

Family Tree

Spring 2021

A magazine for the extended family of Ojai Valley School



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President's Message



— have remained calm and carried on to “not merely endure, but prevail” in William Faulkner’s phrase.

In March 2020, we were faced with many fearful unknowns — the pandemic and a national call to “flatten the curve” by shutting down our classrooms and thoughtfully ramping up a meaningful program of distance learning. These changes were a daunting challenge for all schools, but especially for Ojai Valley School with our century-old mission and practice of highly personalized in-person teaching and learning. With collaboration and ingenuity, academic coordinators and teachers on both campuses prepared schedules for each grade level, adapting to new technology and orchestrating their online classes with real-time feedback from students and families connected from home.

During those early months of online learning we held discussions about the viability of Summer Camp. Following state and county guidelines, we firmly resolved to go ahead with a day-only Camp with morning academics and afternoon activities. This program, we felt, would provide a much-needed Camp experience to allow children to be socially together with peers while also making up for any lost learning in spring.

Camp was also a timely opportunity to prepare for reopening in the fall. With more experience, and greater knowledge of the pandemic, a broadly representative team of administrators, teachers and health professionals developed a comprehensive “Roadmap to Reopening” that charted the course for the fall with strict protocols that included small classes and cohorts, frequent hand washing, cleaning and sanitizing of classrooms, wearing protective masks, restricting visitors from campus, and adhering to social distancing protocols by staying six feet apart as much as possible.

We briefly started the year with distance learning, but by mid-September received a waiver from the county

It’s hard to believe that all of us have been living with COVID-19 for more than a year now. I am pleased, and proud, to report that during this difficult time our community at Ojai Valley School — the administration, staff, teachers, students, parents, and friends

health department to resume in-person learning for primary and elementary students. By mid-October, we were allowed to reopen the middle and high school divisions, and we have remained open throughout the fall, winter, and now spring.

While most schools were restricted to online learning only, or were not open at all, Ojai Valley School kept the doors open. We are incredibly proud of this accomplishment.

In addition to in-person classes, we also managed to take students on day hikes, surfing, kayaking and rock-climbing excursions; we rode horses and resumed sports, hosting five cross country meets at the Upper Campus. The track, baseball, soccer, and golf teams are now practicing and preparing for spring competitions. We continue to test for the virus by providing on-campus screenings for all faculty, staff, and students every two weeks.

Across the state and much of the nation, we are seeing COVID-19 case rates coming down and vaccine availability going up — and that’s good news. By the time you read this, almost all our teachers and staff will be vaccinated. We will again offer Summer Camp, this time for day and resident campers, giving children the opportunity to make friends, be outside, and engage in healthy, fun activities that foster learning and skills development.

Meanwhile, throughout the tumultuous pandemic year, construction crews have been working diligently to rebuild the Upper Campus. As you’ll read in this issue, the buildings are taking shape and will soon provide students with science labs, classrooms, dining areas and dormitories that will enhance the student experience for years to come. From the thoughtful architectural design, which intentionally blurs the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces, to the deliberate focus on environmental sustainability, this historic building project will soon open its doors and usher in a new chapter of growth for Ojai Valley School.

We have reason to believe, based upon our challenging but successful experiences so far, that we will continue to make progress through this year and the coming years, preparing students, as OVS Founder Edward Yeomans said, “for a generous and interesting life which will thrive anywhere.”

Mike Hall-Mounsey

Michael J. Hall-Mounsey,
President/CEO

THE PANDEMIC SCHOOL YEAR

Ojai Valley School has carefully navigated the coronavirus pandemic by offering full-time in-person instruction for grades PK-12 since last fall. Safety protocols include testing, mask wearing, frequent hand washing and social distancing. Students have continued to participate in outdoor education, sports and equestrian.

Here are a few statistics that tell our story:

COVID-19 tests, administered to students, faculty & staff members between January-April 25

2,089

6% Students attending online from China, Korea, Taiwan and other regions

94%

Students attending in-person classes

115+ Days spent riding horses in the equestrian program



58 Virtual events including college admissions presentations, musical performances, open houses, parent club meetings and more

880 OVS facemasks ordered for community members

248 Students enrolled during 2020-21 school year

0 Positive test results for COVID-19 for students, faculty, and staff since testing began

11 Baseball games on the spring schedule



5 Cross Country meets held at Upper Campus

85% Faculty & staff members vaccinated by spring 2021

13+ Outdoor classroom areas created to minimize COVID-19 virus exposure



20+ Outdoor trips, including day hikes, rock climbing, kayaking, rafting & surfing excursions



Pearson Bequest to Fund Lower Improvements

By Jack McClenahan

Ojai Valley School gratefully announces a gift of \$225,000 from the trust of Alan F. Pearson (L55). It is among the largest bequests to the school and, paired with a previous distribution from the Pearson estate, will provide the seed money for an attractive new entrance and solar array for the Lower Campus.

Mr. Pearson's estate significantly funded the renovation of the historic Founder's Woodshop and the addition of a new and expanded arts center at the Lower Campus, appropriately named the Alan F. Pearson Center of the Arts, which was dedicated in 2015.

"I am deeply grateful for Alan's thoughtful planned giving and his generous support," said OVS President/CEO Michael J. Hall-Mounsey. "Taken together, his contributions have greatly improved the Lower Campus and will continue to do so for years to come."

Having been adopted by loving parents, Mr. Pearson grew up in Camarillo with "an ever-present inviting friendliness," according to classmate Bill Wilmer (L55).

"Alan was a handsome, blond, super friendly, athletic guy who did what OVS expected us all to do: become a good person and have fun doing it," Wilmer wrote in a remembrance to his classmate. "He was like a brother we all loved and respected."

Mr. Pearson attended Ojai Valley School from 1951 through 1955 for grades six to nine. At that time, there was not yet an Upper Campus, and what we now call Lower Campus was simply Ojai Valley School, which went through ninth grade.

He then graduated from Oxnard High School and attended Utah State University, where he received a Bachelor's of Science in Agriculture and Business. An avid outdoorsman, Mr. Pearson began his real estate career in Sun Valley, Idaho. He lived briefly in Ventura, but he thought people drove "like maniacs" on the freeways and returned to a Idaho, to, as Mr. Wilmer recalls, "live in the slow lane doing what he loved: buying and selling ranch properties."

Through the years, Mr. Pearson was a loyal OVS alumnus and consistent Annual Fund donor. In 2007, he created the Alan F. Pearson Trust, which named Ojai Valley School as its ultimate and sole beneficiary. This bequest became effective when he died of natural causes in July 2012, at age 71. Ojai Valley School began receiving regular cash distributions of the estate from the periodic sale of residential building lots he had owned in an Idaho subdivision.

Although Mr. Pearson left no directions on how the funds from his estate should be used, the school has

felt that, as an alumnus of Lower Campus, his legacy should be honored by directing the funds to Lower Campus projects. Among the most critical of those projects is now a safer, more efficient drop-off and pick-up area for students.

The West Entry Improvement and Solar Installation Project will significantly reduce traffic congestion, improve parking and pedestrian access, and beautify the campus with graceful new walkways and native landscaping. At the heart of the plan is a proposed solar-covered parking structure and electric car-charging station. The array will shade the existing parking area at the west entrance of campus while generating power and teaching children about renewable energy.

As a California Green Ribbon School, OVS has been recognized as a leader among independent schools for its commitment to environmental sustainability. This includes a curriculum that embraces experiential learning, outdoor education, and teaches students across the grades to be responsible stewards of their environment.

The project will be phased and, once additional funding is available, will include plans for a new administrative building near the existing sixth-grade classrooms.

"The school was greatly improved with the addition of the Pearson Center for the Arts, and now the new West Entrance will bookend the campus with a consistent look and feel that will improve the safety, security, and sustainability of the school for years to come," Mr. Hall-Mounsey said.

"It seems only fitting," he added, "that an alumnus regarded by his classmates for his friendliness is now providing a much-needed and attractive improvement that will warmly welcome students, parents, alumni, and visitors to the school."



Alan Pearson (L55) was great outdoorsman, a passion inspired by his time as an OVS student.



THE WEST ENTRANCE PROJECT

The West Entrance Improvement and Solar Installation Project continues the school's commitment to renewable energy and thoughtful campus improvements that will benefit Ojai Valley School families and the greater community for years to come. We ask you to join fellow families in supporting these ongoing sustainability efforts for OVS.

Ways to Give

OVS accepts contributions by cash, check and credit card. Checks should be made payable to Ojai Valley School and mailed to 723 El Paseo Road, Ojai CA 93023. Payments by credit card can be made at ovs.org/give.

There are other ways to make a gift to OVS: **Securities** – Securities may be donated at their current value. This gift may afford you a significant tax advantage as you might obtain a tax-deduction for the full market value of the gift, and you may avoid a tax on the capital gains of appreciated securities that you have held for more than one year.

The Yeomans Legacy – Named in honor of Ojai Valley School's founder and visionary educator Edward Yeomans, The Yeomans Legacy recognizes alumni and friends who have thoughtfully included Ojai Valley School in their estate plans.

Ojai Valley School is a 501(c)(3) non-profit institution. Your donation is tax-deductible in accordance with state and federal laws.

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RISING

FROM THE ASHES

By Hannah Little (L19)

The new Littlefield Student Commons looms large and square at the southwestern edge of the Upper Campus of Ojai Valley School, overlooking the cascading mountains on the east end of the valley.

Upper Campus Head of School Craig Floyd stands in a wind tunnel that shoots through the second floor of the still unfinished building, his shoulders pushed back by the gusting air that sweeps up the hillside and funnels into the rectangular chute.

The Commons is a mere skeleton now of what it will ultimately become, the centerpiece of the most ambitious building project in school history. But even in its current state, with its exposed wood and freshly mounted glass, it speaks of new opportunities and dreams of expansion.

"It has been three long years of waiting for the rebuild," said Mr. Floyd, leading a tour of the Commons and the other new buildings steadily taking shape at the highest point on the hill. "I am extremely excited to see the buildings approach completion. We're dedicated to making this part of the campus a top-notch facility."

The \$16.5-million project is largely aimed at replacing buildings lost

in the Thomas Fire. Construction has been underway for more than a year on a new and expanded Grace Hobson Smith House dormitory and on the Aramont Science and Technology Center, which among its many amenities will feature new classrooms, science and media labs, and a makerspace for engineering and robotics. Both the old girls' dorm and science building burned to the ground in the fire.

Also under development is the brand new Commons, a two-story dining hall, library, and student center that will, for the first time, provide a place for the entire student body to gather for meals and special events. The new facilities are expected to be completed by early summer, with the goal of having them open and ready for occupancy by the start of the 2021-22 school year.

"From an admissions standpoint, the new buildings coming online will be an extraordinary game changer," said Tracy Wilson, the school's director of admissions and advancement. "But beyond that, this project is going to enhance the student experience at Ojai Valley School."

After the Thomas Fire tore through the Upper Campus in December 2017, destroying half the campus including several signature buildings, OVS wasted no time

launching the rebuilding process. There was a meeting with OVS parent and renowned Los Angeles architect Fred Fisher 48 hours after the fire was put out, both to design a plan for The Village — a temporary girls dorm and classroom space — and to start laying the groundwork for the rebuilding effort.

At the same time, workers from McGillivray Construction — founded and operated by former OVS parent Steve McGillivray — were on hand completing a boys' dorm renovation, and they were pulled in to help establish The Village. Months later, McGillivray Construction would be named lead contractor on the rebuild project.

In November 2019, after a mountain of debris was cleared and architectural plans were made, the first pieces of heavy equipment arrived and the rebuild began in earnest.

"In the footprint of the fire destruction, Fred and his team envisioned an ensemble of buildings to meet the academic and residential needs of the community, and we are now seeing that come to fruition," said OVS President/CEO Michael Hall-Mounsey.

"These buildings will be more attractive, more environmentally sustainable, and more fire resistant



The \$16.5 million rebuild, as of mid-March, 2021. Construction has rapidly advanced from winter to spring.

than anything we had before," he added, "and we are grateful to the families and individuals whose support has made it possible."

From a distance, those living and learning at the Upper Campus have been able to watch the project slowly but surely take shape, but few have been allowed to venture beyond the chain link fence that secures the construction site.

Luckily, Mr. Floyd allows an occasional sneak peek.

