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FREEMASON

Jun/Jul 2009

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Rock 'n' Roll

MASON PIONEERS AFTER-SCHOOL MUSIC
PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS

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At just 17, Brother Jose Mercado of Los Angeles became a professional rock star, touring the world as a guitarist and vocalist for the punk band Union 13. Today, he draws on that experience to provide music education and encouragement to at-risk students through a unique after-school program called All-Stars of Rock.



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A Product of Public Schools

Frank Loui
Junior Grand Warden




I attended San Francisco public schools from elementary school through San Francisco State University. It was an experience that challenged, motivated, and shaped me. The person I am today has much to do with the teachers, classes, and resources that were available to me because of public education.

I was raised in Fidelity Lodge No. 120 (now San Francisco Lodge No. 120). When I started meeting Masons from other San Francisco lodges, I saw some familiar faces from my past. My high school woodshop teacher, the late Paul Freiermuth, was a past master of Columbia-Brotherhood Lodge No. 370. My high school typing teacher, Gerald DeRyan, is a past master of Phoenix Lodge No. 144. Initially I was surprised. But as I got more involved with the fraternity, the more sense it made to me that these men, whom I had always respected, were Masons. They practiced the tenets of Freemasonry and were committed to public education. After all, as you'll read throughout this issue, Masons and public schools have been connected since our country was formed.

Each day I notice another way that our fraternity's support remains crucial. My two sisters-in-law, Annette and Darlene, were both former elementary school teachers who later became administrators. They put their hearts and souls into their work because they loved teaching, and always spent their own funds for teaching supplies because the school budgets were limited. I see the strain on their time and resources. But through Annette and Darlene, I also see the rewards of their sacrifices and dedication.

Masons make public schools a priority because we know that they need our support. They need a helping hand,

someone who has their best interests at heart without asking anything in return. That's a role we Masons embrace.

I served on the California Masonic Foundation Board of Trustees for 10 years, and for six of them, I chaired the Scholarship Committee. I had the honor of presenting scholarships at school graduations and special award ceremonies, and of calling the winners of our C. E. Towne Scholarship, a \$40,000 award towards four years of college. The gratitude and appreciation of the recipients always made me proud to be a Mason, and I still remember the excited hoots and hollers of the kids and their parents. In one case, the C. E. Towne winners included three sisters from Manteca – bright and motivated young people whose family couldn't afford their college educations on their own. Even now, whenever I visit Manteca on Masonic events, the parents report on their daughters' successes, thanks to the Masons of California.

This issue is filled with stories like that one; heartwarming stories about California Masons doing wonderful things for public schools. Many lodges provide support through tangible items such as books, school supplies, computers, monetary teacher awards, or student scholarships; others support schools by offering their time to tutor, volunteer in classrooms, or paint or clear the school yard. But as with any great cause, there is always work to be done. We can always do a little more. Remember those bright students and devoted teachers and think how else you can lend a hand.

I'm proud to be a product of California public schools. Let's continue our commitment as Masons to help pave the way for generations to come – for they are the leaders of tomorrow. ✧



SCHOOL TIES

by Cason Lane

California lodges are vital partners for public education

From multimedia presentations to college scholarships, California lodges continue Masonry's tradition of public school support in a distinctly 21st-century way. Here are three lodges at the head of the class.

NATOMA LODGE: LIVING A LEGACY

When it comes to supporting public education, Natoma Lodge No. 64 in Folsom has been carrying the tradition for more than a half-century. Brother Paul Tibbens says it all started in 1958.

"No one had much money, so the lodge just passed a hat around," says Tibbens. "Whatever went into the hat, they gave to a school in the Folsom area."

In the 51 years since, the lodge's public school

support has built upon those humble beginnings. Thanks in part to a generous gift from the late Joseph Miller, the lodge now provides a number of annual scholarships for local youth.

Last year the lodge awarded \$9,000 in scholarships to nine seniors. The winners were honored at a special dinner and award ceremony in April 2008 – which also marked Natoma Lodge’s golden anniversary of supporting public schools.

