



## **DOLPHIN NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 2012**

### **FRONT PAGE STORY (full version): HONORING MR. PHIL LIND**

#### **What led you to become an educator?**

I actually had bit of a journey. I attended Stanford University from 1969 to 1972 and then left college. I was involved in the anti-Vietnam War and the civil rights movement as it was unfolding then. I met my wife while working for the Mayoral Campaign of Bobby Seale (Black Panther fame) when he ran for Mayor of Oakland in 1974. My wife and I, along with a group of other friends started a child care center in San Mateo and, affiliated with the Black Panthers, we called it Intercommunal Survival School. Its purpose was to help families "survive" and thrive economically. We received funding from foundations, at first. In 1978 we applied for and were accepted as a contracting agency with the California Department of education. The funding for the school is exactly the same as the Redwood City Child Development Centers. It is still in existence today and Betsy and I are members of the Board of Directors.

In 1980 I returned to school and earned my BA at SFSU in 1985 and my teaching credential in 1987. After 14 years working at the child care center

my wife and I decided on a change of careers - I got my job at Clifford, with the Redwood City School District in 1988 and have been at Clifford since then. I taught first grade in room 8 for seven years. My wife became a minister in the United Church of Christ.

### **What spurred your transition from teacher to Assistant Principal and Principal?**

During my years teaching first grade I became a union negotiator for the Redwood City Teachers' Association. People began to look to me for leadership. After 7 years in first grade I was ready for a change and a position was available at Clifford in 5th grade. Just as I was going to ask the Principal (Norma Smith at that time) he moved another teacher into that position. So I decided to take the administration courses to get my Admin credential. That was the year that the decision was made to move Clifford from a K/6 to a K/8 school. So in August, the Asst. Principal at 1/2 time opened and I applied. So that meant I was half administrator and half teacher - and I taught 7th grade social studies two period a day. As the AP I sat on the Committee in charge of the transition from K/6 to K/8. So I was part of the group that spearheaded that change.

### **What was one of your most difficult challenges at Clifford?**

During my time as Asst. Principal, money flowed into the school and we had money for Reading Recovery, for our Magnet Theme of Marine Science. We had a full time Computer teacher and a 1/2 time counselor/ outreach. When I took over as principal after 3 years the money began to go away. The most difficult challenge is meeting the needs of all students with a terribly constricted budget.

### **What was your most inspiring moment as a teacher?**

The most inspiring experience that a first grade teacher has is the moment that a student suddenly realizes that he/she can read. The child moves from looking at letters and trying to figure out the sounds associated and one day looks at letters and says the words. That is magic.

### **What would you tell kids?**

It is critical for you to stay in school as long as possible. Your future earning power will be directly related to your level of education. Economic downturns cause the less educated to suffer the most job loss. Stay in school and learn as much as you can.

### **What would you tell parents?**

Bring your child to school every day and on time. Studies show that student who miss as little as 10 days of school miss instruction that will not be made up. Coming late to school builds habits that interfere with learning.

### **What is your next step?**

I will work for a few years at the district office and help families and students make better choices for the future. I will also be providing Principals with the data they need to use with teachers to improve instruction for students in all of the Redwood City Schools.

I may have a book in me describing the crazy antics of many middle school students, I have a lot of stories about silly decisions that kids make that get them into difficulties.