Walking up to the construction site, the first large building is dedicated to the sciences. The Aramont Science and Technology Center includes a seminar room, three science classrooms, a computer lab and the Makerspace. The

Aramont Foundation, with the encouragement of alumna Lucila Arango (U84), was the first to step up with a major \$1 million contribution after the fire and inspired others to give. This has included numerous alumni, parents, grandparents and friends of the school.

Mr. Floyd steps eagerly into one of the classrooms next to the Carol Burnett Digital and Media Arts Lab, donated by the legendary comedian, an OVS grandparent, and her husband Brian Miller. Like all the rooms in this building, one of the most striking features is the high ceilings and tall rectangular windows that flood the learning space with natural light.

Across from the Media Lab stands the new Black Family Foundation Makerspace, a dedicated classroom for robotics that features a large

roll-up door and outdoor patio. The door will allow resources to be driven straight into the lab, while the patio will give students the opportunity to work outside.

Just west of the Makerspace and across from a sizable new faculty meeting room is the McCarthy Family Multipurpose Room, with its main focus being an epicenter of performing arts that can be used for play rehearsal, instrument storage, and garage band practices. The room has large glass windows that open outward, providing an open, spacious feeling. As designed, it will be a grand space where students will be able to come together and enjoy movies, music, and each other.

From the science building to the new girls' dorm is a short zig-zag path that leads right to the front



The new girls' dorms were thoughtfully designed to utilize natural light and do justice to the unparalleled views.

entrance of the dorm. The one-story building is laid out like a square picture frame; three walls of rooms border a private and homey courtyard.

"One of my favorite features is the courtyard of the girls' dorm," said Fred Fisher, whose architectural firm designed all of the buildings under construction. "Its sense of enclosure contrasts with the wide open space of the hilltop."

The fourth wall, closest to the science building, includes two apartments that will serve as faculty housing. The first wall that borders the girls dorm will be a row of two-person rooms and a single room at the end. Along the back row of the building are larger, three-student rooms.

The girls' lounge is in the southwest corner. It features expansive glass

windows running the length of the wall to expose the gorgeous valley views.

The last of the three buildings is the two-story Littlefield Student Commons, named for alumnus Ed Littlefield (U67), whose foundation contributed \$2 million to the project. The Commons will serve multiple roles, from housing the new cafeteria to offering students places to lounge and relax before classes. Up until now, there has been no indoor space on campus in which all students, faculty and staff could gather, but that will no longer be the case.

When entering through the large glass doors of the Commons there is an elevator directly to the left, part of an effort to make the building accessible to all.

A staircase that leads to the second

floor spills directly into a lounge and seating area, which overlooks the large screens and cafeteria. Adjacent to the seating area is the wind-swept reading porch, and past that lies the new J.B. Close Library, named for former English teacher J.B. Close, which is much more spacious than the current library in Wallace Burr Hall. Attached to the library are a set of rooms that will house the College Counseling office and Learning Center.

Back on the first floor is a spacious new kitchen and server, which was toured during construction by one of the most important constituent groups that will make use of the Commons: the kitchen staff. After years of working in the cramped confines of the current kitchen, the new space was a revelation to the OVS cooks.

The new kitchen features pantry

spaces and walk-in refrigeration spaces and dishwashing spaces that are many times bigger than what is presently available. All the appliances will be electric, taking advantage of the school's ample solar power.

"The whole (current) kitchen can fit in the walk-in," said longtime cook Moises Ferrell, poking his head into all the areas that will soon be his domain.

Bordering the kitchen is a large serving area where the food line will form. Students will then be funneled into Boswell Hall, a spacious dining area that fits up to 190 people. The second floor does not extend over the seating area, so that this space has an extremely tall ceiling lined with glass on both sides. Students will also have the opportunity to sit outside in an oak-shaded dining terrace right outside of the building.

The far wall of the dining hall has no windows and is intended for a nine-panel video wall. The screens will beam sports games, news broadcasts, and other programs. Students will be able to tap into these screens through their phones, and can watch and listen through headphones. With a maximum occupancy of 300, the space is perfect for larger events such as screenings of student films and presentations by guest lecturers.

Less visible is the way in which all three buildings will protect the environment and provide reliable, renewable energy for the entire campus.

This includes a battery storage system that will store electricity generated by the existing solar array, dramatically eliminating CO2 emissions and ensuring the campus can function in the event of

power outages. Additional green-building features are expected to meet the standards for LEED Gold certification, demonstrating they are sustainable and safe for students and staff.

"From day one after the fire, there was no doubt the school would be committed to rebuilding," Mr. Floyd said as he ended his tour. "We know this building project will truly transform the student experience for years to come."

Help us close the funding gap, and double your contribution!
Visit www.ovs.org/give and select "Restore Renew Rebuild" in the dropdown menu.

Celebrating Lunar New Year

After the chaotic events of 2020, freshman Allyanna Westcott (L20) decided that 2021 needed a calm start. That's why, when deciding what to draw for the school's annual Lunar New Year greeting card contest, she went the untraditional route, choosing a napping ox, rather than a strong standing ox. "I felt that after 2020, we needed a mellow ox kind of year more than a big aggressive ox kind of year," said Allyanna, who won this year's competition by wowing the judges with her artistic ability. The greeting card contest and delicious Chinese-inspired meals for students on both campuses are a few of the ways in which the school celebrates Lunar New Year. We hope all our families find happiness, good health, and good fortune in the year ahead!



BRAVO Concert Reaches Hundreds

The Ojai Music Festival's BRAVO program has been enhancing the music curriculum in local public schools for more than 30 years by offering interdisciplinary music lessons and performances. The goal is to help keep music an integral, enjoyable, and exciting part of the learning process while providing critical music education opportunities for students. This year, the Ojai Music Festival and Ojai Valley School presented Chumash Story and Song with Tribal Elder Julie Tumamait-Stenslie as a free virtual event. Pre-recorded beneath a canopy of oaks at the Upper Campus, the online performance reached 1,400 children at 11 schools. The concert was made possible by the Ojai Valley School-Barbara Barnard Smith Fund of the Ventura County Community Foundation. Thank you Barbara (L35) for keeping music and the arts thriving in our community!



Skaters Support Project for Fort Apache

The Fort Apache Reservation is more than 600 miles from Ojai Valley School, but really it is in a completely different world. Located in the northeast part of Arizona, the 1.6-million-acre reservation is home to approximately 16,000 tribal members and more than 400 miles of streams. However, there is one thing that ties these two worlds together: skateboarding. In February, OVS skaters held a Skate-A-Thon at Upper Campus to raise money for their fellow skaters on the reservation. AP Psychology teacher Carmen Doane-Barkan (U99) introduced students to the Apache Passion Project, which sought to raise money to build the first skate park on the reservation. Skateboarding is a fast-growing sport on many reservations. It is also hugely popular at OVS, where students on both campuses can be found wheeling after classes.

College Acceptances Roll In

As of mid-April, our 21 seniors had racked up more than 119 college acceptances to a broad range of colleges and universities. The list includes Columbia University, Johns Hopkins, UCLA, UC Berkeley, USC, and NYU, as well as smaller, less urban campuses such as Montana State University, Pepperdine University, UC Santa Barbara, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Reed College, and many more. The college list is as diverse as the seniors who have been invited to enroll. They are exploring potential majors that include environmental studies, business, computer science, photography and journalism. As always, our goal remains to help students find and gain access to their "right fit" colleges and universities, those schools that are going to fuel their ambitions, sharpen their talents and shape them into the adults they were meant to become.

Students Create Valentines for Vets

Students in grades PK-5 took time to cut, color and write heart-shaped cards to help veterans feel loved on Valentine's Day. "The kids all made heart cards and decorated them with American flags," said first-grade teacher Nicole Ferro (L96). "We talked about why it is important to give back to people in our community and one way you can give back is by brightening someone's day with a heartfelt thank you." Alumni Relations Associate Wendy Tremiti, whose husband is a veteran, organized the mailing with her friend Robert Henline, a veteran and motivational speaker who works with nonprofits on the East Coast. Through Henline, the letters this year were shipped to Fayetteville, North Carolina and were received by a group that supports homeless military veterans.



Spring Musicals Hit the Screen

When the pandemic began, live performances across the nation were canceled due to potential virus exposure. At OVS, performing arts teachers and their students were determined the show would go on. Four virtual plays and musicals have been staged this school year, including the recent middle school spring musical "Singin' in the Rain" and the high school murder mystery musical, "A Killer Party." Both productions relied on strict safety protocols. At Lower, students wore face shields and performed distanced ensemble numbers. At Upper, performers were filmed individually and their songs and scenes edited to give the appearance of being together. "The biggest challenge so far has been getting situated as a film production rather than a stage production," explained director Carmen Doane-Barkan (U99.) Both musicals can be watched at vimeo.com/ojaivalleyschool.



Cross Country Wins League Championship

Sports practices resumed in the fall, and, in the case of our Cross Country team, competitions began last winter with five league meets hosted at the Upper Campus. Cross Country was the first sport allowed to compete by CIF and the state while in the Purple Tier. The Spuds started the season running against a small socially distanced field from three schools. But for the athletes and coaches, the competition was monumental as it offered a glimpse of life post-pandemic. "It's just making it normal in some little, little way," coach Fred Alvarez said. At the end of the season, the boys team ran away with the Omega League Championship and two runners, India Getty-Pruss (L19) and Ben Manning (L20), took home 3rd place medals in their respective races. Congratulations to all the runners for a job well done!





Baseball is Back

As Ventura County moved into the Red Tier on its way to easing COVID-19 restrictions, Ojai Valley School baseball’s team dominated for its opening game of the season. The Spuds rolled to an 11-6 win over Nordhoff High School on March 20. Both teams exuded high energy and showed great eagerness to get back on the field and play a real game after the pandemic forced a one-year hiatus. “I haven’t felt that energy in a long time,” said junior team captain Ryan Farrell (L18), who pitched 3 1/3 innings and allowed only two hits and two runs. “It brought back good memories being out there with the team again.” The Spuds have a full calendar of games this spring. Check the schedule on the website calendar at ovs.org/calendar.

Outdoor Education Trips Resume

We continue to get our students outdoors in small groups for hiking, climbing, kayaking, surfing, mountain biking and rafting trips. It has been a challenge to lead these trips during a pandemic, but we have made it work by taking students in small groups, or cohorts, while adapting trip schedules and adding safety protocols. At Upper, we recently launched two multi-day camping trips as seniors spent a week paddling 84 miles along the San Juan River in southern Utah and then a group of honors students rafted a section of the Colorado River. At Lower, we have enjoyed seeing our middle and elementary students return to campus with huge smiles, enhanced friendships and awesome memories after a series of recent day excursions to the Sespe Wilderness and the Ojai Valley River Preserve.



And Finally ... Seniors Prank the Faculty

Before the sun came up on April 1, the Upper Campus was transformed by a small army of seniors who worked through the night to show their school spirit. When students and teachers arrived in the morning, Mr. Byars’ classroom was at the bottom of the pool, his metal chairs and tables submerged, but appropriately arranged; Mr. Weidlich’s desk and chairs were replaced by four park benches and potted plants; and Mr. Floyd was greeted in his office by a plastic pool filled with Pepsi. On the Lap Board, each teacher had received 11 million laps, except for Mrs. Wilson who had zero and a heart next to her name. Over the years, many classes have left their mark with memorable pranks. It was good to see the seniors inject a little humor this year.



Read more campus news on the student journalism website, On The Hill, at oth.ovs.org. Stay connected by following OVS on Instagram and Facebook. Send us your favorite memories (pranks and shenanigans included) for the fall issue of Family Tree to alumni@ovs.org.

A Cut Above

By Hannah Little (L19)



Allyanna Westcott (left) and Donahi Soriano (right) shaved their heads to support children with cancer. They posed with the perpetually buzzed-cut teacher and coach Fred Alvarez (center).

Freshmen Allyanna Westcott (L20) and Donahi Soriano (L20) showed their peers the meaning of giving back in April by shaving their long black hair to donate to Wigs For Kids, a nonprofit that helps children who suffer hair loss from cancer treatments and other medical issues.

“I really wanted to make a difference and do something that mattered,” said Allyanna, who shared the idea with Donahi. The pair created a Go-Fund-Me campaign and then sat center stage in the Carl S. Cooper Amphitheater for two epic haircuts.

“When the first piece was cut my immediate response was a little sad,” Donahi admitted. “But then I thought about the smiles of the kids who will receive my hair and how my small sacrifice will bring a world of happiness.”

Summer Camp is Hiring!