In addition to awarding scholarships, the lodge sponsors an essay contest for local middle

.....
 “I’m very grateful to the lodge,”
 Green says. “Our commitment
 to public education fits
 what I try to do in life.”

school students. Last year’s essay topic was “What makes a good citizen?” and the four winning students received U.S. savings bonds of \$100.

Tibbens says the essay contest is a way to continue building relationships with the middle schools that are feeders for the Masonic youth orders of DeMolay, Job’s Daughters, and Rainbow for Girls.

“We’ve been able to see these young people grow,” says Tibbens, who helped implement the lodge’s long-standing essay contest. “We hear parents talking about their son or daughter who is now a

surgeon or a teacher, and it makes us feel good about what we do.”

OAKLAND DURANT ROCKRIDGE LODGE: MAKING MUSIC

Like many lodges, Oakland Durant Rockridge Lodge No. 188 had long supported local public schools by donating to various programs and inviting students to display their work at the lodge. But, knowing that schools’ needs change over time, lodge members met a few years ago to consider other ways to lend support.

Brother Bill Richmond, a retired music teacher at John Muir Middle School in San Leandro, suggested a new approach: supporting local music education.

“Music has always been one of the arts struggling to get recognition from the administration for support,” Richmond says.

Richmond knew from his experience, however, that if the lodge simply donated money to the school administration, the music teachers might have a hard time accessing the funds. Instead, he suggested an account at a local music store, allowing teachers to buy refurbished instruments, music stands, and other equipment.

As a result, the lodge has given about \$1,000 a year the past five years – in the form of spending accounts at Best Music Co. in Oakland – to two schools: John Muir Middle School in San Leandro and Piedmont Avenue Elementary in Oakland.

“It’s a good, no-hassle relationship between the lodge

and the schools,” Richmond says.

In addition to serving as the schools’ only source of outside music funding, the lodge supports music education by attending school concerts and inviting students to perform at the lodge. That commitment not only helps public schools, it raises the lodge’s visibility in the community.

One local band teacher – Marlo Green of Piedmont Avenue – says the lodge’s support enabled him to replace his school’s World War II-era instruments and ultimately draw more students to music. He was impressed by the Masons’ commitment to public education and the regular invitations they extended for students to perform at the lodge – so impressed that Green himself is now a member of ODR Lodge.

“I’m very grateful to the lodge,” Green says. “Our commitment to public education fits what I try to do in life.”

LA FAYETTE LODGE: MULTIMEDIA MENTORING

Across the bay in Sebastopol, La Fayette Lodge No. 126 is building its own reputation in the performing arts.

A few years ago, Past Master Dennis Cianfichi heard about a traveling cinema company that goes school-to-school to help students build character and make positive decisions. Using three huge, portable, IMAX-theater-like screens, the company presents 35-minute multimedia shows combining

topical video, pop-culture graphics, music, and narration to educate and motivate youth.

“The shows are about picking good friends and making good choices in your life,” says Cianfichi, chairman of the lodge’s Public Schools Committee. “They use sports people and movie stars and movies all mixed in to get the message across. I thought it was a good program for our lodge to take to the schools.”

La Fayette Lodge has done

just that, working with Go the Distance Productions/Character for Kids Studio to sponsor a few productions a year for local schools. Most recently, the lodge sponsored March shows at three elementary schools. One, titled “Everyday Heroes,” heralds the contributions of individuals like teachers, parents, police officers, and firefighters. Another was “Expect Good Things,” all about the rewards of good behavior.

Cianfichi says the productions

are a great way to make a big difference for a small amount of money – about \$400 per school. In addition, several lodge members make a point to attend each production.

“Before the program begins, one of us explains who the Masons are and why we’re interested in helping their school,” Cianfichi says. “We’re making it known in the community that we’re focused on helping public schools.” ✦



Lodge dollars and programming provide students with resources for under-funded programs, college scholarships, and even after-school mentorship.

“We’re making it known in the community that we’re focused on helping public schools.”

Public Schools

by Laura Normand

PATRONS

There's strength in numbers – something that Bay Area Masons are counting on when it comes to supporting San Francisco public schools.



