worked on and off at the school over the years, doing projects with students or managing weekend duties.

But that temporary work connection with her alma mater became permanent when the decision was made to launch a ceramics program at the Upper Campus. In 2000, Mrs. Cooper became the librarian while a pottery studio was created. In spring 2001, she officially launched the ceramics program, putting in the time and effort in subsequent years to build it into one of the school's most popular offerings. Any student

would agree: her hard work paid off. Margo Eramova (L16, U20) was the first student to spend all four years of high school in Mrs. Cooper's ceramics class, learning to make dinner sets, sushi sets, vases, teapots, casserole dishes, and jars. There was never a dull moment in the ceramics room, Margo recalled. Each day in class would consist of throwing, trimming, glazing pots, or brainstorming new projects.

Mrs. Cooper's classroom had a unique atmosphere that you couldn't find anywhere else on campus, Margo said. She conducted her classes in a caring manner, paying careful attention to each piece that was created, while making the learning entertaining, interesting, and fun.

"Her classes had a different energy (and provided) a place where I could relax and create art," Margo said. "She is a hero to me."

Any student who took ceramics with Mrs. Cooper would agree that her passion for teaching was evident in every class. Even her students who have now graduated from college recall that she was a caring teacher who taught them valuable skills. Carolita Landers (U14) took two years of ceramics with Mrs. Cooper and she continues to create pottery today.

"I'll always appreciate how caring she was and the attention to detail she has about things," Carolita said. "She could always tell when I needed a break from campus, and we enjoyed many dinner dates together that I'll always remember and cherish."

Mrs. Cooper was not only a teacher, but she cared deeply about the wellbeing of her students. Said

Carolita: "I learned to be patient with my creative process and celebrate little victories thanks to Jody."

Mrs. Cooper added her own touch to the OVS community through her gift of pottery. She would make ceramic mugs for the new faculty members when they arrived and she used her talents to fundraise for service projects such as Empty Bowls and Relay for Life.

"She used ceramics as a way to connect with people in the community," said Upper Campus Head of School Craig Floyd (U83). "It will be difficult to replace Mrs. Cooper's talents."

Mrs. Cooper's love for ceramics translated into her devotion to education. Her passion for clay facilitated her teaching in a way that engaged the students and sparked their interests.

"Because I enjoyed ceramics so much, I was able to teach it well," Mrs. Cooper said. "I love to teach pottery more than I love making pottery. It's so satisfying to be able to share something you're so passionate about, and to watch people actually get it."

Mrs. Cooper's classes were not just focused on creativity. She taught the physical mechanics of making ceramic pieces and prioritized the students' understanding of clay so that they could use their skills to develop their creativity.

"Once they get the physical muscle memory, then they get to create their own artistic voice," she said.

By the time the last school year ended, Mrs. Cooper had pronounced herself "ready" to roll

into the next chapter of her life.

Oddly enough, she said the COVID pandemic helped prepare her: new hobbies found in quarantine helped her separate herself from work. While she never imagined what she would do after retirement, quarantine helped her to discover her love for riding her bike, walking, and taking care of her grandchildren.

Adding to that separation was the fact that, because of extensive safety protocols, the pandemic forced the school's ceramics program to take a one-year hiatus last school year.

In short, the pandemic made it easier for her to say goodbye.

"I am sad about this year because my favorite part of the day is teaching, and I haven't taught all year," she said at the end of the year. "It would have been much harder to retire if I had been teaching."

As Mrs. Cooper moves into the next phase of her life, she can rest assured that her impact was significant and that she will always have a place in the OVS community.

"There is no one like Mrs. Cooper — she is a master potter, and she has a long history with OVS," said Assistant Head of School Laurel Colborn, who is among the many teachers who also learned the art of ceramics through classes Mrs. Cooper held for faculty and staff.

"She is not only an expert at what she does, but she is amazing at sharing her skill with others," Mrs. Colborn added. "Her tenure has added immeasurably to the school. I cannot imagine OVS without Mrs. Cooper being here. She will be missed, but I am excited for her to enjoy the next chapter."

