

Taft, California
Greetings from Pete Gianopulos, Class of 1942
The Taft Newsletter

The mystery about of Mrs. Jack Bailey has been solved

In last week's "Remember When . . . ?" article a letter from Lynda Miller Hunt of Kennewick, Washington was published. She was asking the Midway Driller to publish her letter in hopes of being able to contact a Mrs. Jack Bailey who she had taken classes from and who had been taught so much about the love of Jesus.

A call was received last week from Bob Fiscus of Maricopa who had worked with Jack Bailey for the Standard Oil Company. Bailey was a Standard Oil mechanic and worked in the field repairing gas engines. Jack, whose legal name was John, and his wife, Mabel, lived at 133 Woodlawn Street. It was Mabel that Mrs. Hunt was looking for.

According the Fiscus, he and his wife, Aileen, were friends of the Bailey's, who originally came from England. Mabel worked for Lavone Arnold who was the manager of the Montgomery Ward Catalog Store at 311 Center Street in Taft.

When Jack retired from Standard Oil, the Bailey's moved to Bakersfield. Jack passed away sometime after their move. Nothing is known about Mabel as to whether she is still alive or not. If anyone knows anything about Mabel Bailey of Bakersfield please let us know.

Readers Responses

From Lawrence Hildebrand, Class of 1966, of Phoenix, Arizona

Pete - Congratulations & huzzahs for your selection to the Taft Union High School Hall of Fame's 2008 class of inductees. With your long-term love for and service to your community, I feel the Selection Committee has made a "slam-dunk" choice. You & Admiral (William L.) Putnam (Retired) now have equal bragging rights....and deservedly so for both.

LWH (Lawrence W. Hildebrand)

From Alice (Gwin) Manalo, Class of 1950, from Bakersfield, California

Congratulations. You are most deserving. Alice

From Janice Smith, Class of 1954

Pete, CONGRATULATIONS!!!!!! Well deserved!

Janice Smith

From Thelma (Beck) Green, Class of 1942, of Reno, Nevada

Congratulations Pete. You are very deserving of this honor. Little did I know when I started school with you at the North Street kindergarten that you would rise to such heights. Needless to say, I am very proud of you and all of your achievements. You have proven that " The American dream" is still alive and well having been the prodigy of immigrant parents as, have I. I am aware of the encouragement you no doubt received.

Wishing you all the Best

Thelma (Beck) Green

From Martin Gorsching, Class of 1966, from Taft, California

Well deserved recognition. Congratulations!

Martin L. Gorsching, Class of 1966

From Tom O'Brien, Class of 1966, of Cameron Park, California

Hi Pete, This is a well deserved honor for the four of you. Please keep me posted on the date of the induction ceremony. I would very much like to represent the O'Brien family at this event as it was so very special last year when my dad was inducted.

I wish you and your family the best in 2008. It appears you are off to a great start.

Tom O'Brien, Class of '66

From William L. Putnam, Class of 1962, from Phoenix, Arizona (Rear Admiral, Retired)

Counselor: This was soooo obvious a selection I'm a little surprised it took a year. That said, I can still feel the enjoyment when Taft Lodge 516 inducted one PG into its fold. I was just shy of my teens, but I still remember the affirmative sensation when my dad sponsored you into the lodge. I now have that same excitement and am so very

proud. Jan and I shall do everything in our capacity to be there this Spring for the induction.

Congratulations, Counselor ... Son of Taft...

With Great Respect, Bill Putnam

From William L. Putnam, former Rear Admiral (Ret.) and commander of the of the USS Abraham Lincoln Battle Group, Class of 1962, of Phoenix, AZ.

All: Who among us was surprised that the committee saw fit to recognize the most notable among us? I join all of you buckaroos in celebrating Pete's announcement, and I would think that we all should descend on our home town for his induction. More to learn as to dates, etc. I am sooo pleased!!

From John Silcox, Class of 1944, from Tiburon, California and retired President of Chevron International

Pete -- Congratulations to you and the other Honorees. John Silcox

From Kathleen (McNinch '57) McVay, Class of 1957

This was terrific to read. What about Mrs. Shasteen, girls' HS counselor, and Bailey Newlee, one of the best teacher ever? The fact that he committed suicide shouldn't affect the fact that he was willing to come in early and stay late to help anyone with a learning problem and that he instilled a work ethic like none other. His goal was to educate and to help us with growing up to be good adults.

