



Alvin Dunn
Class of 2018

Alvin Dunn graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1944, played basketball his freshman year and baseball the next three years. He also participated in dramatics during his first two years.

Immediately after graduating, Al served two years in the United States Navy during World War II as a Technician Mate and was honorably discharged in 1946.

He then attended Yuba College where he earned his AA degree and went on to Chico State where he earned his BA degree, teaching, and administrative credentials. Baseball was Al's passion, so he was on the team at Chico State and also played semi-pro baseball with the Oroville Olives. 1947 - 1977, he played recreational softball in Oroville.

In 1953, Al embarked on a highly successful 35-year career in public education, all of it in the Palermo School District. He taught at Palermo School from 1953-67, then was principal at Helen Wilcox School for 20 years, retiring in 1987. Al felt that all students should have access to a school library, so he established libraries at both schools, purchasing books and cataloging them himself. One of the libraries bears his name. Another imprint he left on Palermo Schools was establishing pre-school programs for students not yet of age to enter kindergarten.

Al carried a soft spot in his heart for underprivileged children who suffered in school by not participating in school activities. He used his passion for baseball to encourage participation and to help build up their self-confidence. He spent countless numbers of hours teaching these kids how to hit, bunt, catch, throw and enjoy the game. He was often seen on the playground playing ball with kids during the lunch hour. Allene Andoe, Helen Wilcox School secretary, in her letter of support for her boss quotes a child *"We like to play with Mr. Dunn because he's just like a regular guy."*

At times, Principal Dunn would show up at school dressed as the Red Skelton character, Clem Kadiddlehopper, clad in baggy pants, a bashed in hat, torn shirt, and a huge smile on his face. Children loved eating lunch with their famous hobo principal. Often, when a disagreement came up between two boys, Al would sometimes ask if they wanted to put on the gloves. That usually ended the problem and the kids left his office better friends than before. During the summer months, Al could be found at the school working with the maintenance crews cleaning, painting, pouring concrete, and getting the campuses ready for the fall opening. He also loved to draw and was considered a talented cartoonist!

In 1987, Al most deservedly received the Oroville Masonic Lodge Educator of the Year Award! The ceremony took place in a special outdoor assembly at Helen Wilcox School, where there were student speeches and a rendition of "I've Been Working on the Railroad" by the first-grade class. All five members of the school board were present as were several retired school employees.

In his spare time, Al could be seen donating time to his beloved Oroville community. He was a member and licensed preacher of the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church for over 50 years and blended his love of education and children with his love of the Word of God. He brought his wisdom and love of sports to the Feather River Recreation and Park District Board (FRRPD), where he served 17 years, his counsel leading to the purchase and development of Table Mountain Golf Course, the Mitchell Field Complex, Harrison Stadium, the swimming pools in Thermalito and Palermo and the initial refurbishment of the Municipal Auditorium.

While serving as a full-time educator and community volunteer, Al made time in his schedule to coach boys and girls softball, girls volleyball, Little League and American Legion Baseball. Former FRRPD Director and OUHSD Hall of Famer Sonny Brandt and former OHS teacher, Jack Kemper were local lads who benefited from Al's baseball coaching.

Jeanne Purcell, who succeeded Al as principal at Helen Wilcox School, stated, "*For 35 years, Al aspired to provide educational excellence for his students. Always sensitive to the feelings of students and staff, Al has been generous with love for all. The dirtiest, most forlorn and unlovable child found a friend in Al.*"

Al passed away on November 1, 2016 and is survived by his wife Carol, their three children and six grandchildren. His three great loves were family, education, and baseball!