In Memoriam



Barbara B. Smith (L35)

Professor Barbara Barnard Smith (L35) passed away in Honolulu, Hawaii, in July. She was 101. Her nephew Gregory Smith (L66) informed her many friends that, “At her request, there would be no public service and her ashes would be scattered at her favorite longboard surfing spot in Honolulu.” He continued, “She led an extraordinary life up to her last days and she will be remembered for her passionate devotion to her family, students, colleagues and the musics of the world. She asked me to send her gratitude to you all when this time came.”

Barbara started as a second grade student at Ojai Valley School in 1926. She was taught by Edward Yeomans and Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen. She enjoyed live musical performances that inspired her lifelong love of music, especially music from other countries and other cultures. When she grew up, she became an internationally known scholar and professor of ethnomusicology at the University of Hawaii.

After earning her bachelor’s degree from Pomona College and her master’s degree in music literature from the Eastman School of Music, Barbara began her career at the University of Hawaii Mānoa in 1949 teaching piano and music theory. She became interested in her students’ diverse ethnic backgrounds and began to ask about the music of their ancestral heritages, mostly Asian and Hawaiian cultures. She was disappointed when these students told her they knew nothing about it, and she was quite concerned when some referred to their musical heritage disparagingly. She made it her quest to seek out examples of non-western music and to cultivate an understanding of them by learning Hawaiian chant, Korean dance, Chinese butterfly harp, and Japanese court music herself. She then introduced ethnic music performance classes into the University’s music curriculum. Her pioneering work led to the formation of graduate programs in ethnomusicology at UH Mānoa.

After retiring from full-time teaching in 1982, Barbara remained engaged with the University

through field work, research, and mentoring international graduate students. She was named a “living treasure” by the UH Mānoa Colleges of Arts and Science and she received the 2008 State of Hawaii’s Governor’s Award for Distinguished Achievement in Culture, Art and Humanities, which honored Barbara for her “...outstanding lifetime contributions as a pioneer, mentor and founder in the field of ethnomusicology.”

She received the 2012 Ojai Valley School Founder’s Alumni Award for her contributions. In turn, she praised the school for helping to prepare her for a “stimulating and intellectually rewarding career. It was not the result of the subject matter of the classes, but rather my teachers’ encouragement to be more perceptive, to analyze problems I found and determine how to eliminate or at least alleviate them; and then through controlling and channeling my stubborn streak, to have the confidence to act on my resultant convictions. So I am deeply indebted to the School for what has been – and continues to be – an exceptionally happy life.”

Over the years Barbara established non-western music endowments at many schools, Ojai Valley School among them, to ensure the music curriculum was broadened to include the rich ethnic possibilities. In 1998 she created the Ojai Valley School – Barbara Barnard Smith Fund, a Designated Endowment Fund of the Ventura County Community Foundation. This endowment provides enduring support for Ojai Valley School students to experience and appreciate live musical performances and is intended to engender a broad appreciation of non-Western music. In the past three years, Barbara’s vision was realized through a partnership between OVS and Ojai Music Festivals to bring non-western music to hundreds of local elementary children by hosting the annual “Imagine Concerts” on our campuses. The School is indebted to Professor Smith for her foresight and generosity. We hope it will continue to open the doors to memorable musical experiences for students, teachers, parents and the community.

In Memoriam



Christine (Wursten) Haskell (L54)

Christine (Wursten) Haskell (L54) passed away in June. She was 81. Christine was born in Switzerland and attended the Lower School for grades 2-7. During her working years she was a social worker, a private elementary school principal, and a management service officer at UCLA. She was a member of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica for more than 40 years. She taught a water exercise class at the Santa Monica Family YMCA for a decade. In a remembrance

published recently in the Los Angeles Times, Christine was praised for her “loving, generous, and impish spirit.” She is survived by her adoring family, including her husband of 61 years, Charles M. Haskell, M.D., her daughter Candace Haskell Swirkal and her husband Rick Swirkal, her granddaughter Lucky Haskell, and her great-granddaughter Ryder Haskell. She is also survived by her brother Eric Wursten and his family. Because of COVID-19 there will be no public funeral or memorial service.



