



SANTA ROSA HIGH SCHOOL FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Winter, 2022

Vol.35

Issue 1

The mission of the Santa Rosa High School Foundation is to serve as a charitable organization to unite Santa Rosa High School alumni, parents, faculty, staff and interested community members in order to provide financial support for SRHS programs and students, and to preserve and document the history and traditions of SRHS.

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS: THE SRHS WAY

By Don Cambou

In the late 1990s, Nevers Field was a god awful mess. The wooden bleachers were falling apart. The track was uneven and pooled water after a rain. And the field itself was a dry, lumpy, dangerous place to play competitive sports. The Santa Rosa School District decided to do something about it. The District spent two million dollars to put in an all-weather synthetic turf field with padding and fill, a state of the art all-weather track surface, metal bleachers complete with press box, concession stand, press booth, and underground ditching and piping. But it did NOT provide any money for lights. The story of how the lights came on at Nevers Field is one of nearly fanatically dedicated individuals, many official groups working together, and a community rallying around a cause. Chris Zeek '68, SRHS Foundation president at the time, states that literally hundreds of people gave of their time, materials, and money to make the lights a reality.

After a couple of years, and countless meetings a core group began work in earnest on the lights: the SRHS Foundation, PAC (Panther Athletic Committee), STP (Student, Teacher, Parent Organization), and the Football Boosters. Throwing their full support toward the project were school principal Tony Negri, and athletic directors Pat Kennedy and Gary Dellepere.



Two of the four light poles at Nevers Field.

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GLEN GUYMON: A MAVERICK ON STAGE!

by Mike Daniels '59

When Glen Guymon arrived from Hollywood in 1937 to teach drama at SRHS, he brought with him a world of sophistication and a flamboyant, unprecedented presence. Ironically, it would ultimately contribute to his downfall in drama but not to his career as an instructor.

Before Guymon, drama at SRHS was a curricular stepchild that maintained a safe and sanitary style, one reflecting the classical approach to education espoused by Jerome Cross, the superintendent.

From the very beginning, Guymon refused to remain in the shadow of other teachers as he made immediate and significant change. During that first year, for example, the annual Christmas pageant for the first time involved students in every aspect of the production—from scripting to set building to presentation.

Also that first year his production of “The Whole Town’s Talking,” a non-traditional topic about an attempt to marry off a daughter, reflected Guymon’s interest in contemporary ideas and subjects. He followed with “Our

Continued on page 4

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Mary Beseda



Mary Orsborn Beseda
President

Wow, the school year and the Foundations fiscal year is moving fast. We are looking forward to the 25th Annual Polenta Feed on Friday, April 22, 2022, which has been on hiatus for 2 years due to COVID. We are in need of Volunteers to help sell drink tickets, raffle tickets, work a shift at the Bar or pass around the tip basket for the students working the event! Please

call the Pandy line at 707-571-7747 if you can help!

The Foundation is looking for Board Members! We are looking for individuals who share our commitment to Santa Rosa High School! The Board oversees an endowment fund in excess of \$5M and our primary objective and purpose is to serve as a charitable organization which unites SRHS graduates, parents and current and past students, faculty, and staff, and interested community, our mission it threefold:

- Preserving and documenting the history and traditions of SRHS
- Providing financial support to the school
- Promoting community involvement

23 Board of Directors manage the Foundation, we currently have 16. Directors serve without compensation and are elected to serve a 3-year term. Board members and Volunteers also serve on various sub-committees. This support network is key to the success of the Foundation. Come be a part of this fulfilling commitment to the community and SRHS! Please email your interest or questions to info@srhsf.org or call the Pandy line at 707-571-7747. Are you aware that Fiscal year 2020-2021 we awarded \$205,421.63 in scholarships to deserving seniors and grants for activities and School projects not currently in the budget?

In January, the Board with the assistance of Soukup Strategic Solutions was able to mail over 450 thank you – 2021 tax letters to our supporters, this was an exciting new process! In October 2021 we contracted with a new

Bookkeeper, Blake Goranson-Gunter with Goranson & Associates Tax Consultants, which began the task of converting our accounting process to QuickBooks.

July 2021 was the start of our new Fiscal year and the election of the following Board Officers:

Mary Beseda, President, Chris Zeek, Vice President, Rhonda Rehm, Treasurer, and JoAnn MacDonald, Corresponding Secretary.