The Masons have aligned with 16 other community organizations, from the mayor's office to the school district to local nonprofits, in a campaign to improve the city's public education system. By pooling their unique areas of influence, the new coalition intends to reach all corners of the San Francisco community. It's a collaborative effort that lodges are poised to replicate in other communities throughout the state.

The campaign, Your San Francisco Public Schools, has one goal: improve public schools in San Francisco. Their strategy is even simpler: Start a conversation.

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), the city's once-struggling public school system, has improved by leaps and bounds in the past six years, outperforming the seven largest California school districts in testing, attaining high school rankings among the top five percent in the country, and graduating a greater percentage of high school students than almost any other large urban public school system in the country.

The snag is that parents – and the public at large – don't know it.

MASONS MAKE IT POSSIBLE

Legislative, financial, and community support for SFUSD depend on public confidence in the schools, but the stigma of the school system's past weaknesses has lingered. Many families move out of the city for suburban public schools or opt to send their children to private schools. In fact, about 30 percent of San Francisco children attend private schools – more than four times the state average.

Restoring public confidence requires better communication about SFUSD's strengths. The campaign's plans include print advertisements, radio and TV promotions, a Web presence, and grassroots outreach.

Thanks to a generous donation from California Masons, the campaign can move ahead.

PAY TO THE ORDER OF: PUBLIC ED

Six Bay Area lodges and the California Masonic Foundation raised \$30,000 for the campaign, which they awarded at an April 1 Public Schools Month Kickoff at

Visitacion Valley Middle School in San Francisco.

Grand Master Larry L. Adamson presented a four-foot-long check to the delighted gasps of Visitacion Valley middle-schoolers, following remarks by Grand Secretary Allan L. Casalou about the fraternity's history of public school support. The audience also included San Francisco parents, teachers, and members of the community; the school district, the board of education, the board of supervisors, and more than 40 Masons.

San Francisco Unified Superintendent Carlos Garcia, who accepted the check, reminded the audience that the Masons' show of support was also a call to action.

"We need to see more people volunteering in classrooms, donating to organizations that support the schools, and voting for politicians who prioritize public education," Garcia said. "This donation will multiply by inviting community members to make more of an investment in their public schools."

Grand Master Adamson reinforced the fraternity's

obligations outside of San Francisco.

"This is an example of the standards and practices we expect from everyone in our organization," said Adamson. "By replicating the good work in San Francisco, we can have an even larger impact across the state."

BIG PARTNERSHIP'S BIG PICTURE

The celebratory mood of the April 1 event, which included student performances and speeches from the leadership of the Masons of California and San Francisco Unified School District, was a public display of the partnership between the Masons, the school district, and the community. It was also emblematic of a new, more visible role for California Masons as partners with community organizations – which aligns with Grand Lodge's strategic initiative to increase community visibility and involvement.

The fraternity is well on its way with the Your San Francisco Public Schools campaign. Masons were instrumental in the history of California public schools. Now, in San Francisco, they're also a part of the future. ✨

LEADING FROM THE FRONT LINE

Principal Jim Dierke, a member of Phoenix Lodge No. 144 and Mission Lodge No. 169, is the 2008 National Middle School Principal of the Year.

Dierke, who has a 37-year career with SFUSD, led a transformation of Visitacion Valley Middle School, where the Public Schools Month Kickoff was held. When he

took over as principal in 1999, the school was suffering from declining enrollment, test scores that didn't meet federal standards, teacher turnover, truancy, and a high neighborhood crime rate. Today attendance is at 98 percent, the school's ranking and test scores are rising steadily, and teachers are choosing to stay.

Those who attended the Public Schools Month Kickoff witnessed Dierke's influence firsthand. Visitacion Valley Middle School students led public tours of the school, attended the assembly along with the community, and closed the event with a rousing musical performance.

by John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Secretary

The THREE SOURCES

OF OUR COUNTRY'S GREATNESS



DEMOLAY INTERNATIONAL, ONE OF OUR THREE MASONIC YOUTH ORDERS, makes a powerful statement of our fraternity's commitment to this country's public schools, in word, in symbol, and in deed. Those who attend a DeMolay ceremony cannot miss the stack of books placed on the altar next to the open Bible, and our country's flag hanging nearby. In the public installation ceremony, the installing officer places these books on the altar, stating that they are "a symbol of the intellectual liberty, without which there could be neither civil nor religious freedom." He goes on to say that "They are particularly emblematic of the great public school system of our country, the foundation of that universal enlightenment which is the crowning glory of our institutions."

