

back to *the* future

More than a half a century after her graduation in 1961, alumnae **Sharon Esterley**, shares what Claremont High School was like when her class ruled the campus.



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Throughout the years, Claremont High School has evolved into a center of growth and technology. However, it seems like the generations in the past and the generation in the present have some things in common. Alumnae **Sharon Esterley** elaborates on how the former high school used to be and how the alumni strive to impact more than just the city of Claremont.

Yearbook: What years did you attend Claremont High School?

Sharon Esterley: I attended 9th grade at El Roble since 9th was originally a middle school grade level, and 10-12th grade at CHS and I graduated in 1961.

YBK: What were the students and school activities like in 1961?

SE: We had the usual cliques: the jocks, the brains, the social, the nerds who turned out to be the smartest! As for the cultural cliques, there were no African-American or Asian students at CHS back then. There were some Hispanic students and there was no overt discrimination but not lots of social mixing, except in sports. We were the last class to complete all our high school years at the old high school building. We loved it! With only 600 or so students, everyone pretty much knew everyone else. Halls bustled between classes, boys kept cherry-bombing the toilets in the upstairs boys' restroom, girls sneaked smokes in the girls' room.

We wore bangs and big full skirts & lots of petticoats, very little makeup, flat shoes. Girls always wore skirts & blouses to school, never pants or shorts. Boys wore rolled-up jeans or khakis, letter sweaters, flat-top haircuts. We had dances in the gym (now it's the Candlelight Pavilion).

We had a closed campus, so we had to eat lunch in the cafeteria or have picnics on the lawn. There was a tunnel under Foothill from the corner in front of the school that we used to cross the street.

YBK: Were you involved with any clubs or groups on campus?

SE: (I was part of) CSF (California Scholarship Federation), GAA - Girls' Athletic Association, French Club, Drama Club. TOT's (Teachers of Tomorrow), and El Espiritu. And I was the Co-Captain of the Drill Team (the first drill team in CHS history!) None of us had ever been on a

drill team before. We had no school band, so we marched at football game halftimes & in parades to the beat of 3 drummers.

YBK: What was your favorite and least favorite part of high school?

SE: I loved all of my friends, activities, great teachers, drivers' ed, dances, and sports. My least favorite was the drama, the trauma & the teenage angst.

SE: Our initial goal is to create a connection with the alumni and to celebrate the Centennial year of CHS with the first All-Alumni Reunion. Now that the Centennial year is almost over, we plan to expand our alumni connections by collecting complete rosters for every graduating class, scanning and uploading to the website all of the yearbooks from 1911 to present day, and encouraging all alumni to log onto the website where they can find each other and participate in alumni activities. Several events during the year will give alumni the chance to get together.

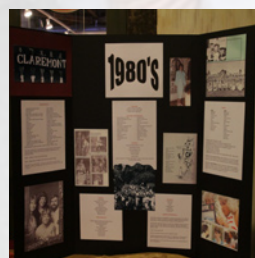
YBK: How was the All-Alumni Reunion?

SE: It was a blast! We had alumni attend from the classes of 1941 through 2011! Everyone came in a party mood & were greeted by current students dressed up as if they'd just stepped out of the 1915, 1938 or 1955 yearbook! **Susan Brunasso's** photo booth saw lots of action as alumni mugged & smooched for the camera, and **Wolfe** made a grand appearance. **Bea Hardy**, at 88 years old, Class of '41, was the belle of the ball and "cut a rug" on the dance floor with **Mickey Blackburn**, Class of '70. The Mediterranean buffet from Casablanca was delicious & beverage service from the Wine Merchant, Hip Kitty & Casablanca gave everyone plenty of choices. Music was provided by the Has Bins & the Seth Greenberg Trio. Historic exhibits told the stories of CHS classes through the decades, with photos of the campus' evolution from its 3-story origins in 1911 to the 2-story "Old School House" to the single-story "new" CHS.

YBK: Is there any advice you would like to give the current students?

SE: Take advantage of the opportunities in front of you, value your education, hold your family and friends near and dear, and after graduation, join the Alumni Society!

A quick glimpse into the past from displays that were on display at the all class reunion...





1 This is a group picture of the Alumni Association at the 4th of July Celebration near Memorial Park. Representing all alumni, the group walked through the parade decked out in patriotic clothing and gear.

2 During the All Class Reunion in September, Principal **Dr. Brett O'Connor** introduces and explains the purpose of the CHS Alumni Association. He highlighted the importance of staying in touch with classmates since high school creates the foundation for great, long-time friendships.

3 Wolfie gives his best grin while standing next to alumnae **Sharon Esterley**. Esterley, the founder of the Alumni Association, thought the celebration at Claremont's Packing House was enjoyable and she could not have asked for her better mascot.

4 Alumni **Bea Saunders Hardy** and **Joy Good** strike a pose in the Wolfpack photo booth. "The alumni celebration was a time of joy and cheer, and it was a fantastic way for the classes to reunite," exclaimed alumnae **Sanders Hardy**.

5 While creating name tags, alumni **Tom Metier** has a content smile when he comes across a person who graduated in his same class. The name tags were so helpful since many of the attendees could not recognize each other at first glance.

6 Assistant principal **June Hilton** cruises through the Homecoming Parade, leading the pathway for the rest of the alumni. Several other alumni drove through with style inside of a convertible and even a stagecoach!

7 Senior **Audrey Sechrest** and junior **Jemina Bloom** have an intent look on their faces while perusing the interesting information on the display boards regarding the lifestyles of past CHS students. The boards (pictured at bottom of page) displayed a timeline of how the school has progressed throughout the years, becoming the school it is known as today.

8 Alumni **Frank Comstock**, graduate of '59, holds his drink of classic Coca Cola as he glances at all the familiar faces of his past. Throughout the evening, he reminisced about all of his favorite friendships in his high school years. "I am so grateful for this event since I am able to finally reconnect with my friends," said **Comstock**.



Congratulations Class of 2012

**You're now a part of a distinguished group - the Alumni of Claremont High School -
and are eligible to join the Claremont High School Wolfpack Alumni Society!**



Claremont High's first-ever Alumni Society was founded in 2011 to celebrate the CHS Centennial Year by helping CHS graduates and former students from the past 100 years, reconnect with their classmates. That might not seem important to you now, but as you grow older, it's nice to know how to find some of your old friends. Don't be the one who goes missing after graduation! Sign up for the Alumni Society now, and keep in touch so all your friends can find you after you've gone off to college, marriage, or jobs!

The Alumni Website at www.claremonthighalumnisociety.com is where CHS alumni of all ages can find each other and stay linked. It's completely **FREE**, or a \$20 donation will make you a Sustaining Member to help support the Society's activities.

**Don't miss out!!! Join YOUR
CHS Wolfpack Alumni Society
today by registering at**

www.claremonthighalumnisociety.com