The Foundation Board of Director's is looking forward to the remainder of the Fiscal year with the upcoming Polenta Feed and the awarding of 44 scholarships to deserving seniors.

Once a Panther, Always a Panther!



SRHS Foundation Directors

Monica Baldenegro '95

Mary Orsborn Beseda '74 President

Don Cambou '64 Newsletter Editor

* Donna Dennes Doyle '67

Kristine Erken, Friend

Paulette Guaspari Gomes '68

Rhonda Rehm Loop '73 Treasurer

JoAnn Hembree MacDonald '56

Corresponding Secretary

Brian Mecchi '77

Tony Negri, Friend

Mark Noonan '70

* Doug Pavese '58

Nadine Wiggins Smedshammer '59

Christine Romani Tonelli '88

Ilona Mayer Williams '64

Chris Zeek '68 Vice President

** Founding Director*

First, the concerns of nearby neighborhood groups had to be addressed. Next came raising the money. The groups held several fundraisers, but the biggest by far was an event dinner and auction at the Fountaingrove Golf Course that raised tens of thousands of dollars. Spirito Falco '41 and Pete Mazzucchi '54, raised additional tens of thousands. Still not enough. The groups needed donations of labor and materials -- and lots of both.

Lunardi Electric supervised the project – for free. Sue Bolt, a mother of SRHS students, who represented PAC and STP, got the I.B.E.W. (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) to donate time to pull all the wiring through the gigantic poles. The wire itself was donated by Summit Electric.

Brad Chance from the Football Boosters got P.G.E. involved, donating manpower and equipment.

Superior Supply, through Ron Falco '65, donated all the project's cement and concrete needs.

The fundraising had been successful. The donations of manpower and equipment would be immense. But the coalition of groups still needed more money. Pete Mazzucchi, with connections at the Exchange Bank, helped secure a very low interest loan for the project. Sue Bolt remembers that Zeek, representing the young SRHS Foundation, was “sweating bullets” when he signed the \$80,000 loan. That gave the groups \$150,000 to complete the project; just a fraction of what the lights would have cost without the many community donations.

Finally, in 2002, it was time to start digging. The Bartley Pump Company, who were great supporters of SRHS athletics, paid for Weeks drilling to bore four 30 foot deep holes to support the high poles. When Weeks hit water at less than ten feet, Bartley Pump pumped the water out – for free. Weeks slipped sleeves into the holes to create a dry environment for the poles. Zeek and Lorenzo Solis, a SRHS janitor, directed a small army of volunteers to dig ditches from pole bases to existing underground pipes. Then the concrete pouring began.

All the while, the Musco Light Company, an installer of arena lighting, made sure everything was done correctly.

The four great light poles rose 80 to 100 feet above the ground. Each would house 18 high powered bulbs. Together, they would be able to illuminate the entire playing field to daylight intensity. P.G.E.

brought in dozens of workers and equipment with very high extensions to connect and place each of the 72 high powered bulbs. They also let Musco use P.G.E. equipment to aim each of the lights so that the entire playing field and surrounding areas would be brightly lit.

A ceremony to celebrate the lights would take place before the school's 2004 Homecoming Game. Sue Bolt remembers the excitement of the crowd when it entered Nevers Field with the lights blazing. She remembers the crowd standing, cheering, and clapping during the dedication ceremony. Zeek remembers he and new Foundation president Mike Grace hugging each other, both with tears in their eyes.

Within three years, the coalition of groups had repaid the entire \$80,000 loan. Now, 18 years later, the lights at Nevers Field illuminate every SRHS football home game, and many other evening and night events. Large regional track meets can take place, and outdoor winter practices can go longer in spite of the fading daylight. The lights even illuminated last year's Covid necessitated Prom. All these events are possible because of the money, work, and dedication of a civic army with a dream 20 years ago.



Bottom pole section, 30 feet deep

Glen Guymon, continued from page 1

Town” and “Arsenic and Old Lace,” both then somewhat edgy plays for SRHS.

He demanded and received complete loyalty from his students and took advantage of that dedication, keeping students from other classes and allowing them to do the teaching. This approach worried the administration, so much so that in 1942 Principal Lloyd Wood was directed by the board of education to restrain Guymon, who steadfastly continued his behavior in spite of the warning.

Guymon’s teaching helped students regularly to win significant awards. Consider these three: Bob Quarry ’43 earned first place in a state forensics competition and later enjoyed a successful Hollywood career; Jone Pedersen ’49 relied on Guymon’s coaching to win the Miss California title; Dan Streipeke ’48 was nominated for an Oscar in his work in the film “Saving Private Ryan” and became actor Tom Hanks go-to makeup artist.