We are getting ready for Summer Camp 2021 and looking for alumni who are interested in working as teachers or camp counselors. Working at OVS is a great opportunity to develop leadership skills, reconnect with nature, mentor young people and be mentored yourself! The essence of Summer Camp is in the human relationships we forge, which is something we are all craving at this moment, and the opportunity to get outdoors after months behind a Zoom screen.

OVS has a great tradition of hiring alumni to work at Summer Camp. Be part of the tradition and play a key role in developing the emotional well-being of campers who have been locked down for the better part of the past year! Contact Camp Director Eleanora Burright for more information at eburright@ovs.org.



Summer Camp is looking for alumni to be teachers and camp counselors at this year’s camp, set for June 27 to August 7.

The Westin Project

Campuses Come Together to Honor a Beloved Pony and Help a Community a World Away

By Hannah Little (L19)

Ted Tambakis was on a search.

Weary of the constant sniping and griping on social media, the Ojai Valley School associate admissions director found himself at the start of the year dedicated to making a positive change through social media.

Stumbling upon a post featuring Gambian laborer Sambou Dampha and his life in extreme poverty, Mr. Tambakis struck up a conversation, unknowingly igniting a match that would burn into a vibrant friendship. The two have now been talking almost everyday through Instagram. They've learned about one another, finding similarities in their lives and exploring their differences.

"I feel I can learn a great deal about him from having circumstances that are much more difficult than my own," Mr. Tambakis said. "We've really built up an individual connection."



The OVS students's carwash raised almost \$2,000 for the Damphas.

Mr. Dampha, 23, is the oldest of 14 children and stepped up when his father died to be his family's primary caregiver. They live in The Gambia, a small West African country, where work is hard to come by and men like Mr. Dampha find themselves searching for and accepting any job that pays. This usually includes grueling physical labor.

To ease the intense need for resources, Mr. Dampha accepts donations through his Instagram. He mainly receives clothes, shippable food, and sponsorships. Mr. Tambakis decided that he too would help his newfound friend and asked Mr. Dampha what his family needed most.

The answer: a horse and cart. These items would provide transportation for Mr. Dampha's family and open a floodgate of opportunity. The horse and cart were priced at \$1,500, which for Mr. Tambakis alone was a tall order. He decided to turn his personal project into an OVS project, and it did not take long before teachers and students jumped on board.

At Lower Campus, 8th graders in the advisory of Spanish teacher Marcia Thacher and science teacher Matthew Inman decided to hold a carwash and set up a Go Fund Me. They raised nearly \$2,000 at the car wash alone, receiving help from Upper Campus students Jean-Michel Lin-Hurtubise, Eli Roston (L20), Dylan Hamilton-West (L20), and Jocelyn Gonzalez (L17).



Westin was a beloved part of the OVS equestrian program for 26 years.

"I think the best way to describe the (advisory's) levels of commitment to this event is, 'All In!'" said Mr. Inman.

The fundraiser included a special twist.

In early February, the school lost Westin, a beloved Shetland pony, who had been part of the equestrian program for 26 years. Every student who passed through the elementary riding program, or who spent time in the barn, cherished the fun spirited and sometimes grumpy Westin. Mr. Tambakis had the idea of naming the campaign "the Westin Project" and asked Mr. Dampha if he would be willing to name his future horse after Westin.

"We're coming together to remember Westin, who brought so much joy to so many kids over so many years, and although we

mourn Westin, on the other side of the world he will still bring that joy to others," Mr. Tambakis said.

Mr. Dampha was beyond grateful. He wrote, "I'm so sorry for the death of [the] beloved horse Westin and we will be so glad to name our horse Westin, such a beautiful name."

During the Westin Project, Mr. Tambakis and teachers

took the opportunity to teach students about the world through the experiences of Mr. Dampha and his family, introducing topics of poverty and the very different lives people lead in comparison to their own. Going forward, Mr. Tambakis and Mr. Dampha are determined to continue their friendship and enact change.

"We can feel your love deep in our hearts," Mr. Dampha said. "And we thank you."



Mr. Dampha and his brother show off their new cart and the new "Westin."

The Art of Inclusivity

By Eugene Fisher (L19)

Ojai Valley School art students are projecting their beliefs and taking strides toward activism through a new medium.

There is a fine line between education and activism, but as social issues have come to the forefront of our lives, that line has faded causing the two to often end up intertwined. Chia Hersk (L88, U92), the Upper Campus art teacher, created a project that incorporates issues students are passionate about into a project where they create posters to show what diversity means to them.

"Different students will interpret it in different ways, and it's really important to see the way different people choose to interpret the idea of diversity," said sophomore India Getty-Pruss (L19). This points out the free reign of the project, allowing students to express their ideas of diversity without any restraint.

India decided to go with a more unique project, cutting out hearts and incorporating different aspects of what diversity means to her. She included topics like mental health, LGBTQ+ pride, Black Lives Matter, and community.

"Diversity is a pretty complex thing with a lot of parts," India said, describing what she wanted to portray with her project. "To understand diversity, you have to understand and appreciate all those different parts, and that's what I was trying to show."

Senior Sydnee Rousseau conveyed the importance of social issues into her art.

"I think it is really important to incorporate real-world issues, especially into art because it gives you a really interesting opportunity to study the subject in a different and creative way," she explained. This project is part of a larger

diversity and inclusivity campaign. Starting with the appointment of two Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons on each campus, Ojai Valley School is striving to become a place where voices can be heard and opinions can be expressed. There are several members of the school community that are passionate about social justice issues, and projects like this encourage and inspire students to express what they are passionate about.

"Students need to understand that the more they are educated about the world, the better they will understand it and make decisions that are for the betterment of society," said Ms. Hersk, who displayed the artwork in the cafeteria for all to see as they go through the lunch line. "We are all related and the more we understand this the more we will have compassion for others regardless of their race, religion, sexual orientation, nationality etc."

OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL

Alumni Weekend

AUGUST 20 - 22, 2021

We are delighted that this year's Alumni Weekend will take place on **August 20-22, 2021**.

We shall, once again, gather in person at the Upper Campus, this time to celebrate the grand opening of the rebuilt Grace Hobson Smith House, the Aramont Science and Technology Center, and the new Littlefield Student Commons.

This, of course, is a change from our long-held tradition of a June event. But we felt strongly that we wanted to hold Alumni Weekend at a time when we could do so under the best possible health conditions for all.

We know that circumstances could change, but we hope that by moving the reunion weekend later in summer more alumni will be able to safely attend.

Alumni Weekend | SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 20

- **3:00 to 7:00 p.m.:** **Alumni Weekend Check-in at Upper Campus Activities Center**
Pick up your name badge. Bring towels, pillows, and bedding if you will be staying in the dorms.
- **5:00 to 7:00 p.m.:** **Poolside Welcome Reception at Upper Campus Activities Center**
Meet fellow alumni and faculty at a poolside social.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 21

- **8:00 to 10:00 a.m.:** **Continental Breakfast at Upper Campus Dining Hall**
Enjoy a continental breakfast with your classmates.
- **8:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.:** **Guided Hike in Sespe Wilderness; meet at Upper Campus Activities Center**
Guided hike for all ability levels. Transportation provided, and sack lunch fixings available at breakfast.
- **9:00 to 10:00 a.m.:** **Pony Rides at Upper Campus Stables**
Pony rides for children.
- **11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.:** **Pool Open at Upper Campus Pool**
Enjoy a refreshing dip in the pool.
- **11:00 a.m. to noon:** **Corn Hole Tournament at Upper Campus Dok Smith Field**
Participate in a Corn Hole Tournament.
- **Noon to 1:00 p.m.:** **Lunch at Upper Campus Dining Hall**
Enjoy a boxed picnic lunch and sit outside with friends.
- **2:00 to 3:00 p.m.:** **Alumni Soccer Game at Lower Campus Athletic Field**
This will be a scored Alumni vs. Alumni game. Jerseys and water provided.
- **4:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.:** **Childcare and Teen Lounge at Upper Campus Girls' Dorm Village**
Dinner and activities will be provided for children and teens. Pre-registration required.

THE MAIN EVENT: GRAND CELEBRATION DINNER

Tour the new Aramont Science and Technology Center, the rebuilt Grace Hobson Smith House dormitory, and the new Littlefield Student Commons. Enjoy the first Alumni Weekend celebration dinner at the rebuilt Upper Campus. Dressy casual attire.

- **4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.:** **Building Tour**
Tour the new buildings, enjoy cocktails and music, and gather with classmates for photos. Adults only.
- **6:00 to 6:30 p.m.:** **Dedication of New Buildings**
Join us in dedicating the Aramont Science and Technology Center, the Grace Hobson Smith House, and the Littlefield Student Commons
- **6:30 to 8:30 p.m.:** **Celebration Dinner**
Two years after our groundbreaking, and 3 ½ years after the Thomas Fire, enjoy dinner with friends and alumni at the rebuilt Upper Campus.
- **8:30 to 9:30 p.m.:** **Live music and fun**

SUNDAY, AUGUST 22

- **9:30 to 11:00 a.m.:** **Closing Day Brunch at Lower Campus Wallace Burr Pergola**
Say farewell to your classmates, and enjoy a final breakfast at Lower Campus

Tentative Schedule. Times and activities subject to change.

Alumni Weekend | REGISTRATION FORM

August 20 to 22, 2021

Return your completed form with payment by August 1, 2021 to: OVS Alumni Office, 723 El Paseo Road, Ojai, CA, 93023

Name: _____ Class of: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Name(s) of adult guest(s): _____

Name(s) & age(s) of child(ren): _____

Alumni Weekend Registration:

The 2021 Alumni Weekend Grand Celebration Dinner will be a limited capacity event; we strongly encourage you to purchase your ticket(s) in advance as this event is likely to sell out. All meals, childcare, and activities are included in your Alumni Weekend registration. Dorm accommodations at Upper Campus are available for an additional cost per person. In the event the school cannot host Alumni Weekend due to the pandemic all fees will be refunded. Social distancing and other safety measures may be required for the health and safety of the community.

☐ \$75 for 1 adult ticket ☐ \$135 per couple ticket TOTAL: \$ _____

Accommodations:

Alumni and families can stay in the Upper Campus dorms for \$50 per single room and \$75 per couple per room. There is no charge for children ages 4-16. Please bring your own towels, pillows, bedding or sleeping bags, and toiletries. Space is limited.

☐ \$50 for single person room ☐ \$75 per couple room TOTAL: \$ _____

Activities:

Please let us know the Alumni Weekend activities in which you would like to participate and the number of people in your party. Check all that apply:

☐ Corn Hole Tournament ☐ Alumni Soccer Game ☐ Guided Hike in Sespe
☐ Childcare for Dinner ☐ Pony Rides for Children

Round Up for OVS!

Your tax-deductible gift supports the 2021-22 Annual Fund, which funds new educational initiatives, faculty enrichment grants, improvements to our equestrian, athletic and outdoor education programs, as well as increased scholarships and financial aid. Supporting the Annual Fund is the best way to have a positive impact on the daily life of our students and faculty.

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ Other: \$ _____

Payment:

☐ Check Enclosed. Please make your check payable to Ojai Valley School. ☐ Credit Card. To pay with a credit card, please visit www.ovs.org/aw or call (805) 640-2578. TOTAL: \$ _____

Founder's Alumni Award

→ Deadline for Nominations is May 31, 2021! ←

In recognition of the school's centennial, the Founder's Alumni Award was created to honor Ojai Valley School alumni whose achievements exemplify the values endorsed in the school's motto, Integer Vitae, meaning wholeness of life, symmetry of life, soundness of life, therefore, poise and strength of life.

Nominations are welcomed and encouraged. The final selection will be made by the school President, after consultation with the Founder's Alumni Award Committee and Heads of School. The Founder's Alumni Award will be presented at the Alumni Weekend Celebration on the evening of August 21, 2021.

The Founder's Alumni Award Recipient will have demonstrated good character, respect for other people, a balance of accomplishments at a level that has a positive and broad impact, whose achievement(s) is/are significant within a profession, career, vocation, or service.

The Founder's Alum will have achieved distinction in one or more of the following ways:

- Serving his or her local, national and/or global community in an outstanding fashion
- Demonstrating extraordinary commitment to making the world a better place through the promotion of education, diversity, and environmental stewardship
- Ensuring the sustainability of the school through various forms of engagement and support

Please include as much information, such as web links and articles, so that your nominee has the committee's full consideration.