The installing officer then reminds us that “Devoted championship of our public schools is a cardinal teaching of the Order of DeMolay. We are unalterably opposed to the same building housing a school, a church, and a seat of civil government. Civil, religious and intellectual liberty are the three sources of our country’s greatness, but they must stand alone, upon separate foundations and under separate roofs.”

Just as we treasure our civil and religious liberties in this free land, so must we treasure our intellectual liberties, represented by our public schools. For the sake of intellectual liberty, our public schools today sustain challenges such as never before.

“...that intellectual liberty, without which there could be neither civil nor religious freedom.”

Inside the base of the Statue of Liberty are inscribed these famous lines from a poem by Emma Lazarus:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free...

Through the centuries, men and women have fled to our shores to realize this promise of freedom, which extends to the public

education system. As a result, our public schools must accommodate dozens of languages spoken by children whose parents came to this land to “breathe free,” as the poem says. Our public schools bring together children from varied social and economic backgrounds, and can become an unintentional battleground for culture wars.

As the DeMolay ritual puts it, they are “the foundation of that universal enlightenment which is the crowning glory of our institutions.”

Great institutions will always be subject to criticism, and as a result of these challenges, criticism often seems to swamp our public schools. It blinds us to their primary purpose, which they have nobly achieved: fostering “that intellectual liberty, without which there could be neither civil nor religious freedom.”

Parents, of course, are not required to send their children to our public schools. They may choose private schools, religiously based schools, or even to school their children at home, as long as they meet certain minimal standards. But such freedom of choice, however valued, does not and cannot take away the great achievement of our public schools.

Public schools are much more than just a public alternative to private institutions. They set the standard for all the other forms of education – and not the other way around. As the DeMolay ritual puts it, they are “the foundation of that universal enlightenment which is the crowning glory of our institutions.”

Universal enlightenment is at the heart of the mission of Freemasonry – a mission devoted to the pursuit of knowledge and the ability to use it wisely. In a real sense, our public schools are a realization of that Masonic ideal. It cannot be better expressed than in these words, from the ritual of DeMolay International:

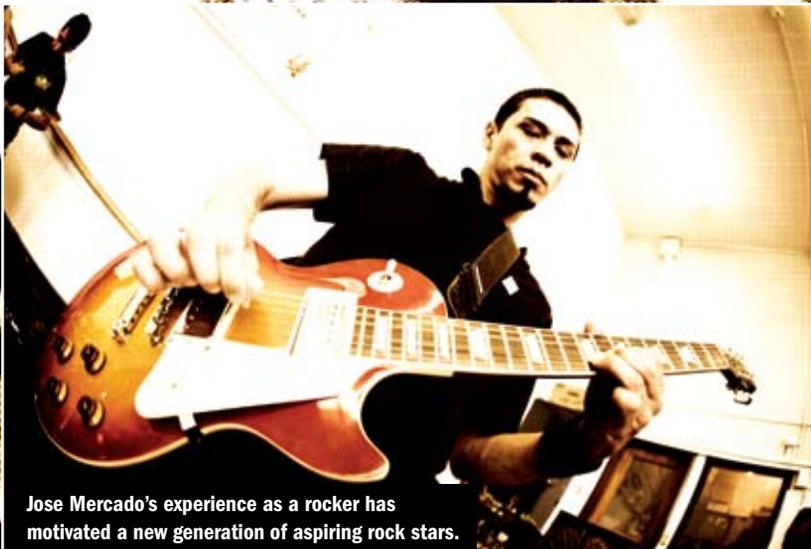
We, therefore, place these books upon the Altar and I solemnly enjoin the members of this Chapter ever to stand unswervingly for the protection and perpetuity of the free public schools, the citadel of our safety and the source of the only real freedom possible in a government of the people, by the people and for the people. ✧

Editor’s note: Prior to becoming grand secretary in 1990, Dr. Cooper was a public school teacher for middle school and high school, an administrator, and superintendent of Escondido Union High School District in San Diego County.

