

WILDCATS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF OAKLAND HIGH SCHOOL, INC.

E-NEWSLETTER **SPRING 2019**



Upcoming Events:

WAA Board Meeting
Dates for 2019:

May 21,
June 18

*Dates, times, location
subject to change.



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Oakland's Khirah McCoy (1), center, celebrates with her teammates after defeating McFarland (Jose Carlos Fajardo/ Bay Area News Group) 3.9.19

Women's Basketball Team on Fire

The Oakland High women's basketball team beat Oakland Tech to win the OAL championship, and then went on to win the Division III State Championship. At the state championships, the second ranked Wildcats beat the top ranked Kern County's McFarland Cougars 51-35.

Coach Orlando Gray was named state Coach of the Year. Coach Gray remarked that he was especially proud of his team, not just for their basketball skills and dedication, but because they are serious about their studies, who boast a team grade point average of 3.6 with 3 of their players' grades over 4.0.

(Article continued on page 2)

Join WAA Today

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

Membership fees are:

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

To join, go to our website at oaklandhighalumni.org or send your application with a check to: Wildcat Alumni Association, P.O. Box 11436, Oakland, CA 94611

Remember reading the Aegis newspaper in class?

Check out the latest issue of Oakland High's online student newspaper at oaklandaegis.com

Alumni Connections

OHS FOOTBALL'S TYLER PIMENTEL, CLASS OF 2021, FIFTH GENERATION WILDCAT HOW FAR BACK CAN YOU GO?

For many of us during our high school days, we were concerned only with the day-to-day requirements of teachers, and, if ambition driven, the next test or composition. Seldom were classmate conversations involved in much of personal or family history. Perhaps many of us, like myself, had brief histories in the US due to immigrant parents or possibly being immigrants ourselves.

So when a casual conversation with one of my OHS 1966 classmates noted that his grandson is an OHS '21 sophomore with an OHS family lineage dating back 100 years, I was intrigued. My curiosity was primed and my queries caused the involved family to check and to confirm some genealogy. With the Oakland High 150th anniversary next year in 2019, this historical perspective seemed fitting.

The subject student is Tyler Pimentel '21 whose mother Kari is the daughter of my classmate Lee Ditlefson '66 and whose father John Pimentel is the son of Janet (Phillips) Pimentel, '63. The family history was written by Tyler's father's uncle, Steve Phillips '59. If this family's 100 year tie to OHS is not enough, do you want to hear about Tyler being a seventh generation Californian? How much more history can you handle?

(Article continued on page 3)



The cast of Hairspray pose for a group shot on stage at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center. (Brianna Jefferson) 3.19.19

First OHS Musical in 40 Years

The Oakland High Glee Club produced "Hairspray" March 9. This is the first musical ever performed in the "new building" erected in 1980! The club is extra-curricular, and despite Oakland High having no choral music class, managed to rehearse and make sets outside of school hours with help of a dedicated volunteer choreographer, volunteer singing instructor and other community supported resources. Members of the instrumental music classes served as the orchestra. The musical was directed by English teacher Christopher Johnston and the live score conducted by Music teacher David Byrd. Added to the difficulty of working on a musical, the performances were scheduled for a weekend that fell in the middle of the recent teacher strike. But in the "show must go on" tradition of true thespians, the 23-member cast of students rescheduled and performed to a sold-out crowd the weekend after the 7-day strike ended. One audience member stated, "Best musical show I've ever seen in my life!"

Glee Club members hope Hairspray will be only the first of many musicals at OHS.



The team was honored by their families, their classmates, their schools, members of the OUSD Board of Education, the Oakland A's and the Golden State Warriors, and state legislators. The City of Oakland celebrated the State Champions OHS Wildcats and Tech Bulldogs, who won the Division IV State Championship, with a parade on Friday, April 12. The parade started at Oakland Tech and stopped at several schools on its way to Oakland High. The girls teams rode in trolleys in a parade through Downtown and around the central part of Oakland on Friday afternoon, followed by a banquet at City Hall. Never before had OUSD had two Girls State Champions at the same time. Speakers at the rally included City leaders, District leaders, the schools' principals and coaches, Olympic Gold Medalist and former WNBA player, Ruthie. On Monday, April 22, both teams took a bus together to Sacramento where they were recognized on the floors of the California State Senate and Assembly.

Oakland's Morgan Dunbar (5), left, begins to shed tears while hugged by teammate Khirah McCoy (1) in the final seconds of their game against McFarland. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/ Bay Area News Group) 3.9.19



Please let **The WAA Newsletter** know what you are up to since graduating.

Write to Wildcat Newsletter at (email) waa@oaklandhighalumni.org, (snail mail) Wildcat Alumni Association, P.O. Box 11436, Oakland, CA 94611.

Be sure to include your graduation year and maiden name (if applicable).

One Hundred and Fifty Years! Let's Celebrate!

Where does time go? Oakland High School, the sixth oldest public high school founded in California, will turn 150 years old in the fall of 2019. That calls for a big celebration! And we are ready to begin planning activities for August 2019 through May 2020 that will appeal to all ages of alumni. And we need to start planning NOW.

If you are interested in serving, send your name, graduation year, and email address to waa@oaklandhighalumni.org and use "OHS 150th Committee" as your subject line.

Pimentel continued

Wildcats Alumni Association wishes to thank Steve Phillips for providing the family historical perspective, Lee Ditlefson '66 for being the family liaison, and Tyler Pimentel for permitting us to affirm his Oakland High pedigree.