Name of nominee: _____

Your name: _____

Please describe the nominee's significant achievement(s): _____

In what ways does the alum exemplify the principles of OVS? _____

Is the nominee connected with the school and/or classmates? If yes, how? _____

Mail nominations to OVS Alumni Office, 723 El Paseo Road, Ojai CA 93023 or email alumni@ovs.org

Play On

Alum Renews and Pursues his Love of Music

By Meline Ellwanger

For OVS alum Erik Wheelon (U07), the love affair began back in high school.

Indeed, that's when he met his first true love, picking up a guitar as part of the Upper Campus music program and instantly finding his constant companion.

Since then, he has turned that love into his passion.

Mr. Wheelon has expanded his musical interests, learning to play a range of instruments including drums, piano and bass guitar. He has worked as a studio musician and as a music teacher, and he is currently working toward a bachelor's degree at the Berklee College of Music.

Most recently, he has become reconnected with the OVS music program, purchasing an array of equipment — including microphones, amplifiers and a vintage analog synthesizer — put to good use in the virtual spring musical, "A Killer Party."

"If someone is lucky enough to possess an artistic gift, I think it's one of the most special things in the world and should be encouraged," Mr. Wheelon said about his generous donation to the OVS program. "So that is my goal

— to encourage people with such interests."

After attending a summer session at OVS before 8th grade, Mr. Wheelon made his way to the Upper Campus for high school, graduating in 2007. He attended Boston University to study economics and math, but quickly realized he didn't really enjoy those subjects and left without graduating to pursue other interests. He eventually started working in the restaurant industry, and is now a part owner of a boutique restaurant investment group in Los Angeles.

But through it all, music has remained one his main interests, so much so that at the start of this year he returned to school in pursuit of a music degree at Berklee.

"It has been a wonderful experience," he said. "My only regret is not having done it sooner."

After enrolling at Berklee, Mr. Wheelon contacted OVS teacher and expert musician John Boyd, who he had grown close to during his OVS experience. After the two caught up, Mr. Boyd brought up the spring musical, and explained how this year, because of COVID, it would have to be staged virtually and pre-recorded. Mr. Boyd also mentioned that the music program

would have to purchase a lot of new equipment.

Mr. Wheelon quickly sprung into action.

"He immediately asked how he could help acquire the items that we needed," Mr. Boyd recalled. "I sent him a list of the things OVS was going to purchase. He purchased the equipment and had it sent to us."

Mr. Wheelon's hope is to empower and support students to use their musical talents and pursue them. He envisions one day being a teacher, explaining that he has benefitted so much from the great teachers in his life and that he'd like to repay that gift.

Moreover, he hopes to continue to support the OVS community with more and broader contributions, such as scholarships or incentive programs for young artists.

"I think OVS is perfectly positioned to have a top-ranking arts program across the Lower and Upper campuses," he said. "OVS did a lot for me, and in the absence of family, helped guide me to where I am today. I will forever read OVS as my immediate family, and it is my pleasure to return the favor, especially for the next generation."



ELITE EQUESTRIAN

College Freshman Caspian Ellis Competes Against Top Junior Riders in Nationals

By Sydnee Rousseau

From a young age, in the barnyard at Lower Campus to the stable at Whitethorne LLC, Caspian Ellis (L16, U20) has excelled in the equestrian world. Her hard work and dedication led her to nationals last fall, where she placed within the top 25 riders out of 250 elite equestrians.

The competitions were held as Caspian, like many of her OVS classmates, had a very different first semester of college due to COVID-19. A freshman at UC Davis, where she will compete on the school's equestrian team, she was hoping to defer for a semester to focus on nationals. But the pandemic changed those plans.

"Because school is offered remotely this year, I began just like everyone else did in the fall and have been taking classes online," she said. "I will continue this for the rest of the year so that I can continue to ride, compete for my barn, and maximize my time at home with my horses before I depart for college in-person next year."

The timing allowed Caspian to excel further in her sport and spend hours at the barn. "It has definitely been a blessing in disguise," she said. "This extra time that I have been able to dedicate to the sport has profoundly impacted my riding and helped me to excel...Not only have I been able to spend more time in the saddle, but I have also been able to learn a lot more about my horses from the time we spend together."

With the time Caspian gained she was able to develop her skills before showing in California as well as traveling across the country to partake in nationals, where she competed against some of the top junior equestrians.

Due to the pandemic, things looked a little different. "Nationals was an amazing experience. I had one in the West Coast (USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals) and two on the East Coast, the USEF Hunter Seat Medal, and the ASPCA Maclay Final. I was on the East Coast for over a month training, traveling, and competing in these championships," Caspian said. "The USEF Hunter Seat final is normally held at

the Pennsylvania National Horse Show in Harrisburg, but due to COVID-19 and the need for social distancing, the location was changed this year to the Tryon International Equestrian Center in Mill Spring, North Carolina."

Junior nationals are a bittersweet time for riders, but their hard work and dedication does not go unseen. "Junior riding is the golden moment for all young riders. And Indoors (nationals) is simultaneously the worst and best day of our lives. We showcase the blood, sweat, and tears that we pour into this sport, as we polish our boots, button out jackets, and tuck our hair into our helmets for the last show of the year," Caspian said. "There really is no better moment in someone's junior career than winning an equitation final and accepting the

award under the glow of the stadium's lights."

Nationals marked the closing of her time showing in the junior division, but Caspian is now looking into her future in the equestrian world. "This was my last year to compete in the USEF Hunter Seat Medal and the ASPCA Maclay because, as of January 1 when your age is recorded, I will be 18 and no longer eligible to compete in these junior classes," she said. "Though this was my last time competing in these finals I could not be more thankful to have had such a wonderful experience. I am now ready to start the next chapter in my riding career."





Naum Nasif



Dara Goldman



Nando Cartocci



Seth Santini

Lower 1959
Spencer Westbrook (L59) reached out to the school recently to donate a beautiful collection of books and magazines. He also provided this alumni note: "I have lived in Ventura for 30 years and retired in 2008 after many years in a career as a facilities manager both locally and in the Silicon Valley area. Upon leaving college after two years I joined the US Navy and served aboard nuclear submarines where I was responsible for engine room operations. I am single, have no children, and my hobby, as it were, is photography. I travel extensively throughout California, and western states to photograph landscapes and, in particular, wildflowers. I also volunteer at the Channel Islands National Park Visitor's Center in Ventura, providing guests and visitors with Park information. Until his passing last year, I had done a number of trips with my former OVS classmate, Terry Collins, who was himself an excellent photographer. We always recalled OVS days while out and about. I continue to visit locations I became familiar with while attending OVS, Rose Valley, Piedra Blanca and Hwy 33. My interests include California history, environmental issues, California native plants. My garden is full of natives, railroads and cars."

Lower 1964
Carl Cooper (See Past Faculty &

Staff Notes, pg. 31)
Lower 1965
Nancy Graves (See Upper 1968)

Lower 1972
Mary Boggs (See Upper 1976)

Lower 1986
Loc Briggs (See Upper 1990)

Lower 1992
Shelby Dees Brown
(See Upper 1996)

Elton Seah (See Upper 1996)

Lower 2003
Iris (Torres) Michael
(See Upper 2007)

Lower 1993
Maren Briggs (See Upper 1997)

Lower 1996
Naum Nasif (L96), who has been living in Denver, Colorado, for more than 20 years, noted that Denver, where he had "no previous connection as a kid, was the prediction I made of where I would be living in our 8th grade time capsule. Nicole Gartrell sent me the evidence! My wife, Emma, and I have two children George (5) and Pippa (3) and are very happy in the Mile High City. We hope travel brings us to Ojai soon so I can inaugurate my family as Boney Beaners!"

Lower 1997
Dara Goldman (L97), after spending almost a decade traveling the world teaching SCUBA, and her husband, Evan, welcomed their daughter, Isla, into the world last winter — just in time for a global pandemic! The seemingly endless months trapped in their Miami apartment with a newborn sparked a deep desire for nearby grandparents and they moved to Southern Oregon — just in time for the insane fire season! Luckily, their house didn't burn down, the smoke cleared, and they've been thoroughly enjoying the change of scenery and time with family (aka free babysitters).

Lower 2000
Nando Cartocci (L00) checked in recently from southern Italy, where he was shooting a Western. He wrote: "COVID is pretty bad, like everywhere, but I'm glad I'm in a safe bubble and everyone gets tested every 48 hrs. Cate is home with our three dogs and all is proceeding nicely."

Lower 2001
Chelsea Weavil (See Lower 2006)

Lower 2003
Kiwako (Ogura) Murakami
(See Upper 2007)

Lower 2005
Seth Santini (L05) is pleased to

announce he passed the California Bar Exam in October 2020. He is excited to begin his career as an attorney at MRHFM, LLP., representing plaintiffs that have gotten seriously ill as the result of asbestos exposure. He lives in Oakland with his girlfriend, Gaby, and their two dogs.

Marie Shin (L05) is living in Germany and working at the United Nations in the Migration department. She wrote, "It's very gloomy during winter here and I really miss sunny Ojai. Hope everyone is happy and healthy! Sending my love to Ms. Scott, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Burright."

Lower 2006 & 2007
Chelsea (L01), **Lucas** (L06) and **Kendall** (L07) **Weavil** provided a sibling update from Charlotte, North Carolina. Chelsea (Weavil) Mynhardt graduated from Elon University and is married to Lee Mynhardt. They live in Charlotte, where she is currently working as a customer solutions specialist at Quest Diagnostics. She also works as a real estate agent and owns her own brokerage. She and Lee both own a construction company where they have become very successful at flipping houses in the booming Charlotte market. Kendall Weavil graduated from The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She lives in Charlotte and is working

for Bio Reference Laboratories as a regional manager overseeing professional sport COVID testing for athletic organizations such as the NBA and NFL. Lucas Weavil graduated from The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In 2019 he married his wife, Kelsey, and, like Kendall and Chelsea, they also live in Charlotte. Lucas is a business development manager at Quest Diagnostics where he develops strategies in value-based medicine. Currently, he is also pursuing an MBA.

Lower 2008
Gunnar Helman (See Upper 2012)

Lower 2009
Marissa Maas (L09) graduated from Stanford University in 2017 and started medical school at the Keck School of Medicine at USC. She will be graduating this year and has been accepted to the prestigious urologic surgery residency at USC. She continued to ride horses competitively throughout medical school and hopes to continue to ride during residency.

Lower 2010
Keaton Shiffman (See Upper 2014)

Lower 2011
Ezra King (L11), his partner, Katrina, and their two-year-old, Daniel, are living comfortably through the pandemic and plan to open a cafe

in the coming months. "I wanted to give a shout out to Mr. Rowan for being an all-around amazing person and teacher," he said, "Go Spuds!"

Claire Wickenhaeuser
(See Upper 2014)

Lower 2012
Peter Marcus (L12) went to the Culinary Institute of America - Hyde Park, New York, where he received his degree in Culinary Arts. He then attended Cornell University and graduated in May 2020 with a business degree. After working in the kitchens of several Michelin-star restaurants, Peter chose to transition into the business side and now works for Reef Technology as a West Coast Brand Success Manager, and guiding restaurants to grow and prosper. Peter lives with his brother (see Jack Marcus, Upper 2012). Both boys get back to California regularly and, when in town, frequently go on hikes in Ojai, evoking fond memories of their time at OVS.

Lower 2013
Josh Han (See Upper 2017)

UPPER CAMPUS

Upper 1965
Dok Smith (See Past Faculty & Staff Notes, p. 33)



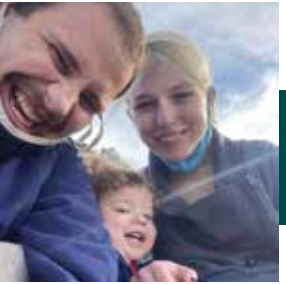
Marie Shin



Chelsea, Kendall & Lucas Weavil



Marissa Maas



Ezra King



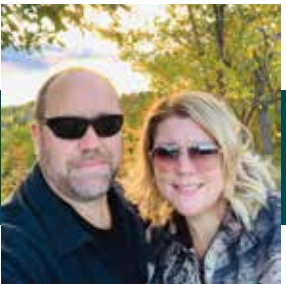
Peter & Jack Marcus



Oscar Kornblatt



William Caine



Shelby Dees Brown



Elton Seah



Loc Briggs



Maren Briggs



Jae Nam

Upper 1968
Chuck Whipple (See Past Faculty & Staff Notes, pg. 34)

Upper 1968
Carl Cooper (See Past Faculty & Staff Notes, pg. 31)

Nancy Graves (L65, U68) was diagnosed a year-and-a-half ago with glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer. She has undergone surgery and a variety of treatments, and she remains on chemotherapy. Nancy has so many sharp memories of her time at OVS, and it's fun for her to reminisce. She welcomes contact from her OVS schoolmates. Phone calls tend to be tiring; emails would be the best way to reach out to her at present. Her email address is: ngraves50@gmail.com. P.S. She attended an OVS reunion several years ago and brought her '67 yearbook, which had lots of inscriptions to her in it. Someone mistakenly took that yearbook home instead of one of the blank ones the school had available. Nancy would LOVE to get that yearbook back! Please check your copy. OVS will pay for having it shipped to Nancy and will replace it for you.

