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Lamorinda Schools

Joaquin Moraga • Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Intermediate • Sleepy Hollow • Springhill • Stanley Middle • Wagner Ranch

Miramonte Community Mourns the Loss of Paul Yriberri

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A Miramonte graduate himself, Yriberri is best remembered by colleagues for his dedication to his family and to teaching, his zest for life, and a legendary sense of humor. Otis McCain, who knew Yriberri first as a student and later as a friend and colleague for some thirty years said, "You will never find a more devoted teacher. He was the best model. He was an inspiration just by virtue of who he was." Mike Whitaker, who also knew Yriberri throughout his career, recalled, "As dedicated as he was to his students and athletes, he was even more devoted to his family."

Yriberri loved spending time with his wife and children in their cabin near the El Dorado Wilderness. He was an avid outdoorsman, who loved fishing, hiking and camping. He had recently acquired what Whitaker described as "a very large motorcycle," because his son had purchased a bike and Yriberri wanted to be able to go riding with him. "After he took the riding lessons his wife insisted on!" added McCain.

As a student, Yriberri was "perhaps a bit too social," laughed McCain; "I

remember that my wife, who taught English back then, once tossed him out of class because he threw another student's shoe out the window." Biology teacher Sheratt Gadde, whose classroom is across the hall from Yriberri's, believes "because he was never a straight-A, stay up and study all night type of student, he related to kids better than most teachers."

A teacher of biology and physiology, as well as coach of football and other sports, Yriberri's classroom is expressive of the joy he took in teaching and coaching. The walls are covered with pictures of hands-on science fieldtrips to Yosemite and Olympic National Parks, sports teams he coached and students conducting various experiments.

"There was never any negativity in Paul's classroom or in his coaching," McCain stated emphatically. Gadde says he learned from Yriberri "how important it is to have fun. He (Yriberri) was so light-hearted and determined that students should enjoy his class. He knew that facts will come and go, but a joy for the subject will stay forever."

Students and teachers

alike agree, "You will never hear a bad word spoken about him, by anyone." Physics teacher Dan Shortenhans reflected, "He always gave. Paul had a huge heart and a real zest for life. He was so excited about teaching and coaching that it rubbed off and was a big motivator for students and teachers." Student Ali Lowry will remember that, "He always just lit up the room with his jokes. He always knew just what to say."

Gadde and McCain, who worked closely with Yriberri and say they all enjoyed teaching together and pulling practical jokes on each other, had dinner with Yriberri a couple of days before his death. It was an informal reunion of some of the Miramonte biology staff. Gadde shook his head as he recalled that at one point during the evening Yriberri said, "I just want to be able to say I had a good ride." He did indeed have a good ride, according to his colleagues, but it ended much too soon for the shaken and saddened community he leaves behind.

There will be a Celebration of Life at the Miramonte High School quad on March 17th from 2:00-4:00. Those who are so inclined

may make a donation to the Paul Yriberri Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o Miramonte High School, 750 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563, or the Solano College Football Program, c/o Floyd Burnsed, 4000 Suisun Valley Rd., Fairfield, CA 94534. Fairfield, CA 94534.

Paul Yriberri was the defensive coordinator for the Miramonte football team from 1992-2001 and he helped lead the team to seven DFAL championships and three NCS titles. Even since his earliest years of coaching, he made lifelong impressions on those who played for him.

"Later in life, when you get into the job market, they ask you who your heroes are, and you usually say your dad or something like that. Then they start pushing a little further and you start thinking about all your old coaches and teachers, and Mr. Yriberri is who keeps coming back to me," said Brian Smith who played under Mr. Yriberri for all four years of high school until graduating in 1978. "Without a doubt, he had the greatest positive impact on me than any other teacher or coach."

By Jonathan Glidden

Moraga: Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School

Joaquin Moraga Eyes the Prize

by Lee Borrowman

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School has been named a California Distinguished School nominee. The school will host a team of evaluators at the end of March, and Principal Catherine Mikes is confident that JM will be successful in its quest for the Distinguished School designation. "I am so proud of our school. Our teachers, our students and the parents who support them are the greatest."