- Frank Kao '66

Pimentel-Phillips-Engel-Hack History

By Stephen Phillips

Anabel Estelle Hack (Engel) was born in Fresno in 1893. Her father, a brakeman with the Southern Pacific, relocated the family to an Oakland home on East 18th. Street soon after. She attended Franklin Elementary School (then K-8), followed by **Oakland High School, Class of '13**. Her two brothers (Fred and George Hack) also attended OHS. During her senior year, her father died, and after graduation, she worked as a telephone operator to help her widowed mother and younger brother financially. Visiting family friends who owned a summer place at Homewood, Lake Tahoe, she met Walter Engel, a native San Franciscan, also on vacation, and the two married in 1916, moving into a small house at the corner of East 18th. and Lakeshore, directly across from Lake Merritt and the old Key System car-barns at what is now Athol Plaza shopping center. Their first child, Virginia, was born in that house, and, when a second child was on the way, they moved to a larger home on East 33rd. Street, overlooking the then-new OHS at Park and MacArthur (then called "Hopkins Street). During WW II, my grandparents rented out one of their garages to Lucien Farris, OHS Principal, after his tires were repeatedly slashed when he parked on the street.)

Virginia Anabel Engel (Phillips) attended Cleveland Elementary School, overcrowded to the point that the city created Oakland Junior High School, which occupied part of the third floor of the new high school, until the city converted its K-8 schools in 1954, and opened a set of junior high schools. Virginia graduated from **OHS in 1935**, then UC Berkeley, in 1938, where she met her husband, Harold Phillips, a native of Long Beach, California. Shortly after the outbreak of WW II, the family moved to East 33rd. Street, to be closer to her family. During college and for several years after, Virginia worked for the Oakland Recreation Department as a Playground Director, opening Poplar Playground, among other responsibilities. After the birth of her children, Stephen and Janet, she was active in the PTA, Eastern Star, and on the national board of the Girl Scouts of America, later returning to the Recreation Department as its director of programs for special needs residents, citywide, in the 1960's.

(article continued on Page 4)



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WAA Board Members for 2019

Alejandro Castillo (2001)

Jeremiah Chuck (2000)

Julia DeGuzman (1999)

Georganne Ferrier (1963)

Stephen Johnson (June 1958)

Frank Kao (1966)

Creighton Lee (1972)

Lisa Ruhland (1980)

Roy Owens (1964)

Nancy West (1975)

Gene Zahas (June 1958)

Pimentel continued

Janet Virginia Phillips (Pimentel) attended the then-new Bella Vista Elementary School and McChesney Junior High (named for a long-time principal of OHS, now renamed Edna M. Brewer Middle School, after Ms. Brewer's death from cancer, while serving as Principal). After graduating from OHS in 1963, Janet attended UC Davis, where she met her husband, Ken Pimentel, and she became a long-time Montessori kindergarten teacher at a parochial school, before joining the San Leandro School District as a teacher and Reading Specialist, while raising her three children, Jennifer, John, and Stephen.

And now, continuing the line, Tyler Pimentel, John's son—and Janet's grandson—attends Oakland High, more than 100 years after the family first entered its halls.

DONTÉ JOHNSON, OHS '96

Donté Johnson, '96 went from OHS to California State University in Fresno where he graduated in 2001 with a degree in Child Development. While in college, he worked in the Bella Vista Child Care Center. He is working toward a Masters in School Counseling. He now works for Central Unified School District working with Special Education students, coaching track and as a personal trainer. He has a pre-teen daughter, of whom he is very proud.

His English teacher at Oakland High remembers his love of language and playing with "ten-dollar" words, often to the amazement of his sophomore classmates. ("Is that a real word? Does he really know the meaning? Is he using that correctly?" "Yes, it is; yes, he does; yes, he is.")

Donté continues to write and shares a recent poem "Proud To Me Me" with us. His preface:

Proud to be me is a poem where I am expressing my great happiness and joy for "being black." However, what I am really trying to get my readers to see, is what it really means "being black" in this country called America. As I look around in today's society and in the black community, I see young people who look like me, and who I represent, that seem not to be proud of "being black" and whom God has made them to be. Therefore, this was not just a poem written to show my great delight and triumph for "being black", but it was written to inspire and encourage the young people today to be proud of "being black"... we all may have to go through the rain every now and then, but through it all, we show and maintain our character, integrity, and love that abide...inside our hearts. So, with all due respect, I love "being black" and I am very thankful for who I am. **"Being black" is something that I am proud to be and not something that I wished never happened to me."**

PROUD TO BE ME

Donté Johnson

Blinded by the very complexion of my body
But yet seeing the purity of my heart
That beats to the same tune of love and
kindness
That Lord bestowed upon them who knew
Him not
While others, with the very same
complexion of my body
Hearts beat to the very same hatred and
ugliness
That my so called forefathers
Bestowed upon them
Whom I knew not
Upon them
Whose backs this nation was built on
Upon them
Who cried out, "WE SHALL OVERCOME
SOMEDAY"
And upon them
Who have already fought the GOOD FIGHT
OF FAITH
Is it not written?
Blessed is the man who suffers persecution
because of me
So just a little note to self and my people
We all can't have our cake and eat it too
But nonetheless, being black is something
I am proud to be
And not something that I wished never
happened to me

WAA Funds Go to Support OHS Students and Alumni

WAA was founded in 1999 to support OHS. It is operated 100% by alumni volunteers.

All membership fees and donations received are used solely for WAA programs including scholarships, career speakers at OHS, grants to OHS for equipment and supplies and maintaining on-going contacts with OHS alumni.

The Oakland High School's Wildcats Alumni Association is the only alumni organization which is associated with Oakland High and whose money goes to Oakland High.

WAA is recognized by IRS as tax exempt as described under section 501c(3). You may donate to the non-profit Wildcat Alumni Association on our website - <http://www.oaklandhighalumni.org/> donations