Upper 1973
Oscar Kornblatt (U73) and his wife of 32 years, Mary Jane, are living in beautiful Colorado Springs, Colorado. In late December, Oscar

had two small strokes, which impacted his cognitive process, but, he said, "no paralysis, praise, God. I have had to stop working and am semi retired. Mary Jane has stopped working and has officially retired." Prior to the strokes, Oscar and Mary Jane completed their 4th Degree Black Belt in Taekwondo, an accomplishment that Oscar said, "took just about 13 years to get there — not shabby at 65 years young." Oscar is looking forward to the 50th anniversary reunion of the Class of 1973 in 2023. "I am already planning on attending," he said, "look forward to seeing many of you there."

Upper 1976
Mary Boggs (L72, U76) passed along the tragic news of the sudden passing of her only daughter, Rosanna (Rosie) Lynn Gold, in July 2020, at the age of 37. Mary would appreciate hearing from OVS friends and can be reached at Mary Boggs, P. O. Box 458, Chimacum, WA 98325. Donations may be made in Rosie's name to the OVS Annual Fund, restricted for teachers' professional development.

Upper 1977
William Caine (U77) was going through old pictures and came across a picture of himself at graduation from OVS in 1977. "I had not been back to OVS

since 1978 until I was looking for a school for my one son about thirteen years ago," he wrote. "I had an opportunity to see the campus and the changes that have taken place since then. I also had the opportunity to speak with Carl Cooper." William's son ultimately did not enroll at OVS. He wrote, "My three children are doing well and I am so proud of each of them and what they have accomplished." His oldest son, Bill, recently graduated from George Washington University with degrees in economics and international relations. He then went to the London School of Economics to get his master's degree in economics and is now working for a real estate investment trust located in Orange County. His middle son, Chase, went to Chapman University and is still working on completing his degree in business. His daughter Amanda, is attending Brandman University, which is Chapman's on-line program, working on her degree in criminal justice. "I retired seven years ago after 35 years in the hotel business and am living in La Quinta, California, near Palm Desert," William said. "I have been spending a great deal of time renovating and updating my house, mostly without help. It sure did not look that hard on YouTube ... I hope my fellow classmates are doing well and everyone is staying safe during these trying times."

Shelley Hermes (See Past Faculty Notes, pg. 32)

Upper 1996
Shelby Dees Brown (L92, U96) is still living in Michigan with her family of four. Last fall, after 23 years in the Great Lakes State, she finally made it up to the Tunnel of Trees in Northern Michigan to enjoy the fall colors. She wrote, "Even with COVID changing all our plans, I was also able to get back to California for the best wedding ever! Dustin and I were so lucky to be part of Iris and Ryan's celebration of love! I miss my OVS family terribly but am so grateful for the connections I have via social media. Cheers to an adventurous and healthy 2021!"

Elton Seah (L92, U96) wrote in with some exciting news: He and his partner, Joy, just relocated their seafood restaurant, Holy Crab, and opened the doors to their newly renovated restaurant on January 13, 2021, in Singapore. If you are in the neighborhood please stop by www.Holycrab.Sg

Upper 1990
Loc Briggs (L86, U90) is still living in Denver, Colorado. He wrote, "for the past five years, I've been self-employed, making my own way. I haven't been setting the world on fire, but I'm still in the black. Oh, and I have been able to spend a lot

more time with family and friends. I have definitely been fortunate." Loc had to shutter a business due to COVID-19. "My take away," he said of the pandemic, "I need to be closer to family geographically. I will soon act on that. Friends can visit or be visited. You can always make new friends but sometimes you can't make a new family. To all my OVS friends, be safe in getting to the hug. Then be brave enough to take it again. Much love."

Upper 1997
Maren Briggs (L93, U97) greeted us from Lake Geneva, France, with a series of memories: "I remember my first year at OVS so vividly, the fourth grade with Mia Emhardt. I can still hear her laugh in my mind, it was contagious. The fifth grade took me to Teresa Scarborough's class, and to this day I am so thankful for the math tools she instilled in me. Teresa and I have remained close my entire life and she is the Godmother of my oldest daughter. Then came my 6th grade year with Linda Downey. Each day began with Mrs. Downey reading aloud to the class from some extraordinary chapter book. Many of the books she read to us all those years ago, I have in turn read aloud to my own children. These three women have inspired so many aspects of my life, and I am so thankful for having known them. My 7th and 8th grade years

were filled with so many positive experiences. Mr. Walker, Mr. Aimone, Mr. Inman, and Mr. Gartrell are a few teachers who come to mind. Whether in the classroom or on a camping trip, these teachers brought more than just academia to the table. Empathy and critical thinking were always in the lesson plan ... I really could fill a book with all of my heartfelt memories from OVS. I am forever grateful that my childhood education took place in such an amazing environment. Not only did OVS frame my formative years, but it was also where I met the love of my life, J-P Balas. Thank goodness my older brother, Loc Briggs, and he were classmates at Upper Campus. It was at their 10-year reunion we met and the rest is history!!"

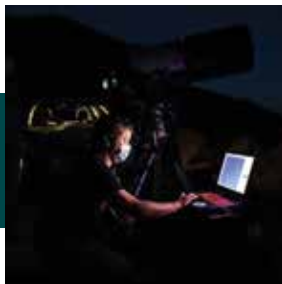
Upper 2004
Jin Chung (U04) has a Korean traditional house (hanok) cafe and has been running it for about two years. He plans to expand to two more cafes in the next five years. He sent thanks to Mr. Cooper, Mr. Colborn, Mr. Dinkins, and Mrs. Boyd, and hopes to be able to come back for a visit soon.

Upper 2006
Jae Nam (U06) shared some exciting news from Korea! She wrote: "Last year, while it has been a challenging year for many around the world, my husband and I were

Alumni Notes



Iris (Torres) Michael



Blake Estes



Kiwako (Ogura) Murakami



Cooper Hefner

blessed with the arrival of our baby girl, Seohyun Park on July 31st. The three of us are doing great except for some boredom coming from limited outdoor activities during the ongoing pandemic. I am currently on maternity leave from work and expect to return in August of this year. I look forward to spending the rest of the leave with my precious little girl and hope we can enjoy the warm spring breeze outside soon as normal days. I miss you all dearly. When more flexible international travels are allowed, I would very much like to visit the Upper Campus with my new family. Until then, please stay well and healthy. A special hello to Mr. and Mrs. Boyd, Mr. and Mrs. Colborn, Mr. Dinkins, Mr. Weidlich, and Ms. D."

Upper 2007

Iris (Torres) Michael (L03, U07) married her partner of 10 years, Ryan Michael, on September 19, 2020, in Sanger, California. Fellow OVS alum **Marie (Holguin) van Leeuwen** was in attendance.

Blake Estes (U07) made the cover of Amateur Astrophotography Magazine! This is on the heels of being pictured on BBC News in December about his photography using high-end telescopes to photograph the moment planets seemingly aligned for the Great

Injunction of 2020.

Kiwako (Ogura) Murakami (L03, U07) is now a mother of three beautiful children. She wrote, "Before I had our third baby almost two years ago, I used to teach English to people, and do translations for a few companies. Ever since I graduated and came back to Japan, I love learning new languages! So I am now studying Italian, Spanish, and German for the future when we get to visit places with my family and friends. I wish I could have realized how lucky I was to be in an international school interacting with friends all over the world when I was there. I really miss OVS! I hope I can come visit there soon with my family. Maybe even let my children attend summer camp someday! Hi, Ms. Scott, Ms. B, and everyone else who are like my second moms and dads. I miss you guys so much! I promise to come visit soon with my family. Please stay safe and I'm sending lots of love from Japan!"

Erik Wheelon (U07) (See page 22)

Upper 2008

Jack Marcus (L08, U12) graduated from Dickinson College in May 2017 with a BA in Environmental Studies and went to work as a gap year instructor in Southeast Asia. In January 2018, he moved to New York City and now

works as a Senior Project Expert and East Coast Partnership Director for Projects Abroad, a provider of international volunteering, internships, and travel experiences. Jack shares an apartment in the city with his brother, Peter (See **Peter Marcus**, Lower 2012).

Upper 2009

Cooper Hefner (U09) talked to our American Government class last fall about representative government, how young people can serve their communities, and why he considered jumping into the political arena. "I have been watching the events that have been unfolding in government across our country and across the world," he said, "and I thought, what can I do to lead us in a direction that would allow the train to get back on the tracks." Hefner served as ASB Vice President at OVS. He has since gone on to work as a businessman, teacher, and board member at Chapman University, and a U.S. Air Force Reservist. Cooper began an exploratory campaign last summer for the California Senate, saying it is time for more young leaders to be involved in government, but announced in November that he would not run because he will soon be called to active duty. During his Zoom meeting with the OVS seniors, one asked how he



Gunnar Helman



Keaton Shiffman



Claire Wickenhaeuser



Joshua Hsu

would handle the polarization in politics today. "This is an incredibly divisive time," he responded. "Part of unwinding that polarization is recognizing that we need new voices who are interested in finding the things that connect us and one of the qualities that does, and should, connect us is the ability to disagree and still break bread, still enjoy dinner, and get on with our lives."

Upper 2012

Gunnar Helman (L08, U12), works for an HR solutions company called NEOGOV based in El Segundo. He just hit his two-year mark and got promoted to an account executive role. He wrote, "NEOGOV helps cities and counties recruit and manage their workforce. When the pandemic hit, I began to work at home, which was not all that bad as I recently moved. I now live in Venice, here in L.A. with two roommates. Even with the pandemic, I have been able to travel, visiting Palm Springs, Phoenix, Lake Tahoe, and Steamboat, Colorado."

Upper 2014

Keaton Shiffman (L10, U14) made it through the crazy 2020 pandemic year and wrote: "I did get COVID, unfortunately, but made it out unscathed. I took the first few months of quarantine off and did a lot of cooking, home

renovations (gutted my closet and built a new one), and just rode it out. After those months it was back to work. I've been working for an Artist Management and Development company called CON-STRUC-TION. As of December I was promoted into a new role on top of my old role and am working directly with Kyle (Thomas Harvey). Kyle is a multi-platinum Hip-Hop artist who's from Ventura. I love every second of my job, so it's made time fly. I still have my own management clients, but work with Kyle day to day and started a new business on the side with him ... -so that's kept me busy as well. All is good on my end, about to head off to Atlanta and Miami for a few weeks to work!"

Upper 2015

Claire Wickenhaeuser (L11, U15) is pursuing her BS in Earth Sciences with an emphasis in geophysics at UC Santa Cruz after earning two associates degrees from Santa Barbara City College. Her studies have been happily interrupted with jobs working as an interpretive ranger and EMT for the National Park Service, first at the Channel Islands National Park in California and more recently at Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado.

Upper 2016

Sarah Sharpe (U16) graduated

from Loyola Marymount University in December 2020 and is pursuing a career in emergency medicine while spending time with her mini Australian shepherd.

Upper 2017

Josh Han (L13, U17) is studying Concept Art at Vancouver Animation School and hoping to earn his BA in the near future. After graduating from OVS, he spent a year in a professional photography program at Vancouver Institute of Media Arts (VanArts) based in Vancouver, British Columbia. Took a year off for military service in the Taiwanese Navy. He writes: "It's hard to imagine that it has been almost four years since the last time I shot photographs for OVS sports. Really miss all of you guys."

Caspian Ellis (L16, U20) (See page 23)

Upper 2020

Joshua Hsu (U20) wrote from college in Michigan: "Sunny California. How I've missed you. Things have changed. I'm cold now. It's freezing, yet exciting. College has been great. New friends, a new environment, and a new chapter in life. Confusing, refreshing, terrifying, and loving it are the four words I'd use to describe my first month of the college experience. Go Green!"

OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL

Spring Gala & Auction

Saturday, May 15, 2021

Get ready for our virtual Gala and Auction!