Philip Hallowell Rice III (L49)

Philip Hallowell Rice III (L49), whose spirit of adapting and overcoming adversity led to a rich and adventurous life, passed away in August. He was 86. Philip was born on January 31, 1935 in Oxnard. He lost both parents at a young age and was taken in by cousins John and Beck Lawton of Fillmore. It was there his adventures began. Phil loved the freedom of being raised on a ranch. He met many friends while boarding at Ojai Valley School and spent many days exploring the local mountains and trails. He told great stories of the backcountry, including the time he was saved by a friend from falling hundreds of feet near Piedras Blancas.

friends and had their only child, Lori Kay, who was born on his birthday in 1972. After three years in Arizona, they moved back to California to be closer to family and built a home in Fillmore, a life-long dream for Phil. The “Big House” as he and Judy called it, was a seven-year adventure in designing and building a welcoming home where they hosted barbecues and volleyball games, always with a cold beer from the keg. It was there that they created an active and fun-filled childhood for Lori, with Phil mentoring Lori through a variety of sports. Lori inherited Phil’s competitive spirit and he was always so proud of her many accomplishments.

Phil played basketball while attending Fillmore High School and was recruited by powerhouse schools like Duke, Syracuse, North Carolina and UCLA. Phil committed to UCLA’s Coach Wooden, but a back injury required him to sit out a year and recover. His dream of becoming a Bruin never came to fruition. Instead, he enlisted in the Navy and was stationed in Pensacola, Florida, and learned to fly planes while winning many awards on the All Navy basketball team. Upon completing his service, Phil attended UCSB and played basketball as a Gaucho while studying Social Science and Business. His studies, military experience and athletics provided many life lessons that shaped the man he became. In 1964, he married Judith Ann Ashburn and started the next adventure of his life.

In 2000, Phil and Judy moved to the Oaks in Santa Paula in the same neighborhood where Lori and Kevin would eventually move. Their close proximity allowed Phil to watch his two granddaughters grow into teenagers. He was especially pleased to see the girls play sports, and he attended their school volleyball games. The greatest gifts of Phil’s life were his friends, including the happy hour crowd at the Mupu Grill. Judy was a tremendous partner for 58 years, as well as his caregiver while he was in hospice. Along with Judy, Phil is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Lori and Kevin Beyer, his granddaughters, Reid and Acely Beyer, his sister-in-law Joanie Finn and her children Randy Finn, Cathy Carswell and Kelly Finn and their families, his nephew Don DeBenidictis and his East Coast Beyer Family. A private remembrance will be held by the family. Please raise a glass, look to the sky and toast Phil with a hearty ‘Pog Mo Thoin!’ He and all his friends will smile back!

In 1970, Phil started a business in Tempe, Arizona, where he and Judy made many new

Remembrances of the Grace Hobson Smith House

By Elizabeth (Curran) Hermes (L66, U69)

Eagerly clambering up the front steps with our huge suitcases in September of 1966, we girls were about to become the fortunate first residents of the Grace Hobson Smith House and thus the first girls to live on the OVS Upper Campus. Our dorm was so new that some finishing touches were still needed: doorknobs, for instance. There was just a hole in each of our dorm room doors where the knobs would eventually go.

But that was a small matter. We were thrilled with our luxurious new digs. Certainly, they were luxurious as compared to the no frills accommodations the boys had been occupying across campus for the past three years. The Grace Hobson Smith House was spacious, air-conditioned, two-storied, and aesthetically appealing. Our every comfort and convenience had been considered in the design. The living room, with its high beamed ceiling and large fireplace, was a warm, inviting place. The dorm rooms were generously sized and well-appointed. We also had a laundry room and a full kitchen at our disposal. In short, our dormitory outshone the ones for the boys in most every respect. (In recent years, I've heard some of those boys, now well into senior citizenship, still grouching about that injustice).