Relying upon his Hollywood connections, Guymon through the years brought actors and singers to campus to entertain the student body. Frankie Laine, Johnny Ray and Sammy Davis, Jr. sang on the auditorium stage. Eartha Kitt and a partial cast of “New Faces” also appeared. Actors Thomas Mitchell and Bert Lancaster talked about their craft with drama students. And the rock and roll Coasters sang their do-wop hits to student delight.

Guymon chaperoned his students to plays in San Francisco, where they went back stage to meet the actors. He took students to Hollywood for a tour of Universal Studios.

In 1949 Guymon produced his most successful and spectacular project in “Life with Father.” The set was expensive, built with the aid of community professionals

and contained borrowed antiques. A 20-page program was printed. The cast wore the costumes used in the Columbia Pictures version that starred Elizabeth Taylor and William Powell. Red Skelton and Fred MacMurray sent congratulatory telegrams.



Sammy Davis Jr. at SRHS

The play generated about \$8,000 in ticket sales, an amount the SRHS administration declared would be used to benefit all school programs.

Guymon, who had previously controlled the income from his productions, was outraged. He declared that he would produce no more plays. Lloyd Wood, now the superintendent, directed Principal Fred Duey to “get it in writing.” Duey did and this contract violation put Guymon where Wood, no fan of Guymon’s, wanted him.

By reassigning him to typing and study hall, the administration believed Guymon would be ineffective and he could be fired for cause. But the opposite happened. He organized and ran those classes with the same efficiency and flair he did drama classes.

Guymon maintained his flamboyant style throughout his career. After 30 years at SRHS, he retired in 1966, a decision he made on his terms and not the administration’s.

FORMER SRHS PRINCIPAL SEEKS COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS JOB

By Don Cambou

Brad Coscarelli served as SRHS’s very well liked principal from 2010 to 2018. Before that, he was a shop teacher at Herbert Slater Middle School and assistant principal at SRHS. He’s currently principal at Hidden Valley Elementary School, where his four children attended. He’s also in the running to become the County Superintendent of Schools. The election will be this June 7, with a possible runoff in November. He has stated, “I want Sonoma County Schools to be a national model and destination for students, parents, and teachers.”

It’s a big job. The County’s 40 school districts command a budget of nearly a billion dollars a year, employ over 4,000 teachers, and serve over 65,000

kindergarten through 12th grade students. Coscarelli already has the endorsements of the California Teachers Association and the Santa Rosa Teachers Association. He says, “I want to support the students and the teachers and the staff members and the families of Sonoma County. Do I think I have the best experience? Yes.”

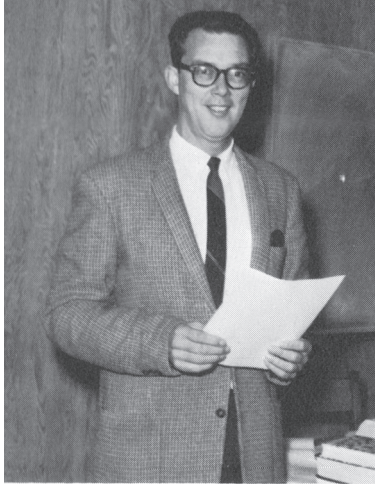


For more information visit Bradcoscarelli.com.

GENE DESOTO: A REMEMBRANCE

By Steve Hart

I was 16 years old in 1966 when I entered Gene DeSoto's English class at SRHS. It was only his third year teaching at Santa Rosa, but it seemed as if Gene had been there forever, with his stern air of authority and highly structured classroom. We quickly found



Gene DeSoto

out that Mr. DeSoto tolerated no foolishness and expected the best from his students. Gene taught the foundations of writing - grammar, spelling and sentence structure. He came across as a drill sergeant, and many of us were intimidated. But he also was full of surprises. Gene often flashed a sly grin, told corny jokes or affected an Irish brogue. Occasionally he would

recite poetry or burst into song. Gene once showed us a faded sports page from the Oakland Tribune, with a photo of himself as a high school baseball star, sliding into second base. "This DeSoto Has Air Brakes," blared the headline.

