



Frank O'Neill Class of 2012

Frank O'Neill was born on November 12, 1922 and graduated from Grass Valley High School in 1940 where he was an outstanding football player and described by his coach Bill Wilson, OHS class of 1922, as a "tough offensive and defensive end." Upon his graduation from high school, he enrolled at Placer College, and then worked in the shipbuilding industry before enlisting in the United States Army Air Force in December of 1942.

Frank served his country honorably during World War II from December 1942 to the day of his honorable discharge as a First Lieutenant 2113th Army Air Force Base Unit in May of 1944. During the war, he compiled an exemplary record as a pilot and commander pilot of a B-17 bomber aircraft. He flew twenty-nine missions during the war and received numerous honors, awards and medals for his meritorious service.

Four times Frank was awarded the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters given for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight. He also received the European Theatre Operations (ETO) Ribbon with three stars, the Rhineland Ribbon, the American Campaign Medal and the World War II Victory medal.

Following his honorable discharge, Frank enrolled at Chico State College where he earned his bachelor's degree and teaching credential, and then went on to do graduate work at the University of California at Berkeley (UC).

Frank's career in public education began in Live Oak, CA and after experiencing three years of successful teaching and coaching there, he came to Oroville High School (OHS) in 1956 to teach history, government, and psychology. He also served as football scout for head varsity coach and OUHSD Hall of Fame member Johnny Johnson as well as being freshman head football coach. For the remainder of his career he was head counselor and served in that capacity for fifteen years. 1983 marked the end of Frank's thirty year career in public education.

During his fifteen years as head counselor, Frank had a significant impact on instituting positive changes in that department. He restructured the department by upgrading the California State testing procedures and as a result, student test scores improved. Students were originally tested in large groups in the girls' gymnasium and Frank instituted testing in small class size groups in the regular classroom where students were more comfortable.

Frank pioneered pre-freshmen counseling beginning at the eighth grade in order to facilitate their transition to high school. Students were counseled by high school counselors at their eighth grade school as opposed to coming to the high school to meet with a counselor. In addition to this personal counseling, Frank instituted evening group sessions for parents of incoming freshmen in order to clarify any questions they might have had. Through added counseling, increased potential scholarships came about.

Frank is currently a full-time resident of Oroville and has called it home for many, many years. He was a member of the Oroville Lions Club for over thirty years, and served as its president. He also was a member of the Sons In Retirement (SIRS) and sat on the Butte County Grand Jury.

A colleague in the counseling department writes, "I learned much from Frank when I first started at Oroville High School. He is a strong leader and was committed to providing the best guidance and counseling services to all students. Frank is a person who you can learn from and he also challenges you to be the best you can be. He left a positive imprint on my life, not to mention the number of students, parents, and community members whose lives he also touched. Frank is most definitely –a loyal Tiger, a caring friend, and a person respected and admired by many."

Frank's mature and honest approach to students is legendary! He was an outstanding role model and committed to Oroville High School and the student community.

He continues to reside in Oroville and enjoy his many friends.