On **Saturday May 15**, Ojai Valley School will bring the **Silent and Live Auctions** to your living room via live stream from the Upper Campus. Pandemic case rates are declining, but it's still too early to host a large in-person gathering. Instead, we will come together virtually with a special online event that will look — and taste — like our past events!

Cozy up with delicious family dinners prepared by **Lorraine Lim Catering** with beer and wine from sponsors **Topa Topa Brewing Co.**, **M Special Brewing Co.**, **Firestone Brewery**, **Topa Mountain Winery**, and **Michael Mondavi**. Meals must be pre-ordered, and will be available for pick-up or local delivery (Ojai/Ventura).

After dinner, join the fun by participating in the Live Auction via live stream and remote bidding. Silent Auction items will be available for bidding online the week before the Gala.

All proceeds will benefit the OVS Annual Fund.

Registration is now open! There is no cost to attend the event, only to purchase dinner and drinks to enjoy from the comfort of your home.

Online registration now open at www.ovs.org/gala

There are many other ways to support this event, including sponsorships, donation of auction items, and placing your bids on May 15! Contact Wendy Tremiti in the Development Office for more information at wtremiti@ovs.org or (805) 646-1423 ext. 1277.

Faculty & Staff Notes



Mark Aimone



Steve Bartlett



Phil Bryan



Carl Cooper

World travelers, adventurers, volunteers, avid outdoor enthusiasts. We caught up with former OVS teachers, administrators and staff who are living life to the fullest.

Mark Aimone is in his fifth year as Director of Advancement at Wilbraham & Monson Academy and his 31st year working at a boarding school. The former OVS social studies teacher and his wife, Megan, live on campus and their youngest daughter, Claire, is currently a junior. Their oldest daughter, Kayla, fell in love with the West Coast on visits to Ojai and is now in her senior year at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena studying fashion design. The Aimones are frequent visitors to Ojai to see the Inmans and always find time to catch up with the Gartrells and the rest of the OVS family.

Steve Bartlett is developing a green thumb, growing plants and composting soil. The former woodshop teacher returned to Lower Campus to work Summer Camp two years ago, then returned to his beloved mountains to work on his art and sustainable living.

Phil Bryan returned to the United Kingdom after leaving OVS. The former Lower Campus headmaster taught in Oxford and in 1992 married his wife, Paula. "We traveled a great deal in Europe and bought a house in the south of France as a vacation home. When Paula retired in 1999 we decided to sell up in the UK and

move to France! We love the life down here in the south especially as our home has plenty of land for growing most of our fruit and vegetables and is fairly isolated with wonderful views towards the Pyrenees. Thankfully, the way of life seems to have kept us fit and well always planning for new challenges in life."

Carl Cooper (L64, U68) is enjoying retirement beyond imagination. "I finally have time to read for pleasure, no more professional journals when there is so much great fiction to avoid the world of today," he wrote. "I do miss the everyday beauty of the Upper Campus and the daily interaction with the students and staff, but there is no more stress of being the guardian. The view from my kitchen window allows Topa Topa and the adjoining mountains to be part of my daily life. Dog Harley and I continue to walk, although it is at a much slower pace with an occasional visit to the Upper Campus and the Pi course. The void of structured work is more than adequately filled with garden chores, daily exercise, and the joy of spending time with grandchildren and family." The former headmaster will soon be joined in retirement by his wife, Jody, who is stepping down as ceramics teacher this year. Reflecting on his 40 years at OVS,

Carl said, "The School provided me with much more than an education and a job. It allowed me to be with an amazing and diverse group of people who taught me so much and gave me great joy day in and day out ... I think back to so many graduation speeches given by students and the most common thread in all of them was the impact that the people they shared the OVS experience with was the most important thing in their mind, so true for me as well."

Sophocles Cotsis arrived from Maine to California in 1987 and worked as a dorm counselor, coach, and Summer Camp coordinator. "It was here that I met my future wife, OVS School Nurse, Carla Stone," he said, "In time, we had three daughters (Sophia, Carmen, and Georgia) who basically spent the early days of their lives roaming the halls of the dorm, enjoying the beauty of the OVS Lower Campus, and the delicious meals that were prepared by the kitchen staff." After leaving OVS, Sophocles worked for the City of Ojai as a Recreation Coordinator, and later, was promoted to Recreation Manager until his retirement in 2019. Carla continues her work as an RN. "The 14 years that our family shared at OVS remain some of the best years of our lives," he said. "We will be forever grateful for the wonderful

Faculty & Staff Notes



Bernadette DiPietro

students, families, and faculty we met over those many years."

Bernadette DiPietro, who taught art at OVS for 33 years, now works out of her Ojai studio, Bamboo Cottage Studio, where she continues creating Ukrainian Egg Decoration, building small chair sculptures, collages, photography, assemblages, and gardens. She is still exhibiting with the Ojai Studio Artists and just had an essay and photos published in the New Farmer's Almanac Volume V. She encourages past students to contact her through her website, www.bernadettedipietro.com. She wrote, "It was a pleasure to teach art on both the Lower and Upper Campus where I met some of the most creative, imaginative art students who went on to establish themselves as fine artists."

Dana DeYoung spent the winter in Kauai, Hawaii. The former Kindergarten teacher (and grandmother of seven) retired in June 2018 with plans to travel the world. Her wanderlust previously led her across Southeast Asia, Europe, Canada, Mexico, and South Africa. But then COVID arrived, and, as with everyone else, her plans were put on hold. Dana has since divided time between Grass Valley, California, Ojai, and now Hawaii. She has been learning to play the ukulele, brushing up on her Italian, and connecting with former students



Dana DeYoung

and her grandkids on social media.

Shelley Hermes (U77) is living in Seoul, Korea, teaching English in public school. The former elementary teacher wrote, "I've been enjoying my life over here very much, teaching during the week and seeking out as many cultural experiences as I can during the weekends. My favorite pastime is visiting the many Buddhist temples all over Korea. I've traveled extensively throughout the country looking for the oldest and most interesting temples. (Shelley shared a picture of herself with her co-teacher, Sunmi, at a temple they visited in the fall.) I really enjoy my time in the classroom teaching the students and introducing them to American culture ... I've continued my relationship with OVS by coordinating a pen pal program between some of my students and Mrs. Floyd's fifth-grade class."

Marsha Hoem moved back to her hometown of Missoula, Montana, and is currently working as a tutor/college counselor. In her free time, the former middle school language arts teacher hikes in the hills, bakes sourdough bread, tends to her garden, tinkers with the "never-ending list of things that are broken," and reads, reads, reads. "My two kids are in Missoula now, so we're our own COVID-pod, and we've been trying to keep things interesting by cooking Falstaffian meals with food we've harvested



Shelley Hermes

from the wild," she wrote. "Last November, my son and I traveled by boat down the Missouri to hunt up some game, and we ended up packing out two large mule deer in two feet of fresh snow — a proper death march!" Marsha has so many memories of her former students that she treasures. "I hope you are all still writing, and that you left my classroom with a sense of how powerful your voices are. Use them."

Tina Leslie is still living in Ojai, teaching a bit of ESL at Besant Hill School, where she's been for 31 years. She wrote, "I think it might be my retirement year (although I've said that before). I hope the pandemic ends soon so I can begin to travel and enjoy time with friends. These days I spend a lot of time on the golf course."

Patrick Faverty stayed in education after leaving OVS. The former headmaster and his wife live in San Luis Obispo County and, now retired, enjoying hanging out with friends in the wine business!

Ron McFarlane escaped the pandemic by hunkering down on the island of Kauai in Hawaii. He wrote, "Hello dear friends at OVS! It's been a while since my time at the school ended in 2009 and much has transpired! Of course, you remember that Perry succumbed to her battle with cancer, the most difficult time my



Marsha Hoem



Ron McFarlane

family has ever faced. But we are carrying on. I have remarried, Xiao Xiang and I married in 2012. She hails from Beijing, China." Ron hopes to return briefly to Ventura this summer before moving back to Kent, Connecticut, where the former learning specialist built a timber-frame home for Perry, Seth, and Rachael in the 1980s. "Seth recently bought the house back and Xiang and I are moving to Kent for about a year," Ron said. "A fire severely damaged the structure in 2019, so we are going to rebuild it. That task will require that I bone up on my mortise and tenon skills."

Judy Oberlander dedicates much of her time as a community volunteer. Before the pandemic, the former English teacher and college counselor spent a lot of time leading hikes and whale watching excursions for the Channel Islands National Park and the National Marine Sanctuary Naturalist Corps. She also volunteered at the Park Visitor Center in Ventura, where she occasionally worked alongside alumna Claire Wickenhaeuser. Since retiring (twice) Judy has also become very involved with the Ojai Valley Family Shelter as secretary of the board, with the Ojai Valley Library Friends and Foundation, as president of the board, and with Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, at its food pantries.

Shawn Sampson lives in Ojai and enjoys "living life to its fullest."



Judy Oberlander

For the former outdoor education coordinator that translates to traveling, especially to explore the mountains and beaches of Baja.

Tom Scarborough has walked a meandering path since his teaching days at Upper Campus. He did his graduate work in American History at Cal State Northridge and UCSB with emphasis on the history and culture of the American South. He also taught at Thacher and Dunn. In 2005, after wrapping up his time at Dunn, Tom was ready for an adventure and moved to Natchez, Mississippi, where he opened a bed and breakfast overlooking the Mississippi River. After meeting his wife, Denise, Tom moved to his current home of St. Francisville, Louisiana. He owns a small business and also blogs about music and current events. He remains an avid student of history. As he puts it, "As a trained historian, the past four years have enthralled me. As a citizen, they kind of freaked me out."

Chris and Heather Siebel have been teaching in Northern California since leaving OVS in 1997. Chris has been teaching high school math and Heather has been teaching Kindergarten. Their daughter will be graduating from Oregon State University in June and their son is continuing his education in Chico. Traveling has been a big part of their family for years and a bucket list experience



Shawn Sampson



Dok & Teresa Smith

last summer was a trip to Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands.

Dok Smith (L62, U65) and Teresa Smith still live in Meiners Oaks. Dok retired from teaching in 2006 and enjoys days filled with surfing, running, reading, and hanging at the beach with their dog, Buddy. Teresa continues to manage the Ojai Valley Directory and is a real estate agent with LIV Sotheby's in Ojai. She volunteers her time to various community groups and says she works extra so Dok can enjoy his retirement! The Smiths love to travel and spend time with their eight grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. They will celebrate 20 years of marriage in November.

Diane Sterba has many fond memories of her 11 years at OVS (1975-86), being the Spanish teacher, yearbook advisor and "Dorm Mom." After leaving OVS, her family moved to Mineral Point, Wisconsin, where she taught K-12 Spanish. She earned her M.A. in Education and moved to 20 acres of woods where she and Will homeschooled their three children (Bodin, Anika, Katrina). Diane later worked as a Library Director, Youth Program Director at her local Art Center and taught Art Education at the University of Wisconsin, Platteville. "My passion for travel has taken me to 25 countries and five continents," she wrote. "Although no longer married,

Faculty & Staff Notes

Faculty & Staff Notes



Willie Sterba



Lynn & Chuck Whipple



John Wickenhaeuser



Mary Jane Wilkie

Will and I remain good friends and we see each other when we visit our wonderful kids and three grandkids."

Willie Sterba continued with his music after leaving OVS, recording four albums, and is currently recording lullabies. "I've also worked with not-for-profits supporting adults with disabilities," he wrote. "I am now manager at Avenues Thrift Shoppe where we provide job training for these adults. Bodin is now married and they have two kids. They live in Wisconsin. Katrina and Anika both live in Vancouver, BC. Kat is married with one kiddo. Diane and I remain good friends and our dear family is very close. I'll always be grateful for the many fine people we were with during those OVS years."

Jeff and Nita Tracy retired to Rigby, Idaho, to be near their grandson, Knox. Their community is situated south of Yellowstone and west of Jackson, Wyoming. Nita wrote, "We love to camp in our motorhome and kayak on Jefferson County Lake, a small lake and no motorized vessels. Lots of paddleboards, kayaks, a few canoes, and long-distance swimmers. Missing Ojai, but loving the winters for a change, especially, since a small ski resort is only 10 miles from our house."