From Rear Admiral William L. Putnam (Ret), Class of 1962, from Phoenix, AZ

Pete: Jan joins me in extending our heartiest congratulations for your election to the Hall of Fame. The truth of it all is those of us fortunate to be inducted last year have gained decided credibility now that Taft's most beloved citizen is in there. I know I

am very proud to be part of any listing that includes one Counselor Extraordinaire. I am delighted, and I know my Mom and Dad would have been as well. Well done, Counselor!

With Great Respect, Bill P ...

From Janis (Matton) Varner, Class of 1966, from Bakersfield, California

Congratulations on your latest achievement – election to the Taft High Hall of Fame. You are certainly most deserved and a fine example of the caliber of people we want on the wall. The best to you in 2008.

Janis

From Pete Magee, Class of 1955, from St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Pete: I've been very remiss in not congratulating you before this for being elected to the TUHS Hall of Fame. In my view, you deserved to be one of the first few members: to many of us, you ARE Taft. The job you've done in keeping those of us who've wandered informed about what's going on is really monumental, and the letters you get from all the alumni are just a hint of how many people you've reached. We all hope those reports will still be coming for lots of years. I personally owe you a lot just for connecting me with Opal Smith. . . .

Warmly, Pete Magee

From Dorothy (Shular) Palmer, Class of 1942

Congratulations Pete, you deserve all the awards they will give you. You are my hero! Sincerely, Dorothy

From Milt Stark, Class of 1950, from Anahiem Hills, California

Hi Pete, What a great picture! Was it taken in front of the old Taft High gym? I am assuming Everett Endicott was Bill Endicott's brother. To the best of my knowledge, Bill is the only Taft High alum to ever play major league baseball. He had a cup of coffee with the St. Louis Cardinals in 1946 when I was in the eighth grade at Lincoln. I remember George Lawrence and Gordie McMillan well from the Bank of America where I opened a savings account as soon as I got my Bakersfield Californian paper route! Later I played softball with Gordie. I was the rookie on the team, and he was one of the old vets. He treated me as he did all others on the team. He was a good guy. Keep 'em coming.

Milt Stark

From Steve Casagrande, Class of 1967

Pete

Total memory jog on this one. Setting pins in the bowling alley with the deafening noise and shear terror when down in the pit and looking up to see that "extra" ball screaming towards you is something one will never forget. We passed out pool cues, flipped burgers and spun records all in the same shift and the Kingsman's album with Louie Louie and the Stones with Not Fade Away were completely worn out by the end of my senior year. I didn't realize at the time that we had shared the stage with the Soul Folk etc). Times change but the spirit of the people of Taft is a special one talented musician's from the USO period. Lots of memories of being on that stage playing with local bands (Misfits, The Rogues, Peace of MInd) and dancing to the great Bakersfield bands) The Donnybrooks, The Avengers, The Word, Roger Baily and the [that](#) keeps it from being just another small valley town. All the best to you.

Steve Casagrande 67'

(NOTE: Steve brings up some special memories of the Rec and the great Gardner Field Band. There was a periodic small newspaper that was published at the Base full of information about what went on there. My 100th "Taft Heritage" TV videotaping was an interview of Ray Matthai and his wife, Mary. Ray mentioned many stories about the Gardner Field band since he was a member. While he was in the band, he, and his wife lived off the base in Taft. Every other week the Band would travel to Hollywood and appear on the radio that was broadcast all over the world, and then they would play at the Hollywood Paladium for the servicemen. I have been told by some fellows stationed overseas in Europe that they heard the Gardner Field Band playing over the radio. One of the famous "Big Band" musicians who was in the Gardner Field band was Buddy Desilva who played with the band at the Rec.

For special events on the Base, open to the public, the band would play for the well-known entertainers of that time like Jack Benny, Kay Kaiser, Danny Kaye and many others. These events were held in the Base's large hangers.

After Mathaii was discharged from the Army, he was hired by Taft Union High School and Taft Junior College in about 1945 as the teacher of the marching and concert bands.)