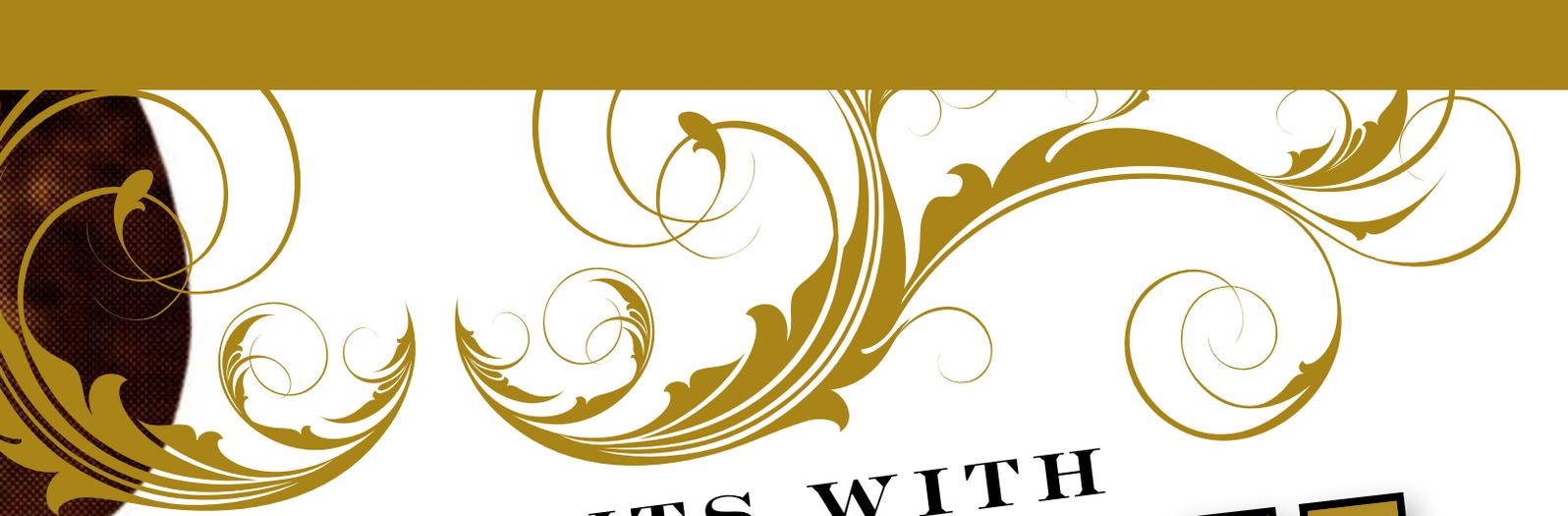


REACHING ROCK

MASON PIONEERS AFT



Jose Mercado's experience as a rocker has motivated a new generation of aspiring rock stars.



ING STUDENTS WITH K 'n' Roll

AFTER-SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS

by Cason Lane



For many kids in inner-city schools, life outside the classroom is a dangerous and discouraging place. Thanks to one Mason in Los Angeles, now it's their chance to be a rock star.

His name is Jose Mercado, a former punk rocker with a whole new gig. He pioneered a unique after-school music program that teaches the fundamentals of rock to middle school students. They get to create the music they love, form bands, and perform live concerts – all while building confidence, self-esteem, and an appreciation for learning.

It all started when
Mercado was hired a

few years ago as a guitar instructor for After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles, an organization founded by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to educate and inspire students at public middle schools. When students heard they could learn rock music with a real rock star, they started packing into Mercado's class.

"They flocked to the class because I was teaching the music they like," says Mercado, 31, master of Greenleaf Gardens Lodge No. 670 in Whittier.

OFF THE STREETS AND INTO THE LIMELIGHT

Mercado helped expand the free class into a thriving program. Today, All-Stars of Rock serves some 600 students at 16 middle schools

At weekly practice, student Jason Gonzales works towards mastering the drums.



