



## Bill Wilson Class of 2012

William "Bill" Wilson was born in Cherokee in 1904. His family moved to Oroville in 1911 where he watched his first Oroville Olives baseball game in 1913 when the Olives beat Chico for the Trolley League Championship. In his later life, he went on to play for the Olives, the Palermo Orphans and the Grass Valley Miners of the Placer Nevada League.

Bill graduated from Oroville High school (OHS) in 1922 where he played four years of football and baseball. He also played the French horn in the orchestra, was captain of the First Battalion High School Cadets and elected student body president as a senior.

Upon graduation from OHS, Bill went on to earn his Bachelor's Degree in history at the University of California, Berkeley (Cal) where he also played coronet and French horn in the Cal marching band. While there, he also played freshman baseball. He did graduate work at the University of Missouri. He was disqualified from active military duty due to a mastoid condition.

His thirty-five year career in public education began when he was hired by principal Chester Nisbet to teach and coach at OHS. After two years, Bill was contacted by Grass Valley High School to come there to teach and coach and he decided to make a move that kept him there until his retirement thirty-three years later.

Bill's highly successful career in public education, started with him teaching history and band and coaching football, basketball, boxing, track and his first love, baseball. His first year at Grass Valley High School (GVHS) saw him coach eight teams and over the years he became known as "the coach." His 1936 team won the league championship and gave up a mere twenty-three points the entire season.

In 1942, Bill was appointed vice principal of GVHS, a position he held for one year when he was appointed principal of GVHS. He successfully performed the duties of principal for the next ten years when district trustees elevated him to the position of Superintendent of the Grass Valley Union High School District (GVUHSD).

As superintendent, Bill was one of the key players in uniting Grass Valley and Nevada City High School Districts into becoming Nevada Union High School. Facilities at both high schools were in a dire state of disrepair and not meeting new state requirements. Through Bill's consolidation of the trustees of the two diverse school boards, two district superintendents, and a history of political distrust, under his guidance both towns voted to unite as one district and become the Nevada Union High School District (NUHSD).

A new NUHSD board appointed Bill superintendent, a post he held for the next seven years. To many, he became known as the "The Father of Nevada Union High School."

While living in Grass Valley, Bill was as active in his community as he was as a superintendent. He led the drive for construction of Nevada Union High School and was a member of the Grass Valley Elks and Lions Clubs. His message was, "In Union There is Strength."

Following his retirement from NUHSD, Bill returned to Oroville and managed two olive orchards for his brothers. He once hired John Steinbeck to pick fruit when the legendary writer traveled the country. At age fifty-five, Bill went into the real estate business and remained there as a broker into his eighties.

Bill continued to be active in his community as a member of The Fellows Club of Oroville, and coach for Babe Ruth League baseball. He was inducted into the Northern California Sports Hall of Fame in 1981.

Bill and his wife Helen were married for sixty-five years before his life ended in July 1995 as a result of a massive heart attack. His last words to his son Dan, were, "Too much trouble." He passed away at Oroville Hospital the following day.