Our living room was capacious, easily accommodating the

comfortable couches and armchairs that furnished it as well as the Steinway grand piano that Rick Van Ness (L64, U67)'s family had generously donated. (There was even enough room left over to park a Volkswagen Bug, which Nancy Graves (L65, U68) and other still unnamed cohorts determined after moving the music teacher's VW into the middle of the living room in the dead of night one time).

I remember Keith Carradine (U67) playing that grand piano, singing "Try to Remember" from the Broadway musical *The Fantasticks*:

*Try to remember that kind of
September,
When life was slow and, oh, so
mellow;...
Try to remember and if you
remember,
Then follow...*

There are lots of aural memories that have become deeply fixed and inextricable with my early ones of the Grace Hobson Smith House. To walk down the hallway of one of the four sections of our dorm was to hear the Mamas and the Papas, Jefferson Airplane, or Jimi Hendrix wafting out from each open door. Dances featured the extraordinary Fyve of a Kind band: Conrad von Dehn, John McCutcheon, Jeff Hanselman, Scott Eicher, and Dave Sessions (all L65, U68). We couldn't believe our good luck to have such talented

musicians play for us! There were also heartfelt hootenannies (Yes, we sang "Kumbaya") and plucky bluegrass performances, thanks to Ed Littlefield (U67), among others. I still remember the lyrics to most of those songs but couldn't tell you what I had for breakfast today.

The living room was also where all the smokers in the dorm gathered for a final cigarette break before lights out. Someone (a dorm parent?) rang the official bell and, for 10 minutes, we got the most we could out of one or two cigarettes. Then we dutifully shuffled off to bed. Sometimes hunger kicked in long after lights out, when our dorm kitchen was off limits. Late one night, my roommate, a famished but resourceful Mary Ann Mordock (U68), managed to peel and eat an entire avocado in the dark with a bobby pin. Claudia Christensen (L66, U69) had a lucrative black market business going: She had brought a motel-sized refrigerator for the room and sold slices of raw Pillsbury chocolate chip cookie dough to her customers for a dollar each, an exorbitant sum in those days! (And the slices weren't even that big!)

Mrs. Reed, with her soothing Southern drawl and ever-lit cigarette, who'd been the junior high girls' dorm mother at the Lower Campus, took over as head dorm parent of the Grace Hobson Smith House that first year. Student



The dedication of the original Grace Hobson Smith House.

Council meetings took place in her apartment, and Mrs. Reed frequently hosted bridge games in her apartment and let the girls work off their infractions (labor crew sentences) by making fudge. Mr. and Mrs. Wursten (He was a Lower Campus alumnus, Class of 1957) lived in the other faculty apartment with their young daughter, Astrid, who had just learned to walk. Many of us remember the helpless panic of seeing, from outside the classrooms below, tiny Astrid toddling around on the edge of the girls' dorm roof. Thankfully, her dad was able to safely rescue her.

She must have found her way to that precarious spot via a door on the second floor that led out to our sunroof. Tans were in, and many of us roasted ourselves on that roof when we could, often topless to avoid tan lines. There was an unusually high number of private planes that flew low over us on those occasions. Maybe it was just a coincidence ...

Meditation Mount had not yet been built; neither were there orchards or a road to Upper on that side of the campus in those days, so the view from the back patio of our dorm was of the richly chaparraled hills and of the valley spilling out before us. That setting had to have nurtured our still forming hopes and dreams. On behalf of those of us who were privileged to be the first, fifty-five years ago, to move into the Grace Hobson Smith House, we wish the girls who are leading OVS into its phoenix-like new era, the same good fortune we enjoyed and fond memories we cherish.

*Deep in December, our hearts should remember
And follow...*



Elizabeth Curran in October 1966. She explained: "I'm standing in front of the brand new but sparsely landscaped Grace Hobson Smith House wearing something that looks like a stewardess uniform. 'May I have your ticket, please?'"



Parents of Alumni:

If your son/daughter no longer maintains a permanent address at your home, please notify the Alumni Office (805-640-2578) of his/her new mailing address.

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