By the end of the school year, I regarded him more as a colorful character than ruthless taskmaster. I was surprised in June when Gene approached me with an offer of a summer job. A German restaurant in the hills near Cazadero was looking for kitchen help. The DeSoto family lived in the woods near Cazanoma Lodge and Gene's older son Craig, a football star at El Molino, already worked there. Gene said he'd drive me out to the lodge and I'd work six days a week with full room and board. Without knowing what to expect, I agreed. I figured it was better than mowing lawns. It would be my first job with a real paycheck.

The lodge is set in a lovely forest of redwoods and firs at the head of Kidd Creek, not far from the Russian River. It was owned at the time by Walter and Agnes Lenk, who served traditional German dishes in the dining room and rented cabins to guests. Craig DeSoto showed me the ropes, and soon I was mopping floors, bussing tables, washing pots and running loads of plates, glasses and utensils through the dishwasher. I learned to make sauerkraut and helped guests catch trout in the small pond below the dining room.

Still, I had plenty to learn. Like Gene DeSoto, the Lenks ran a tight ship. I'll never forget the chef's reaction when I used one of his best kitchen knives to pry open a wooden crate of lettuce.

Every Tuesday morning, Gene would pick me up at the lodge and drive me in to Santa Rosa, where I'd drop off my dirty laundry at home and enjoy some of mom's cooking. The next day he'd drive me back to Cazanoma Lodge in time for dinner preparations. It must have been a long weekday commute for Gene, but he seemed to really enjoy the trip through the woods along the Russian River.

On our rides to town, Gene talked about his life, family and philosophy of teaching. When we crested the last hill on River Road, overlooking the wetlands, pastures and vineyards of the Santa Rosa Plain, he always waxed poetic. Gene said it was a fine example of God's creation, and that he felt blessed to live in such a beautiful setting.

One thing Gene didn't talk about was his experience as a young Army infantryman in World War II. I didn't learn until years later that he'd fought in the D-Day invasion and Battle of the Bulge.

I never returned to Gene's class or the job at Cazanoma Lodge, but Mr. DeSoto wasn't through with me yet. He became assistant track coach under Coach Ken Goetzel and whipped himself into shape running alongside the track team. As always, he pushed us to do our best. Gene's six sons became standout athletes, setting Redwood Empire records in track and field.

I graduated with a journalism degree from Cal and worked as a newspaper reporter for 40 years. Gene wasn't the only SRHS teacher who influenced me. There was the urbane English teacher Arnold Solkov, journalism instructor Edward Von der Porten and business teacher Bill Wycoff, who had me typing 60 words per minute. But none was more memorable than Mr. DeSoto.

I recall Gene's memorial at the high school auditorium, where a parade of former students told how Mr. DeSoto had changed their lives. It was fitting when the school board decided to put his name on Santa Rosa's outstanding new classroom building.

HAVE YOU INCLUDED THE FOUNDATION IN YOUR ESTATE PLAN?



CONTRIBUTIONS & MEMBERSHIP NEWS

WINTER 2022

By Paulette Guaspari Gomes '68 and Mark Noonan '70

For the period November 2021 through January 2022, the Foundation welcomed 12 new members, 33 renewing members, and 4 Lifetime members. Membership dues totaled \$3,760 for this period. For fiscal year to date starting July 1, 2021, we have 28 new members, 82 renewing members, 9 Lifetime members and \$9,110 in membership dues. Total active membership in the Foundation now stands at 715. We continue to actively contact members regarding upcoming renewals and have made over 300 contacts this fiscal year.

The following Foundation members and friends made contributions in addition to membership dues.

Robert/Kim Carpenter '77 Agrella
Dorothy Gordon Calegari '64
Hugh Cambra, Jr. '68
Florine Trombetta Ellingson '56
Burl Estes '61

David Gervais '59
Larry '62/Pat Hartley
Alana Kelly '78
Dorothy Cameron Mercer '57
Lucille Elliott Moholt-Siebert '68

James/Gwen Nicholson '65 Neary
Charles Proses '50
Peter/Jane Hamilton Schmidt '61
Mark/Sheryl Simpson – Parents
James Streeter '76

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Susan Lane Gambini '60
Jennifer Gibson '78

Virginia Templeton '63
Kathleen Bradshaw Robinson '80

ORGANIZATION DONATIONS

Amazon Smile
Benevity

The Sports Basement
Pledgeling Foundation

SEAT PLAQUES

Bruce/Debra Agee Burton – Parents
**Rachel Burton, Class of 1988/Scott
Burton, Class of 2004**