JM was invited to apply for the Distinguished School designation after scoring 920 on the Academic Performance Index. Applicants go through a rigorous competitive selection process. The California Distinguished School Award program honors only about five percent of California's schools each year for being academically outstanding or inspiring. Applications are

evaluated and scored by teams of local educators from across the state under the direction of the California Department of Education. The highest-scoring schools are selected as statewide nominees, and then receive site visits to validate the accuracy of the information presented in their application.

The application for the award was prepared by a team of JM teachers and administrators, and then vetted by representatives of the PTA, the Moraga School Board and the office of Superintendent Richard Schafer. Mikes is confident that the evaluators will find JM to be deserving of this award. "We are everything we said we are. I would like to acknowledge the students and staff of JM for all their hard work." Awards will be announced by State Superintendent Jack O'Connell on April 17.

Is there something cool happening at your school? Tell us about it!

Schooldesk@lamorindaweekly.com

Young writers are welcome with parent permission. This week we'd especially like to know: What's blooming in your classroom? Where are you going for Spring Break?

Students on an Odyssey

Congratulations to the teams from Miramonte High School, Orinda Intermediate, Stanley Middle (this team included some Happy Valley 5th graders) and Happy Valley Elementary for taking first place in their divisions at the Odyssey of the Mind regional event. The Moraga Rotary teams also claimed three first place honors.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international competition in which kids apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their

own interpretation of literary classics. Each team chooses one of five competitive problems to solve. Under the supervision of adult coaches, teams work on their solutions throughout the school year. The first place winners of the regional competition have the opportunity to go to the State Finals in Visalia on March 31.

Los Perales Gets Spruced-Up for Spring

Moraga: Los Perales

Los Perales Elementary held its Campus Beautification Day at the end of February. Parents, students and staff gathered on a Saturday to give the school a bit of spring finery. Principal Bruce Burns, who supervised a group of young painters, says the workday was "a lot of fun!"

The LP campus now boasts a brand new three-section compost bin for green waste, and several school bathrooms have become works of art as lovely decorative paintings adorn the walls of the pop-

ular student hang-outs. Benches were sanded and stained, exterior walls painted and a variety of greenery planted.



New bin hides behind proud students

Orinda: Sleepy Hollow School

"Walkabout" Auction Reaches Goal!

Dressed in Aussie attire, the parents, teachers and staff of Sleepy Hollow Elementary dined, danced and bid at the annual Parent's Club Auction, themed "Walkabout: an Aussie Adventure." Auction Chair Kim Wolfe happily reports that the fundraising goal of \$200,000 was met by parents who came out to the Claremont Resort and Spa to have fun and support their school.

Guests came outfitted for an Aussie adventure, arriving in scuba or surfing gear or ready to hike the Outback. Many lined up early as Wolfe offered the first fifty ladies a sapphire, each one beautiful but only one Australian-mined.

Classroom assistant Pam Chang was the recipient of the coveted Aussie gem.

"Six years ago I attended my first auction as a new parent at Sleepy Hollow. I was shocked by the goal amount of \$100,000. Today our auction needs to double that" to meet programmatic needs, Wolfe marvels. "The Sleepy Hollow Parents Club will spend \$850 per student this year." The smallest of Orinda's elementary schools, Sleepy Hollow has 390 students.



Who could resist these auction items?

Orinda Intermediate School Achieves National Recognition

Hot on the heels of last month's announcement that OIS has been named a California School of Character, which qualified the school to advance to the national competition, comes word that OIS is now a finalist for the National

School of Character Award. The goal of the character education program at OIS is to develop programs and strategies to help students learn to respect themselves and others, to value differences, and to interact with people in positive, consider-

ate and healthy ways. The Character Education Partnership annually recognizes 10 public and private schools and K-12 districts as National Schools of Character for their outstanding work in character education. In 2007, winning schools and districts will receive a \$20,000 award.

ORINDA ACADEMY summer school 2007



Session 1: June 18 - July 10
Session 2: July 12 - August 3
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

- Earn High School Credit
- Algebra I & 2, Geometry
- English. U.S. History
- Basic Skills Review for Middle School
- College Prep Requirements
- Maryanne's Yoga, Focusing class
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- Small class size

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Wed., April 18th 7:00 p.m.
Limited Spaces available for Fall 2007.

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