

# The Cardinal Chatter

## SUMMER 2020

Newsletter of the Whittier High School  
Alumni Association and Educational Foundation

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**POSTPONED REUNIONS:**  
1960, 1970, 1980, 1990  
These classes informed us they are postponing their events. Please see our website for updates as they emerge.

### A MESSAGE FROM BOARD PRESIDENT BEN MEZA

We dedicate our Summer Edition of the Chatter in the memory of Mr. Craig Dean (photo at right), Class of 1965, who passed away after a gallant battle with cancer. Craig was VP of our Alumni Association Board and was relied on for his recommendations and sound judgment. We admired his unwavering love of Whittier High School, his desire to help its students, and his service on the Hall of Fame selection committee—assuring each candidate met the high standards of previous honorees. He will be greatly missed! Please visit our Alumni Association Website for coming details on his memorial service .



In 2005, our organization began to award scholarships to well-deserving WHS seniors. That year \$1,000 awards were given in the names of Richard and Patricia Nixon, Maxine Milner Rich, Vic Lopez and Henry Kilinski, as well as a \$2000 scholarship awarded by the Alumni Association. Six scholarships were awarded each year from 2005-2010. In 2011, the Association doubled the award count to 12 to accommodate the number of highly qualified and deserving students. For 2020 we added an extra scholarship to bring the total annually awarded to 13. Individuals, alums, families, and classes have funded 12 awards of \$1500 each this year, and the Association funded one \$2500 scholarship. Since 2005, our Association has awarded 157 scholarships totaling \$179,500. If you would like to contribute to our scholarship efforts, please visit our website (see address below).

UPCOMING EVENTS:	DATE:	LOCATION:
All Class BBQ/Reunion	(Oct. 18, 2020)	<b>CANCELLED</b>
Hall of Fame/Scholarship Dinner	April 11, 2021	WHS LIBRARY

### Have you checked out WHSAAEF's digital presence?

We have a website ( <https://www.whittierhighalumni.org/> ) and a Facebook page ( <https://www.facebook.com/whittierhighalumni/> ). The website is a one-stop shop for information about our organization, membership, and ongoing projects, including Auditorium seats and the Wurlitzer organ. Between issues of the Chatter, our Facebook page provides information about events, and human interest stories while providing Cardinals an opportunity to interface with each other.

### WHITTIER HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

### WHSAAEF AWARDS \$21,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO CARDINALS BOUND FOR COLLEGE

Cardinal scholars are optimistic about their future despite unprecedented circumstances and grateful for our association, its donors, and the contributions provided for their support.



ANDRES HERNANDEZ  
UC SAN DIEGO



LAYLA C CHAPETA  
UC BERKELEY



ANGELICA BLODGETT  
CAL POLY POMONA



MEGHAN T UYEDA  
UC LOS ANGELES



LEE WENG CHU  
UC IRVINE



LAURA E MAYORGA  
PASADENA CC



LAUREN A GARIBAY  
UC SANTA BARBARA



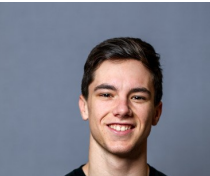
CITLALLI MIRANDA  
UC LOS ANGELES



HENA S SHEIKH  
UC SANTA CRUZ



JOHANA VASQUEZ  
CSU LONG BEACH



JOE ANCICH  
CAL POLY SLO



JOSE HERNANDEZ  
U of LA VERNE



JULIA S CASAS  
HARVARD UNIV.



## Cardinals In Crisis (THEN)

The coronavirus pandemic has shuttered the Whittier High School campus since mid-March. But it is by no means the first time that Cardinal students and teachers have endured adversity.

In 1918-19, Whittier High School, along with most other public places in the United States, was closed during the Great Influenza pandemic.