Steve/Jessie Kroeck – Parents
The Kroeck Family

Sarah Richardson '92
**Sarah Richardson, Class of 1992/
Freya Fick Richardson, Class of 1960**

Ruth Taylor Hauschildt '58
Ruth Taylor Hauschildt '58

Mike/Kelly Lopez – Parents
**The Lopez Family, Mike, Kelly,
Melissa '14, Annalise'17, Jenna'20**

Belva Bandy Sager '57
Belva (Bandy) Sager, Class of 1957

Tom Kniffin '61
**Tom Kniffin Family, Tom '61, Tim '85,
John '86, Jim '88, Always Love**

Mary Nienaber – Friend
**Steven R. Nienaber, PhD, Class of
1958**

Christine Romani Tonelli '88
Gabriela Tonelli, 2024

MEMORIAL & SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

You may send the SRHSF a contribution in the name of a deceased Panther, or in the name of a specific living person, department, group need, or scholarship fund.

AG DEPT

Edward Hansen '57

TIM ALEXANDER '72

Todd '73/Mary Orsborn '74 Beseda
Arlene Gagliardi – Friend
Sue Garvey Grave '67
Gary Vice '58

ART PROGRAM IN MEMORY HEIDI

FJOSNE PAULSON '82
Ione Gaskey Ramsdell '80

BASEBALL PROGRAM

Scott Beseda '72

BEVERLY BELLOUMINI CAMBERON

'58
James Laier, Jr. '58

BOYS SOCCER PROGRAM

Julie Molinar - Parent

JESSIE CARNEY '97

Laura McNeill '97

CROSS COUNTRY IN HONOR DOUG COURTEMARCHE

Ballo Family

DANCE PROGRAM

Darlene McCullough Bath '56

BRIAN GALLAGHER '94

Oren/Nadine Wiggins '59 Smedshammer

RAE GAMBINI '37

Art '68/Andi Gambini

BETTY J. GONG '66

Dick '67/Vivian Gong

CARL GOSLAVICH '63

Mike/Kathy Daniels Grace '65

Sam McMillan '63

Gary Vice '58

**RICHARD "DICK" HUTCHINSON,
MD '59**

Mike Daniels '59 and Penny Hastings '59

Ward '58/Patricia Townsend '59 Thompson

RAYMOND LAZZINI '48

Katherine Lazzini – Friend

SUE ANN STRONG MARSHALL '47

Mary Jo Tanner Spring '52

GARY MARTIN '57

Buck Yaeger '59

**BRUCE MECCHI '68 MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIP**

Dennis '68/Kathryn McCarty

LINDA MC BRIDE

T (Tauzer) Smith '75

MUSIC DEPT

Bruce/Connie Kinnison – Parents

**MUSIC DEPT IN MEMORY WILLIAM
BARCLAY**

Jim Nelson '61

**MUSIC DEPT IN MEMORY MARTIN
POWELL**

Anthony Martin '64

DORIS HIGGINS NASH '45

Todd '73/Mary Orsborn '74 Beseda

Buck Yaeger '59

Beverly Stumbaugh - Friend

STEVE NIENABER '58

Doug Pavese '58

Ward '58/Patricia Townsend '59 Thompson

MARILYN TENTER PERA '49

Dick '49/Angie Colombini

JIM SIMONDS – PARENT

Dana Simonds - Parent

SUSAN BRIGGS SLOAT '65

Jean Wood - Friend

Nick '61/Michele Sokol

**PETER SLUSSER AGRICULTURE
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP/PETER
SLUSSER DEBATE MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIP**

Redwood Foundation

ROBERT "BOB" STONE '54

Todd '73/Mary Orsborn '74 Beseda

Bruce/Karin Kenney '59 Camilli

Dick '49/Angie Colombini

David Engman '57

Mike Daniels '59 and Penny Hastings '59

James Laier, Jr. '58

Doug Pavese '58

Ward '58/Patricia Townsend '59 Thompson

**BERTA WIGGINS GOLF
SCHOLARSHIP**

JoAnn Hembree MacDonald '56

Oren/Nadine Wiggins '59 Smedshammer

**In Memoriam**

Lawrence Anderson	Faculty	Ronald Pomeroy	1956
Patrick McManus	Faculty	Donna Stevenson Vine	1956
Robert Tuttle	1940	Ron Thomas	1957
Donald Dixon	1945	John Tibbetts	1957
William Pedersen	1945	Kirk Veale	1957
Henry Schukler	1946	Beverly Belloumini Cameron	1958
Marilyn Tenter Pera	1949	Steven Nienaber	1958
Wesley Strech	1952	Frank Palmieri, Jr.	1958
Alfred Wilford	1952	Ray Alberigi	1959
Marvin Haggard	1953	Carl Goslovich	1963
Donald Laabs	1953	Lennie Barton Flint	1967
Elaine Line Vanadore	1953	John Gomes	1970
Noreen Griggs Curtis	1954	William Hoehn	1976
Robert Stone	1954	Brian Gallagher	1994
Robert Bocchetti	1956		