Thanks to All-Stars of Rock, some 600 Los Angeles students spend their after-school time in the safety of a classroom, experimenting with music.

throughout L.A. In addition to rock music, students can learn other styles such as jazz, drum line, mariachi music, piano, classical music, and hip-hop. It's all designed to provide a safe, supportive environment for at-risk students.

After all, Mercado says, "middle school" is called that for a reason: It's the middle space between elementary school and high school. And that middle space – especially in inner-city L.A. – can be a slippery slope, as many students age 10-14 choose gangs, drugs, or alcohol to fill their time outside of class.

"They're trying to find their identity, and they sometimes get into trouble," says Mercado, who is now director of music for After-School All-Stars. "So we build the curriculum around what they want to learn, the kind of music they want to play. We let them experience life as a rock star."

That experience comes in the form of live rock concerts. The students' bands have played such gigs as the Key Club on Sunset Boulevard; Los Angeles Galaxy soccer games at the Home Depot Center; and the BOOST Conference in Palm Springs, a nationwide gathering of after-school program administrators.

ANOTHER HOTEL ROOM, ANOTHER SQUARE AND COMPASS

Mercado knows a little something about the life of a rock star – since he used to be one. He spent his own middle school years learning to play guitar, drums, and other instruments. In high school, he hooked up with other young musicians to form a punk band called Union 13. After building a reputation playing backyard parties in East L.A., the band was signed by a Hollywood label called Epitaph Records.

At just 17, Mercado had made the big time. So he finished high school and packed his bags, kicking off the life of a rocker on the road. As a guitarist and vocalist for Union 13, Mercado spent years touring the world with famous punk bands like the Dropkick Murphys, Voodoo Glow Skulls, and Slayer.

As luck would have it, his world tour exposed him to lots of new things, not the least of which was the square and compass.

"Everywhere in the world I traveled, I saw this little symbol," Mercado recalls. "It sparked my curiosity. And I ended up knocking on the door of Masonry."

As his days on the road were coming to an end, a new road

appeared. About the time he joined the After-School All-Stars, he approached the Masons at Greenleaf Gardens Lodge. The fraternity focused on things like how to give back to the community, help each other, and live a productive life – a message that directly applied to his new career.

As a result, Mercado has a brand new bag.

"I had no structure in my life – it was a show here, a hotel there," he says. "Now I have a world of responsibility, to provide opportunities for children. Masonry helped me grow from a young punk-rock star to really doing something great in the community."

A FAMILIAR TUNE

Just as Mercado personally knows the life of a rock star, he personally knows the life of an at-risk youth – and the value of an after-school program. Growing up around gangs in the Maravilla Housing Project of East L.A., Mercado found solace by nurturing his childhood passion for the saxophone.

As a student at Griffith Middle School, he participated in an after-school jazz band, which gave him a safe, educational haven. He remembers working closely with his music teacher, Gary Tavis, who



encouraged his pursuit not only of the sax but also the flute, bass, clarinet, and drums. Tavis was so influential that Mercado thanked him on his first Union 13 album.

Today, Mercado has come full circle, spending a lot of time back at Griffith Middle School, where the All-Stars of Rock program got its start, working with young people growing up in the same rough neighborhoods.

"I was unlucky enough to witness murders, and I myself ran away from gunshots," Mercado says. "My goal is to keep kids away from that. Life is beautiful, and kids should not be witnessing death. They should be living their dreams and finding themselves."

SO YOU WANNA BE A ROCK STAR?

Program graduates are proof that Mercado is achieving his goal.

Marcos Moreno, 17, joined All-Stars of Rock as a middle school student at Griffith. In addition

to honing his drumming skills, he learned important basics like punctuality and commitment. Moreno, now in high school, has returned to the program as a drum instructor.

"When I was in middle school, there was a lot of trouble on the streets," Moreno says. "I had a place to relax and play music rather than being out in the danger zone."

Pilar Granados joined All-Stars of Rock as a shy seventh grader. After trying her hand at guitar, she found her fit as the lead singer of a student band. She's in high school now and continues to sing with the band at performances around the city. In addition, she volunteers with the program at Griffith, where she helps younger girls with their singing and continues to work on her confidence.