Lynn Whipple and husband, Chuck (L64, U67), are happy

campers in retirement. "Camping was always a favorite of mine so when I retired we purchased a little retro trailer," Lynn said. "I have packed it with all the things I need to cook with since cooking is my thing when we camp. Food tastes so much better cooked in the fresh air. Before the pandemic took hold we did some camping in the Sierras ... When the pandemic grew and all the parks closed we had to scale back our trips to day outings. We pull our little trailer down to the Rincon in Ventura, set up camp, and play all day until it closes. Now we'll just wait until we can visit the National Parks, but in the meantime we tend to entertain ourselves with long walks on the beach" After years working in the front office, Lynn misses the cooks, the wonderful meals, and the students at Upper Campus. "I can't recall ever having a bad day, only laughing a lot. It's like having a lot of family around, that's how the school works."

John Wickenhaeuser is still in the tech world. The former Director of Technology and Sustainability and AP environmental science teacher is now working as the Director of Operations for Tablet Command, a company that provides incident management and response software to fire departments across North America. John previously worked as a fire rescue instructor and is enjoying being back in the fire service industry. He volunteers

with the Channel Islands Park Foundation, serving this year as board president, and enjoys hiking and camping as much as possible. He misses the classroom, but stays connected with OVS by volunteering as a baseball coach at Upper Campus.

Mary Jane Wilkie currently lives in New York City, having returned to the East Coast in 2001. "Truth be told, I was never a California woman," she wrote. "I have earned my living in a variety of ways. Most of my work is recruitment for a national non-profit organization, although I've had side gigs teaching subjects ranging from children's theatre to music to English." The former OVS music teacher has published two books, the first about music education (*Music from the Trenches*) and a second about job hunting. She hopes to move to France, noting, "I would have been living in Paris by now, had COVID not intervened. My plan is thus on hold but not dead, only postponed for a year or so. You can visit me there."

Henry Zussman retired to a small town south of Tampa Bay, Florida. Henry, a former OVS social studies teacher, works for the city of Safety Harbor as the Assistant Director of Special events and also works with golfers at a country club there. A former baseball and hockey coach, he still enjoys sports and plays in two softball leagues.

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RESTORATION OF THE ARTIST

Gary Dinkins' Beloved Landscapes Landing in Luxe Stores and Catalogs

Photo and story by Sydnee Rousseau



Don't call it retirement.

A man of many hobbies and talents, former OVS teacher, coach, and mentor Gary Dinkins has been on quite the journey since leaving the Upper Campus more than a decade ago. He has spent his time running, painting, and even learning Mandarin as part of his lifelong love of learning languages.

But even with all he has accomplished, nothing quite prepared him for his latest round of commercial success.

Recently, Mr. Dinkins was able to get a collection of his artwork — a series of landscapes inspired by the American West — into the upscale homeware and furnishing store Restoration Hardware, where the paintings-turned-art prints are now featured for sale among the shop's fine decor.

Mr. Dinkins' daughter, Caitlin, co-owns and operates Zoe Bios Creative, an L.A.-based art collective dedicated to sharing the work of like-minded artists across the country. That site features much of Mr. Dinkins' work, prints of paintings inspired by some of his favorite places, including the scenery surrounding the Ojai Valley and in the Eastern Sierra.

"Recently Restoration Hardware saw her site and said they wanted to represent me and that's how I was discovered," said Mr. Dinkins,

in his usual matter-of-fact manner. "This experience has felt like a door opening up for me."

For Mr. Dinkins, art was always an interest from a young age, but nothing he had ever considered pursuing professionally.

"From childhood, I was really fascinated by drawing, and so that's what I did," he said. "But I think the reason I stopped was because I thought, 'Well, there's other stuff to do, I don't think I'll get any better anyway.'"

After putting his passion on pause during his youth, he decided at the age of 35 to rekindle his artistic flame and started taking art classes. He has been painting ever since, though he still does not put pressure on the creative process, preferring for it to remain a spontaneous act.

"I don't paint for hours — I paint for like 20 or 30 minutes, maybe twice a day at the most," he said. "I spend a lot of time looking. I can be anywhere in my room, just lying down and glance at it. It gives me insight from time to time as to what to do next."

There have been plenty of "nexts" for Mr. Dinkins since he left OVS, where he was a beloved member of the community for nearly five decades. He taught countless students in French, Spanish, Latin, World History, U.S. History and

World Geography, and he became a legendary cross country and track coach, one well known for his willingness to lace up his running shoes and put in the work alongside his athletes.

But really, Mr. Dinkins earned his legendary status for the lessons he taught outside of the classroom. He was well known for his positivity and his even-keeled approach, and he remains a favorite of generations of former students.

For his part, Mr. Dinkins is humbled by the attention and cherishes the memories.

"Well, I think it's the best thing that could have happened just given my personality and the way I am, the way I respond to small groups with a quality experience," Dinkins said. "I just think that my whole experience there was a blessing."

He feels the same way about his career as an artist, where it is quite clear that what used to be a small pastime has now grown into so much more.

But again, in typical Dinkins fashion, he is quick to point out that he ever expected to get to this point, and that all the art he does is merely for his own pleasure.

"I like to think of my art in terms of whether I like it, regardless of what anyone else has to say," Dinkins said.

In Memoriam



Heidi Herrick DiCapua (L51)

Heidi Herrick DiCapua (L51), who attended Ojai Valley School for part of her second and ninth grade years, passed away on August 12, 2020. She was 84. Heidi's connections with OVS are numerous. Her mother was a student in the 1920s, when the school had not yet relocated and renamed itself. (It was then known as the Bristol School). As a member of the Thatcher family, Heidi has had cousins, nieces and nephews at OVS to this day and for four generations. Heidi also was one of former OVS President Mike Hermes's (L53) most cherished childhood friends.

As published in the *Ojai Valley News* on August 21, 2020:

Born as Harriet on April 28, 1936, in Manhattan, New York to Newbold Lawrence Herrick Jr. and Harriet Thatcher Herrick, she quickly adopted her mother's nickname, Heidi. Heidi's first years were primarily spent in New York, where she attended The Lawrence School, The Masters School, and Skidmore College, where she earned her nursing degree. She would later go on to earn a master's degree at Adelphi University and work toward a doctoral degree at Columbia University.

Her focus on academics was not surprising given her family tree. Her grandfather, Sherman Day Thatcher, founded the Thatcher School. Her great-grandfather, Thomas Anthony Thatcher, was one of the longest serving history professors at Yale University. Her ancestor Roger Sherman was treasurer at Yale (before signing the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the U.S. Constitution).

It was at Coney Island in 1957 during her nursing internship years that Heidi would meet Peter DiCapua. They would go on to marry in 1960. Over the years, they would live in Brooklyn (followed by Malvern, New York), and then settle in her hometown of Lawrence, New York in 1969.

There she helped put down roots, reconnect with childhood friends, and raise three sons. Once their boys had grown, she and Peter began spending more time in Ojai, eventually relocating there permanently in the 1990s.

Heidi was as comfortable in an evening gown dancing to Lester Lanin as she was in overalls harvesting Swiss chard and zucchini. She was a master of any sport involving a racquet, regularly winning club tournaments on both coasts in tennis, squash, and paddle tennis. She played with determination and grace, and somehow left those she defeated liking her even more. She regularly volunteered to support the Ojai Valley Tennis Tournament, and ultimately became Director for several years.

From her mother, Heidi developed a life-long passion for reading and bridge. And she helped pass on her verve for hearts to her grandsons by playing countless hands with them whenever they were together. In the 1970s, she learned that the Portuguese Water Dog breed had flirted with extinction, so she decided to help by raising, breeding, and even showing them (including appearances at The Westminster). Heidi was also a dedicated quilter. She crafted dozens of intricate masterpieces and selflessly gave each away to family and friends to mark a special occasion.

Heidi will be missed by the many people who thought of her as a good friend. Her words and actions brought laughter, warmth, joy, and inspiration to those she touched. She did her part to make the world a better place. Heidi is survived by her husband of 60 years, Peter; by her sons, Anthony of Ojai, Lawrence (wife Brooke) of New Canaan, Connecticut and Peter Jr. of New Milford, Connecticut; by her two grandsons, Henry and Blake; by her brothers, Newbold Herrick (wife Georgia) and Sherman Herrick (wife Camie); and by 13 nieces and nephews.



Hirochika Noguchi (U65)

Hirochika Noguchi (U65), a member of the first graduating class of the Upper Campus, died at his home in the Philippines on August 9, 2020. He was 74. Hiro was born in Tokyo, Japan, less than a year after the end of World War II. His grandfather and, later, an uncle served as prime ministers; his mother had been born into the Japanese royal family.

Sent to the States at age 16 to study English and to familiarize himself with American culture, Hiro initially stayed with close friends of his parents and attended Pasadena High School, where he earned top grades. His host, Mr. Poole, had this to say about their houseguest: "Hiro has been staying with our family for one year, and we wish our own children were as little trouble."

Neither was Hiro trouble to those he encountered at OVS after he made the switch midway through his junior year. On the contrary: He was an affable and hard-working addition to the Class of '65. In the words of his close friend Spencer Garrett (L62, U65), Hiro was "all in."

That was certainly apparent on the baseball field. In the position of catcher, Hiro was a terrific asset to the varsity team in terms of both spirit and talent. His roommate, Kirk Warren (L62, U65), who was one of the pitchers for the team, observed, "Hiro was electric. Never in my life have I seen a catcher as active athletically as Hiro was. He had a hot dog flair about him..."

Elected captain his senior year, Hiro led the team to an undefeated season, the only one in OVS history. Wrote Coach Bill Wilmer (L55) on Hiro's final grade report (accompanying an "A+" grade): "Hiro is 'Mr. Baseball' to all who know him, and it will be the school's loss next year when he is gone." (See Wilmer's remembrance).

After graduating from OVS, Hiro returned to Japan and enrolled at the International Christian University, where he studied journalism. In the early 1970s, he became a crime reporter for the Japanese Syndicated News Agency. It was work he relished.

The Philippines became Hiro's primary residence in 1992. He came to be a well-respected member of Manila's Japanese community and was elected president of the Japanese Society there. Convinced of a need for a paper that reported Asian news from Asia, Hiro launched *The Kyoda News Daily*. (In 1996, the name was changed to *The Daily Manila Shimbun*.) Two years later, he started a sister

publication in Indonesia, *The Daily Jakarta Shimbun*. Hiro had been named for his father, who was renowned internationally for having founded the Seitai Society, which has, to this day, tens of thousands of members. According to the *New York Times*, "'Seitai' is the art of cleansing and aligning the body ... Noguchi [Sr.] held that the body's natural restorative powers were stronger and more effective than treatments propounded by Western medicine, and that taking pills to stop or accelerate symptoms did nothing but damage these powers."

Hiro himself subscribed to these beliefs and, after his father's death in 1972, replaced him as secretary general of the Seitai Society. He continued overseeing the business aspect of that organization until his own son took over for him nine years ago.

In his younger school years, Hiro had attended Tamagawa School in Tokyo. Later, when OVS was in need of additional students at Upper, Hiro facilitated meetings between administrators at his old school and his former dorm father at Upper, Mike Hermes (L53), who was now president of OVS. The result was an influx of Japanese students, both from the Tamagawa and Morimura schools. Hiro agreed to serve on the OVS Board, remaining as a trustee from 1988 to 2012. He was of indispensable help to current OVS President/CEO Mike Hall-Mounsey, with recruitment as well as with fundraising in Asia.

Although Hiro attended OVS for only a year and a half, his experiences there had been so positive that, decades later, he arranged to have his two sons and a nephew attend, as well. And, for over half a century, Hiro maintained his OVS connections, sometimes visiting here in the States, but more often hosting in Japan and, later, Manila. All the OVS friends who visited him over the years — including Carol and Mike Hall-Mounsey, Mike Hermes, Dok Smith (L62, U65), Kirk Warren, and Spencer Garrett — have remarked on Hiro's unfailingly gracious hospitality.

After their OVS graduation, Hiro and Spencer took off together on a memorable road trip around the country. It was the summer of 1965. Over the next 55 years, the two of them — and, ultimately, their families — got together dozens of times, despite their living on opposite sides of the globe. It was a touching and true friendship.

Hiro is survived by his wife, Masako; by his three children: Asa Ohashi, Harutane ("Harry" U93), and Hiroyoshi ("Corky," now "Koki" U94); and by three grandsons.

In Memoriam

In Memoriam



Beth Pfeiffer
(L66, U69)

Beth Pfeiffer (L66, U69) passed away on December 4, 2020, in Southwest Harbor, Maine, surrounded by her loved ones. She was 68. Beth was born and raised in Ojai. Her parents, Homer and Elizabeth “Betsey,” had been drawn to Ojai by the beauty of its natural setting. The burgeoning artistic life of the community also appealed to them strongly as did the unusual cluster of fine schools.