SRHS STUDENTS BECAME EDUCATORS— SOME LONG AGO AND SOME IN THE PRESENT

By Mike Daniels

Over the many, many years of Santa Rosa High, students have chosen teaching as their career path and have made significant contributions to the profession. Quite a number of SRHS alumni have returned to their alma mater as instructors, while others have made their mark at other Santa Rosa high schools and at higher levels of education. The following lists but a few of those who have left a lasting mark on SRHS education and elsewhere. Readers are invited to send names and bio information of other SRHS teaching alumni to doncamboul@gmail.com or to mdaniels@sonic.net or mail hard copies to SRHS Foundation, PO Box 11006, Santa Rosa, CA 95406-1006

Roy Simpson, a 1912 grad, after a long career as a junior high and high school principal in a number of California schools, became the state superintendent of education in 1945. He served until 1962.

Helen Cochrane enjoyed a lengthy tenure as SRHS vocal music teacher. She graduated in 1913, the same year as Mildred Turner, who taught PE and dance. The two collaborated for years on campus music and drama productions.

English teacher Martha Erwin, a 1922 alumna, was a senior in the fall of '21 when the Humboldt Street campus was destroyed by fire. She became the English Department Chair and then a counselor before she retired.

Frances McCanse graduated in 1923 and as SRHS physical ed instructor for girls contributed to the growth of that curricula.

Long time SRHS science teacher Ted Leifrinck was a 1925 graduate, the year the Panther mascot was adopted. Juanita "Ma" Baird, who also graduated in 1925, shepherded the new night school to success.

Legendary agriculture teacher Wes Jamison graduated in 1926. Breaking new ground, he taught the very first ag class for girls in 1958-59. He also mentored a number of local, state and national judging teams during his lengthy SRHS tenure.

If you were a student at Santa Rosa Junior High in the 1940s or 50s, you probably remember Esther Serel who taught there and was the school's vice principal. She graduated from SRHS in 1924.

While he didn't become a teacher, 1929 Panther Bernard Plover made contributions to the growth of SRJC as a trustee. The college shared the SRHS campus from 1918 to 1932, when it moved next door and Plover followed it.

Plover later was appointed to the California Community College Board of Governors. The JC library is named for him.

Rollo Norris, who taught SRHS auto shop for years and years, was a member of the class of 1931.

Serving the Rincon Valley schools as teacher, principal and superintendent for 37 years, Douglas Whited graduated in 1936 from SRHS. The elementary school just east of Middle Rincon Road is named for him.

A number of 1942 alums spent their careers in education: Clarence "Brook" Tauzer taught history at SRJC and then became the college's vice president. He also authored a history of the school. Sanford "Sandy" Twitchell, after service in WW II, taught at Lawrence Cook Junior High. Philip Neisingh taught at both SRJH and SRHS.

Co-author of the Sonoma County history "Wild Oats in Eden," 1949 alumnus Harvey Hansen had a long career teaching history at SRJC.

Some 1950 Panthers also had long educational careers, including Robert Acquistapace, who taught at SRHS before moving across town to serve as an administrator at Montgomery High and later at Piner High; Eugene Canevari was a drama student at SRHS and then became heavily involved in mentoring student activities at SRJC; John "Jack" Rackerby, another drama guy, taught SRHS drama and later instructed science. Both Canevari and Rackerby were influenced by SRHS drama teacher Glen Guymon.

This brief list shouldn't end without adding James Underhill, Jr., son of legendary SRHS football coach "Genial" Jim Underhill. The younger Jim, a 1952 SRHS alumnus, was well known throughout the North Bay for coaching Piner High cross country and track and field championship squads. The athletic field at Piner is fittingly named in his honor.

Throughout its existence many other Panthers returned to Santa Rosa's oldest high school as teachers, and each made special contributions. Currently on the staff, Levi Jones, 1990, teaches English and coaches golf; Ryan Terschuren, 2001, teaches PE and Yoga; and Luis Patrick, 2002, also teaches PE and coaches girls varsity basketball.