"When you're on stage, you have to have a lot of self-confidence," she says. "You meet a lot of people and

you have to say your name and make small talk."

Improved confidence isn't the only thing she's grateful for. She – like her peers – is thankful for the opportunity to work with Mercado.

"Jose is a great guy," she says. "He could be in a band somewhere touring the world. But he would rather be with us, teaching us to be in a band and tour the world. That's really cool."

The way Mercado sees it, All-Stars of Rock is a natural fit for him, the perfect embodiment of his personal experience – as a man, a rock star, and a Mason. And it's the perfect way for him to support public education.

"I feel really connected to the community," he says. "Every morning, I wake up and smile, knowing that I'm making a difference for children." ✨

PIANIST IN A PINCH

In December 2008, right before his installation ceremony as lodge master, Jose Mercado learned that the pianist was sick.

So he called on two of his students from All-Stars of Rock. "I asked their parents if I could borrow them for the night," he recalls.

Mercado says that last-minute arrangement helped him out of a bind, gave his students some real-world experience, and gave him an opportunity to show a glimpse of Masonry to some local families who didn't know anything about it.



by Richard Berman

MASONIC

The little-known and long-extinct Masonic college movement spread like wildfire through 11 states

I N THE MID-1800S, AMERICAN MASONRY DEFINED ITS COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION IN A NEW WAY: WITH PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES.

Through fundraising, per capita, and generous individual donations, grand lodges founded several public educational institutions, most of which operated on a collegiate level. A number of schools were created to serve family members of Masons who could not otherwise afford college, and many others offered free tuition to any deserving student, even if he or she didn't have a Masonic connection.

The Masonic schools also led another important movement: unlike other colleges at the time, they accepted students regardless of religious affiliation.

Although most of the schools were short-lived, the Masonic college movement gives enduring insight into

how brothers in the early decades of the American republic saw their mission in promoting education.

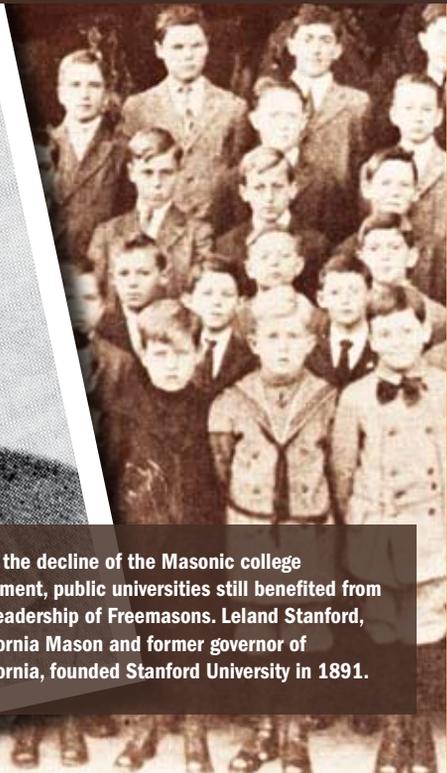
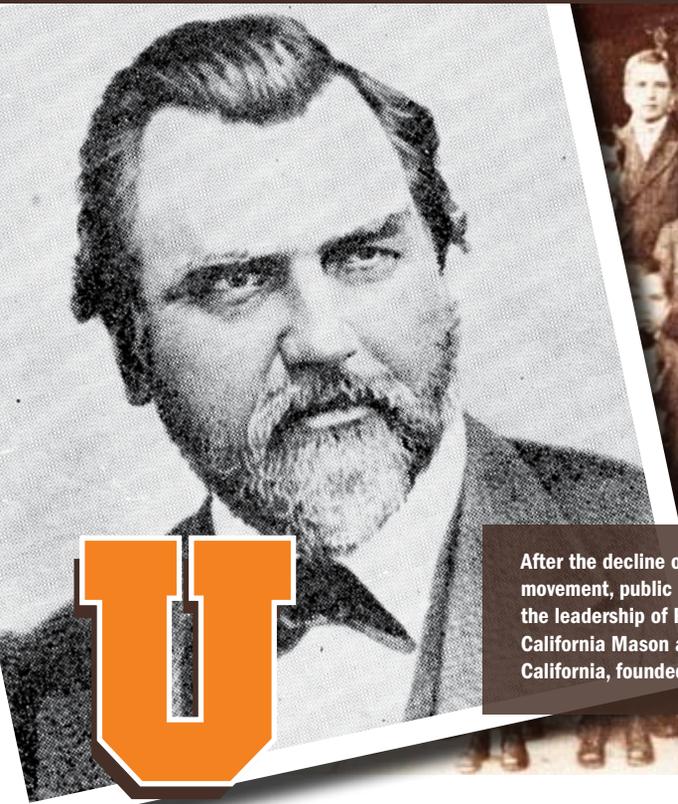
A BRIEF MOVEMENT WITH A LASTING MESSAGE