Although Beth’s parents were not “horse people,” they had encouraged her early equine interest, an interest that quickly grew into a real passion. Jack and Margaret Huyler at Thacher School were good friends of the family, and there was no one in the valley more knowledgeable about horses than Jack, who arranged for Beth to ride and gave her patient instruction.

Beth and her older siblings, George (L63) and Dorrit (L64, U67) initially attended Monica Ros School, where their now single mother worked. Mrs. Pfeiffer became Beth’s teacher for first and second grades and then, after Betsey had taken a job at OVS, for the sixth grade.

Joe Singleton ran the horse program at Lower, and he was instrumental in helping Beth develop her riding skills. As a responsible horse owner, Beth learned to take care of her horse before she saw to her own needs. That might involve staying up all night with a colicky horse, for instance. Despite these considerable demands on her time and energy, Beth never let her studies suffer. She managed to remain a top student while simultaneously putting in all the work it took for her to become a successful Gymkhana competitor.

Beth recognized that her decade-long experience as an OVS student defined her. Upon accepting the Founder’s Alumni Award in 2015, she said, “A singular memory I hold is the motto carved above the assembly stage at the Lower Campus in those years: ‘Nothing less than your best.’ I read that imperative time and time again and said to myself, ‘I can do that.’”

Doing her best resulted in Beth being offered enrollment at Wellesley College following her graduation from OVS. She earned her undergraduate degree in history there in 1973. Her experience at Wellesley was fulfilling and well-rounded. Beth rowed crew, learned to sail, and developed her cooking skills. She also got involved in student government and participated in various clubs.

Her first enterprise after graduating was to go into the catering business. Later, yearning for adventure

and new challenges, Beth took part in a work exchange program and spent four months in South Africa, where she worked as a research analyst.

After returning to Boston and while working as a securities analyst, Beth met Joe McNay. They married in 1977. The next year, she followed up her undergraduate degree with an MBA from Harvard Business School. Beth worked in corporate lending, as a consultant to Boston Broadcasters, Inc., and she designed a graduate program for Emerson College before her sons, Stuart and Andrew, were born. She took several years off from working so she could be a stay-at-home mother.

In 1994, she and two friends founded Gamewright, which evolved into a leading maker of family-oriented card and board games. Beth sold Gamewright in 1999 and went on to pursue a BFA in printmaking from Wellesley College, graduating in 2006.

After her 25-year marriage ended, Beth rented a 17th century farmhouse in Tuscany every June for a decade and worked with an experienced printmaker there. She loved the combination of design and creativity and the technical challenge involved the process of printmaking. She set up a studio and press at her home in Southwest Harbor.

For Beth, art and appreciation of the arts was an integral part of who she was. Whether it was designing the spaces in her homes, making her own prints, or ensuring the continuation of the arts for others, Beth understood that the arts touch us emotionally. Those close to her remember the gift Beth had of making the beautiful look simple and the simple look beautiful.

Beth’s love of nature inspired both her art and her active life. She took delight in skiing, going on raft trips, biking, hiking, and taking walks with her beloved dogs. Ever the enthusiastic student, Beth, in her later years, signed up for classes in ballroom dancing and in West Coast Swing, and she started going to barn dances in Maine, where she had a blast line dancing and country partnering.

Beth traveled extensively over the years, with destinations including Turkey, Italy, France, and England, as well as Thailand, Cambodia, Ecuador, and the Galapagos. In recent years, she was thrilled to witness her elder son participate in the Olympic sailing competitions in Rio, England, and China.

Beth was generous with her time and her talents, serving on multiple boards, including those of Wellesley College, the Isabella Stewart Gardner

In Memoriam

Museum, and the Southwest Harbor Public Library. She also mentored incarcerated prisoners in Boston University’s College Behind Bars degree program. Her kind nature combined with her sharp mind made her the ideal volunteer.

In 2012, Beth relocated from Boston to what she referred to as her “true home” in Maine. Her Maine roots went back generations, and the rustic six-bedroom family home had hosted the Pfeiffer family each summer while Beth and her siblings were growing up. It was a destination that gave them all delight.

Beth met John Foster in 2014, and they married in 2016. Cruelly, Beth was diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer, just two years later. Beth faced her illness as she lived her life: with courage, resolve, and optimism. Her tremendous ability to find gratitude in the big as well as the small inspired and sustained those around her throughout this difficult time.

Reflecting on her formative experiences as an OVS student, Beth wrote, “My persistence and determination was supported and honed by my two-legged teachers in the classroom and by my four-legged teachers in the barn. I loved these teachers, each and every one. They gave me tools

of the intellect along with tools of the heart and spirit. In the books, in the people, and on the backs of horses, I found meaning, friendship and beauty, all of which helped me figure out my own trail ride through a richly gratifying life.”

Beth is survived by her loving husband, John B. Foster, Jr. of Southwest Harbor and Fort Fairfield, Maine; son Stuart McNay, his wife Tanya, and grandchildren Lexi and Sammy of Providence, Rhode Island; son Andrew McNay of Brooklyn, New York; brother George Pfeiffer and his wife Nancy of Sheridan, Wyoming; sister Dorrit Castle and her husband Tom of Stonington, Connecticut; nephew Christopher Castle; nieces Lisa Pfeiffer, Katie Pfeiffer, and Hilary Castle Green; mother-in-law Natalie Foster of Fort Fairfield, Maine; and her dearest friend Alison Yada. She was predeceased by her parents.

Due to COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions, Celebration of Life Services will be held in late spring or early summer in Southwest Harbor and in the greater Boston area. You are invited to visit her Book of Memories at www.wilesre.com to read her life story and to share your own tributes. For those wishing to donate in Beth’s memory, the family suggests the Southwest Harbor Public Library, 338 Main St. Southwest Harbor, ME 04679



Alfred Yin (U70)

Alfred Yin (U70) passed away on December 16 2020. He was 71. Born the second of four sons to non-English speaking parents in Yunnan, China, Alfred and his family soon fled three different totalitarian countries in search of a better life. They ultimately made their home in Thailand.

Alfred studied in the American School of Vientiane, Laos, for four years before coming to OVS for his junior and senior years. (There was no American school in his region of Laos past the 10th grade). He was a strong student, well-liked and respected. In her letter of recommendation for him to attend Whittier College, College Counselor Joyce Biscoe referred to Alfred as “a very rare person in terms of ability and drive.” Her assessment would be confirmed given the way Alfred’s life would unfold.

After completing a BA in Biology at Whittier College in 1974, Alfred went on to do a year of graduate work at Emory University’s School of Medicine, studying anesthesia and life-support systems. He became an anesthesia technician researching the

effects of certain cardiovascular drugs on patients undergoing open heart surgery. He also worked at this time as an anesthesia blood-gas analyst at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. Later, Alfred worked as an education technology consultant and as the executive director of a non-profit senior day center. He also managed a number of rental investments.

Inspired by President Kennedy’s challenge to “ask not what your country can do for you but rather what you can do for your country,” Alfred committed himself to doing volunteer work wherever he thought he could be of use. While at Whittier, he served as the Director of Cultural Arts for the Associated Students Program Board. A member of the Georgia Human Relations Commission, whose purpose was to bridge the cultural differences between various communities, Alfred was also appointed a member of the governor’s 1990 census task force. He was elected President of the Organization of Chinese Americans, Georgia Chapter and was voted OCA (Organization of Chinese Americans) Georgia

Continued on the next page

In Memoriam

Chapter President for 2007–2008. In addition, he served as a board member of the Asian Pacific American Council of Georgia.

He and Wooiyi were married in June of 1982. They had met on a hayride the previous year. The Yins made their home in Marietta, Georgia, where they raised their two sons. Wooiyi worked for Worldspan as a mass storage administrator and then as an IT professional for Worldspan, a company that provides airlines reservation and booking engines (Priceline,

Delta, Northwest...) She retired early so she and Alfred could travel together. Happily, they were able to do that. They traveled extensively, highlights including trips to Malaysia, Grand Cayman, Bangkok, Spain, Morocco, Italy, Crete, Turkey, and the Caribbean.

Alfred is survived by his wife, Wooiyi; by his sons, Andrew and Michael; and by his brother Bill Yin (U73). The family asks that anyone wishing to donate in Alfred's name send a contribution to the Center of Pan Asian Community Services (CPACS).



Laura Casper (U93)

Laura Casper (U93), who lived an adventurous life as a military contractor in Iraq, Afghanistan and other far-flung locations, passed away on March 1, 2020. She was 45. Laura worked as a civilian contractor with the Department of Defense, most recently as an Instructional Systems Specialist in Maryland, and for the Navy Medicine Support Command (NMSC). She moved from Maryland to Manhattan Beach, California, several years ago and was living with her father, Bill, at the time she passed.

Laura grew up in Southern California. As a girl, she joined the Brownies and later the Girl Scouts and spent her summers at different camps. Raised primarily by her father, Laura attended the Upper Campus as a boarding student for three years in high school. It was during that time that her mother, Mary, passed away in 1990 while Laura was a freshman.

In January 1994, Laura and a friend drove up to the Bay Area and were in a car accident. Laura's passenger was thrown out of the car as the vehicle rolled seven times. The passenger did not survive the crash and Laura suffered the first of several traumatic brain injuries that would significantly impact her life.

Laura attended the University of Arizona and was enrolled in the college's innovative Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques (SALT) Center, which provides academic support for students with

learning and attention challenges. Laura thrived at the university. She became involved in student government, joined a sorority, and became part of the Greek council. She earned a degree in anthropology and then went on to the University of Missouri-Kansas City, graduating in 2005 with two Masters degrees in specialized education.

Laura was hired by the Department of Defense and worked in Bethesda, Maryland, at the National Naval Medical Center, where she traveled to many undisclosed locations overseas working with medical officers. She also worked at the U.S. Marine Corps base in Quantico, Virginia, doing logistics for a few years and then went back to Bethesda.

In 2010, while working overseas, Laura suffered her second traumatic brain injury while on a mission when her Humvee was crushed by another Humvee, landing on the roof. Tenacious, she recovered and went on to teach on naval carriers and helped to write educational books for training medics.

Laura eventually returned to California. She lived her final years by the beach with the love and support of her service dog, Bubba, and her father, Bill, a former military police officer of the U.S. Army. She kept in contact with the Alumni Office and had many fond memories of OVS; she loved sports, especially soccer, and had looked forward to attending Alumni Weekend.

She is survived by her father.

The Last Word



Captain Hiro Noguchi successfully blocks out a Thacher runner to insure an 8-7 victory in 1965.

A FAREWELL TO OUR BASEBALL HIRO

By Coach Bill Wilmer (L55)

It was a sunny afternoon as Hiro Noguchi (U65) walked up and planted himself squarely in the box as the team's lead-off batter, cocked his bat, and gazed straight at the pitcher, waiting to make a hit and get safely on base. The pitcher leaned forward and reared back to deliver a fastball that screamed toward Hiro, who was ready and swung, smashing the pitch through the infield and out into left center, running fast along the grass, chased by the left fielder, who caught it and threw it toward second base. But not in time.

Hiro had, once again, started the club's movement toward another win.

It did seem to me, the coach, that Hiro always got us started fast with his hitting and running skills, and then off we would go to win the game. I say, "Win the game," because we did win

— every game that season — with Hiro's help and the determination and skill of every other team member. Hiro was the perfect lead-off batter and the perfect image of that team. He almost always hit and got on base; every other hitter was encouraged to do the same and usually did.

Hiro was a bright guy who loved baseball and being the catcher. He delighted in calling the pitches fired over the plate and throwing out a batter at second base. Hiro's attention to the game never varied and was always serious and full of his desire to participate. He was so easy to coach, as was the entire team.

Hiro also helped us prepare the field back then, when we ran the old weapons carrier truck pulling a metal scraper behind it over the grass of the soccer field and scraped out an infield.

The guys stood on the scraper, holding a rope and stayed anchored there as I drove around many times during the late afternoon into the early dusk.

The game we played that sunny afternoon was against Thacher. We crushed the Toads' long record of undefeated innings and games. Hiro was very proud, as were all the players. It was our toughest game and nothing after that could stop us from winning.

With his passing, we look around and see that others on the team have also passed. The coach is now 80. But no matter how long we wait to reflect back on the team's accomplishments, Hiro will always stand tall as the lead-off batter and dynamic catcher of that team.

Hiro, you were our hero. May you rest in peace.



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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