

Rick Arucan

Rick is a distinguished alumnus of Edison High School in Stockton and he is a graduate from the University of the Pacific, where he was elected to the school's Hall of Fame for his accomplishments on the baseball field. He spent 39 years in education as a teacher, coach, and administrator and holds a Master's in Education and School Management.

After spending his entire teaching and administrative career at East Union High School, Rick was named as the first principal at Sierra in 1993. He greeted his first class the following year and spent 14 years as principal of Sierra High.

Rick set the highest standard for himself as well as those around him, including his teachers, administrators, and especially his students. While at Sierra, we always achieved the highest accreditation marks from the state of California and his outstanding leadership earned him the ACSA Administrator of the Year award.

What is seen on the Sierra campus today is a direct reflection of the culture and climate that Rick set out to create back in 1993, with ideas such as the Lobo Gold Rally, a rally to celebrate academic excellence.

Many people who have worked underneath him have gone on to become high school administrators and principals and can confirm that his influence was a driving force in their leadership style. Even after retirement, Rick continues to mentor and provide support for younger principals and even spent a short stint as an interim principal at Lathrop School. Rick is still well respected and adored by his students and staff, and his leadership is the most important reason why Sierra High School continues to be successful.

Lindsey Pavao

Lindsey Pavao graduated with honors from Sierra High School in 2007. While at Sierra, she could be seen singing with the Jazz Band and she also played the Piano. After spending two years at U.C. Davis, she transferred to Sacramento State, where she is majoring in Psychology.

Lindsey is a role model to former, current, and future SHS students as an example of a person who stretched herself to the extreme in order to pursue her dream of singing. Not only is she achieving her goal, but she has earned significant recognition from some of the most widely recognized professionals in the music industry.

After a rigorous tryout process, Lindsey was chosen to participate in the nationally televised singing competition known as "The Voice." Thousands of hopefuls, across the nation, auditioned and competed for a spot on the hit television show. It took her less than 30 seconds to make an impact on the show. She had hardly begun singing when Christina Aguilera, Blake Shelton, and Cee Lo Green began fighting over her to include the Sierra grad to their respective rosters. Lindsey ended up choosing Aguilera as her coach, and they formed a powerful bond that helped lead her into the final 8 contestants of the show. Aguilera told Lindsey, in front of a national television audience, that "You have such a unique quality and tone to your voice," and Lindsey was the number one iTunes downloaded contestant to date.

Lindsey was featured in the April edition of Nor Cal Magazine and she has been recognized for her vocal achievements by the Modesto Bee, Manteca Bulletin, KCRA News, Entertainment Weekly, along with making numerous other radio appearances. She has proven that if you vigorously work hard and pursue your dream, good things will happen.

Vern Gebhardt

Vern Gebhardt was preaching “Victory with Honor” and “Character Counts” long before the phrases became the mainstay of the Sac-Joaquin Section and High School athletics. Just like Mr. Arucan, Mr. Gebhardt was a U.O.P. athlete and graduate. He was one of the first people hired by Mr. Arucan in 1993 for the school’s opening in 1994.

Mr. Gebhardt was the architect of the athletic program, hiring each coach and ordering every piece of athletic equipment and every stitch of uniform clothing. Unlike other new schools in the district, Sierra opened with lots of land, but few athletic facilities. Under Mr. Gebhardt and Mr. Arucan, Sierra built baseball diamonds, softball diamonds, and later added a Swimming Pool. Certainly one of the most significant accomplishments was the building of the Daniel Teicheira Memorial Stadium, which provided the Football, Soccer, and Track teams with a home field of their own. Mr. Gebhardt also created an athletic budget that was fair to all sports and, by saving the current year’s athletic receipts for the upcoming school year, the athletic department has always enjoyed a surplus of funds.

Much of the culture and tradition that Sierra’s athletic program established in 1994 is still present today. Many of the coaches that were hired by Mr. Gebhardt have enjoyed successful careers and are still coaching at Sierra.

After retiring in 2005, Mr. Gebhardt was elected to the Manteca Unified School District Board of Trustees. A former M.U.S.D. Teacher of the Year and Sac-Joaquin Association Athletic Director of the Year, Mr. Gebhardt recently added another honor to his name. The City of Manteca recently inducted him into the Manteca Hall of Fame for his outstanding contributions to Manteca education and athletics.

Mario Enriquez

Mario is a 2006 Sierra High School graduate. He participated in the Peer Resource program for three years, under the direction of Debbie Mitzman. In college, he used his skills to positively impact the community through programs at the University of Pacific.

After receive his Bachelor's Degree from UOP, Mario continued his community involvement while working with the National Council of La Raza in Washington, D.C.

Mario still returns to Sierra and works with current students, serving as a role model for both Peer Resource students and the ELD population.

Mario works every day to make a positive difference in local communities and in the world at large. According to the UOP Alumni Office, "Mario has been able to apply his Sociology degree to his work at a top-tier non-profit organization. The National Council of La Raza is a Latino/Latina civil rights advocacy-based organization. Mario works on the NCLR, which supports hundreds of local and community-based programs, as well as campus-based student organizations. The goal is to build the skills of Latino youth and increase their potential to be leaders. In his role, Mario plans and executes local and national youth conferences, increases social media efforts such as Facebook and Twitter, and works to promote the Lieders network, which provides resource for youth such as scholarship, internships, and fellowship."

Mario has also been recognized and honored as the Outstanding Latino Leader of the Year Award by the University of the Pacific, National Knight of the Roundtable Award by the Omega Delta Phi Fraternity, and he has been a keynote speaker at several Latino Leadership Conferences and Bilingual Financial Aid Summits.

David Ulibarri

David was an excellent and distinguished athlete while attending Sierra High School and continued his outstanding athletic career at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where he was the Big West Conference Champion in the 800 meter.

David set three Track & Field records, which he continues to hold to this day at Sierra. He has the 800 meter record of 1:55.42, the 1600 meter record of 4:13.2, and the 3200 meter record of 9:13. He qualified for the C.I.F. State Meet in Cross Country all four years of high school and he helped Sierra win its first C.I.F. Section Championship in Track & Field by scoring 18 of the team's 28 points. He went on to place 8th at the C.I.F. Track and Field State Meet.

David was named Sierra's All-Around Senior Athlete in 1999 and Tri-Valley Herald's High School Athlete of the Year for the 1998-1999 school year. The 2012 Tom Moore Relays were also dedicated to David.

Since graduating from Cal Poly, David has remained in the San Luis Obispo area, working as the Purchasing Manager for VS Athletics. David has continued to support the Sierra High School Athletic Program by donating thousands of dollars to the school.