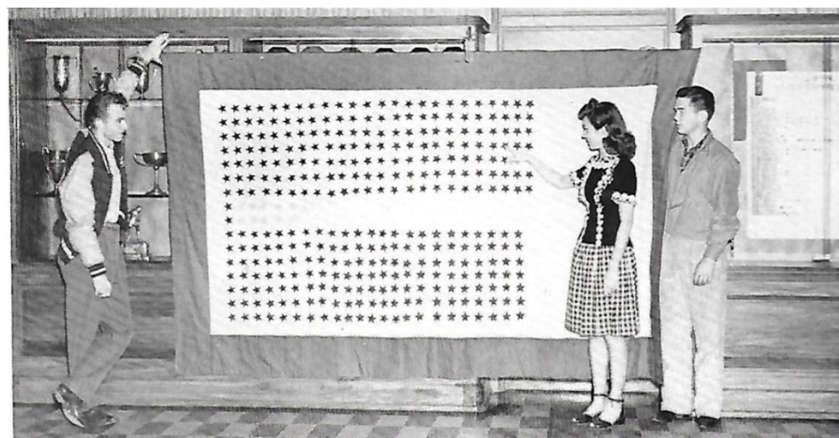
Two and half decades later, the *Cardinal* began with a quote:

“Drums...marching men...trampling feet...sharp commands...stirring marches...newspaper headlines blaring...sobbing sweethearts...these all meant one thing...WAR”

And then a date: December 7, 1941



Above: Teachers admiring a Red Cross display, 1942  
Left: Whittier High School's service flag, 1944



The opening pages of the Spring 1942 yearbook highlight Red Cross drives and defense stamps in addition to the more innocuous high school activities of drinking Cokes and cramming for tests. The 1944 yearbook contains a photograph of Whittier's blue-and-gold star banner, as well as the school flying a vigilance flag. By 1944, 349 Cardinals

had already served in the Armed Forces, with 11 giving the ultimate sacrifice. This was not the first time that the Greatest Generation of Whittier High School graduates had endured a crisis: as children, they experienced the Great Depression. The Great Depression meant millions of Americans experienced serious economic hardship (much as millions are today), but it also led to the creation of the Works Progress Administration, which constructed the Whittier High School Auditorium and other buildings on campus.

In 1933 the Long Beach Earthquake resulted in closure of the original auditorium that would later become the library. In more recent years, the 1987 Whittier Narrows quake closed campus for several weeks and many buildings, including the library and auditorium, for much longer. When combined with effects of the 1971 Sylmar and 1994 Northridge earthquakes it resulted in the reconstruction or refurbishment of almost every building on campus, a process that continued well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Above: Damage sustained at Whittier High School during the 1987 Whittier Narrows Earthquake, from the 1988 Yearbook.

## Cardinals In Crisis (NOW)

An Update by WHS Principal Timothy Liggett

The 2019-2020 school year proved to be one of the most unusual years in the 120-year history of Whittier High School. On March 13, 2020, WHS held its last day of in-person instruction before going into an official school dismissal that carried all the way through the last day of school on June 3. Our teachers literally had a weekend to pivot from in-person instruction to online instruction, which began on March 16. I am incredibly proud of the heroic efforts of our faculty in continuing to provide a rigorous educational experience for all students in an online format and I am equally proud of our students for persevering in the face of unprecedented challenges.



I am particularly proud of the students in the Class of 2020, who have now officially joined you in the alumni ranks. Despite losing out on some treasured senior activities such as prom, baccalaureate, and a traditional graduation, they kept their heads up and finished strong with a 97% graduation rate (which is just a few tenths of a percent away from setting a modern Whittier High School record). It was very important to me to provide those students with a satisfying culminating experience to recognize their achievements. We took a gamble by pushing graduation back to July 23, hoping that a positive turn in the course of the pandemic would allow us to hold a traditional graduation ceremony.

Unfortunately, the pandemic turned in the negative direction but I am still proud of the drive-through ceremony we provided for our students. We set up a stage in the Senior Parking Lot, in the shadow of the Vic Lopez Auditorium, and one by one, each graduate got out of their car, received their diploma, had their name read, and walked across that stage. In some ways, the drive-through ceremony provided families with a more intimate graduation experience as they were able to watch their graduates walk across the stage from the comfort of their cars from just a few feet away. The feedback from our families and graduates has been overwhelmingly positive and some have wondered if we might consider using that graduation format in the future even after the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

As we now prepare for the start of the 2020-2021 school year, it is already promising to be even more unusual than last year. As of this writing, we already know that we will be beginning the school year with distance learning. Students will be reporting to online classes through video conferencing software on a schedule in much the same way they would report to physical classrooms during in-person instruction. In an effort to ease the burden of distance learning on our students and our teachers, we are experimenting with a quarter system this year (three classes completed every nine weeks) instead of our traditional semester system (six classes completed every eighteen weeks). I look forward to keeping you updated on our progress this year through the Cardinal Chatter and as always, I am grateful for all of the incredible support from the Whittier High School Alumni Association.