HAVE YOU INCLUDED THE FOUNDATION IN YOUR ESTATE PLAN?

POLENTA FEED UPDATE

By Paulette Guaspari Gomes

We started selling Polenta tickets on January 15th to Foundation members only until March 1. We are now selling to all SRHS family and friends.

Here is the update: The 25th Annual Polenta Feed is scheduled for April 22, 2022 at the Veterans' Memorial Building. So, if you haven't called into the Pandy Line (707 571-7747) to purchase your tickets, please do so. You can only call in for 2 tickets per household. Adults only. Each ticket is a \$40.00 donation. It's a fun event you don't want to miss!



AUDITORIUM SEAT PLAQUES

By Paulette Guaspari Gomes

Since our Fall newsletter was issued, we've had an overwhelming number of sales. That leaves us with only 40 seats left. Don't wait too long to get your name, or your family members' names, permanently installed on



a seat in the SRHS Auditorium. To make your donation, download and print the online seat plaque signup form located on the Foundation website (www.srhsf.org) and mail it with a check for \$150.00 to the SRHS Foundation, P.O. Box 11006, Santa Rosa, CA 95406. If you have questions, email us at donation@srhsf.org or call our Pandy Line at 707 571-7747.

KERRY BENEFIELD: READY TO FILL BIG SHOES

By Don Cambou

If you're even a passing sports fan and read the Press Democrat, you probably know the writing of Kerry Benefield. She has worked for the PD for 18 years, and for the last six plus years she has written high school sports stories for that newspaper. She always seems to find an interesting angle that makes a sports story a human interest story as well. What you may not know about Benefield is that she's a SRHS grad and an athlete herself.

Benefield '91 was the SRHS student body president in 1991. She lettered in four sports, and was a standout in basketball and soccer. She went on to UC Berkeley where she played Division 1 soccer for a team that at one point was ranked number two in the nation.

She's no longer the high school sports reporter for the PD. As of May, 2021, she has become the paper's community columnist. That slot is about as close to hallowed ground as you can get at the PD. It's the space Gaye LeBaron filled for 35 years – 8,000 columns. LeBaron's column was the most popular feature in the newspaper. Following LeBaron, Chris Smith took over the job in 2001 and stayed there for the next twenty years. Now it's Benefield's turn. A pretty intimidating assignment.

She writes, "I want this column to shine a light on who we are, what makes us a community and all of the things that

make us special. It should be a place to tackle the questions that vex us (the funny, the mundane, the irritating) but also look into the questions, and answers, we didn't know we had. Where we have been and where we are have their place, but what's next — and who is taking us there — is pretty compelling, too." Among those who took Benefield to her current position are two former SRHS teachers: "I adored both Mr. Desoto and Mrs. Devlin - two very different English teachers but both of whom have had a lasting and profound impact on my love of reading and writing."



photo by John Burgess/Press Democrat

Best of luck in your new position, Kerry. Your old school is still cheering for you.



Santa Rosa High School Foundation
 “Once A Panther, Always A Panther”
ONE THOUSAND PANTHERS

One Thousand Panthers is a campaign in progress to enrich the SRHSF Endowment Fund by utilizing \$1,000 donations by 1000 Panther supporters to reach a goal of \$1 million.

Proceeds are allocated to student needs at SRHS through the Panther Project Fund of the SRHS Foundation. The campaign began in 2011 and will continue until the goal is met.

**CURRENTLY - WE HAVE A
 TOTAL OF 301 DONORS**
 (Many with multiple donations)
OVER \$532,556.92

Call the Pandy Line (707-571-7747) or visit us online at www.SRHSF.org for assistance.

**Thank you for
 your generous donations.**

We look forward to your involvement with the SRHS Foundation

Donations options by cash, check, or credit card are accepted from individuals and groups (pooled). Pledges over 2, 4, and 5 years, employer matching funds, and marketable securities are also accepted. **CALL US!**

JOIN US! We are making a difference.

2021-2022 Donations to Date

David Armstrong 1958:** In memory of Delmore G. (DG) Pedgrift 1958

Richard Bastoni 1957*

Jay Berger 1962*

Bolt Family*

Robert Borges 1978 *****

Shawn & Jennifer (Richardson) Brumbaugh 1985

John & Judy DeMeo

Marcia (Walling) & Bruce Dyche 1988

Bill & Suzie Friedman 1966*****

Mike & Kim (Roberts) Gutzman 1971*****

Alana Kelly 1978*****

Roy M. Kunz 1956*

Katherine Lazzini*: In memory of Raymond Lazzini 1948

Dennis McGill 1967*: To honor four generations attending SRHS

Debra Jalli Martini 1961: In memory of Dick Hutchinson 1959

Daniel McMahan :** In memory of Pam Griffin McMahan 1967

Mark E. Noonan 1970*: In honor of Ed 1944 and Maxine Fowler 1945

Ward 1958 & Pat (Townsend 1959) Thompson ***#**

Victor 1965 & Karen Trione*

Larry Weese 1964*****

Marianne (Wurnitsch) Scheffler 1953*

Janice Yates: In Memory of Bobby Yates 1961*#

Class of 1955

** indicates multiple donations
 # indicates plaque donation*



By Pandy
Winter 2022

Nevers Field will always be Nevers Field, but its oval track recently received a new moniker. It's now the **Doug Courtemarche Track**. The name honors the long-time cross country and track coach who recently retired but who can't stay away from working with athletes. Doug's assumed a limited role with head coach Carrie Joseph, so his influence will still be at work.

Andy Brennan of the SRHS Social Studies Department was named the California League of High Schools' Educator of the Year for Region 1. That includes Sonoma, Mendocino, Lake, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties. Congratulations Andy!



Andy Brennan

Since 2013, **Antonia Mitchell '09** has toured the world, skating with "Disney on Ice." Coincidentally, on her present tour she skates with Michael Hilgren, a 2007 Piner High grad. Mitchell plays Cinderella, and Hilgren plays Prince Eric from "The Little Mermaid." Both grew up together, skating at Snoopy's Home Ice, also known as the Redwood Empire Ice Arena.

Working together, **Mike Daniels '59** and **Mike Grace '65** raised money this last holiday season to donate to students in need. The Mikes received the funds from their '59 and '65 classmates and other alumni eager to participate in the effort to help needy students enjoy the holidays. They purchased over \$5000 in Target cards for the students. They presented the cards to **Wendy Albarran** in the SRHS Business office. Wendy delivered the cards to the kids. She knows the kids, and who would benefit the most from the cards. A small Holiday fund but much appreciated.

The Foundation receives many different kinds of donations to help the students and teachers of SRHS. But it isn't everyday that it receives a baritone trombone with mute and case. **Cheryl Fox '67**, who has power of attorney for the family of **Gabriel Perstyn**, made the donation for the family. The school orchestra needed such a trombone, and their number one trombonist, **Val Benz**, will play it at the Spring Concert.



The trombone at its new home at SRHS

A Santa Rosa native, long distance runner **Julia Stamps Mallon '97**, started breaking national records at 16 as a student at SRHS. She went on to become a six time All-American runner at Stanford. Then she shattered her leg in a skateboarding accident. Doctors told her she would never run again. She proved them wrong. She's now an accomplished trail runner and keeps placing in races around the country.

The **SRHS Foundation** has recently been selected to receive the Sonoma County Historical Records Commission Collection and Archives Recognition Award for 2021 in the category of Education (phew!) for sponsoring the SRHS Museum. **Teacher Art Horner and Mike Daniels '59** will accept the award at a Flamingo Hotel luncheon on March 20... Meanwhile the Museum continues to receive donations, some are inspired by the recent death of longtime **teacher/coach Larry Anderson**. Among those items is a **Frank Romano '69** football trophy (Most Improved Player), and an inscribed **Mark Temple '69** football (Best Running Back). **Brenda Fletcher '80** donated several pennants, buttons (Stomp Montgomery, Nail the Norsemen), and other memorabilia. The donations were Brenda's and her dad's, **Robert Fletcher**, who collected them during his years as a teacher in the district from 1960 to 1990.

Some female members of the class of **1985** have elected to make their careers in medicine: **Kathryn Pearson Peyton, MD** is a radiologist and the Director of Breast Imaging at Precision Imagery in Florida; **Susan Northern Lacy, MD** is a gynecologist at the Memphis Center for Reproductive Health in Tennessee; **Julia Bley, MD** is an obstetrician at Sutter Health in Oakland; **Kim Baxter Albert, MD** is a pediatrician specialist at the Austin Diagnostic Clinic in Texas.



SRHS FOUNDATION

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