The first Masonic college in the United States was founded by the Grand Lodge of Missouri in 1844, and three years later a new campus building opened in the city of Lexington. The college was supported by a small per capita on every member in the state, and was established primarily for the benefit of orphaned children of deceased Masons. It graduated a future governor, a congressman, and two senators before financial

problems led to the school's closure in 1859. After being used as a military academy and then a women's college, the building was destroyed by a fire in 1932, and its former site made into a public park.

The Grand Lodge of Missouri was not alone: 11 southern states boasted their own Masonic educational institutions, many which offered coursework for younger students, too. All told, 88 institutions were established between 1841 and 1861 (including academies, colleges, institutes, schools, seminaries, and universities). Almost all were closed before the end of the 19th century, in large part due to the Civil War's drain on educators and resources.

The Masonic University of Tennessee was founded in 1850, but less than a decade later fell on hard times and was acquired by the Presbyterian Church. It changed



After the decline of the Masonic college movement, public universities still benefited from the leadership of Freemasons. Leland Stanford, California Mason and former governor of California, founded Stanford University in 1891.

names several times before moving from its original home in Clarksville to Memphis, where it exists today as Rhodes College. A similar fate befell Alabama's Auburn Female Masonic College, Masonic University in Kentucky, St. John's College in North Carolina, and nearly all others. One notable exception was Pea Ridge Masonic College, which operated until 1916, when its property was deeded for use as Pea Ridge Public School.

SIGNS OF THE PAST

The lasting influence of the Masonic college movement is evident at a number of public and private universities throughout the United States.

The University of Texas is home to Scottish Rite Dormitory, which was created in 1922 by Samuel P. Cochran, past grand master of Masons in Texas and president of the Texas Scottish Rite Educational Association, in response to a lack of accommodations for female

students at the school. Numerous other schools have scholarships created and endowed by Masons.

Perhaps one of the earliest examples of the convergence of Masonry and higher education can be found in the University of North Carolina, the first state-funded college in the country. A group of Masons laid the cornerstone in 1793, presided over by William Davie – a state legislator and grand master of North Carolina from 1792-98, today remembered as the father of the University. A number of Masonic symbols still dot the university, including a prominent square and compass in the logo of the Dialectic Society, the university's oldest student group. In addition, the layout of the school's campus draws comparisons to a Masonic lodge hall, with three buildings – Old South, Old East, and Old West – that mirror the walls of a lodge, and a well in the center of campus that could represent a lodge altar. ✧

Future Teachers of America

Masonic colleges guided students towards careers in public education

The age to become a Mason was 21 in many jurisdictions during the Masonic college movement, so most of the students at Masonic schools were not eligible to join the fraternity. In other words, the Masonic colleges were not focused on training new Freemasons.

By some indications, many were actually intended to prepare new teachers for public schools. While few records of the schools' curricula exist today, they – like most other private schools of the era – offered a classical education focusing on science, math, history, and philosophy with a heavy emphasis on Greek and Latin. Many offered additional coursework aimed at cultivating future leaders of public schools.

The legislative act approving the charter for St. Johns' College in Little Rock specified, "Young men educated in this college, gratuitously, shall be in honor bound to teach primary schools within the state of Arkansas, for at least two years after graduation."

The Masonic College of Kentucky offered a course in "school-keeping" and kept a register of students who completed it as a reference for institutions in need of educators. And the Masonic University of Tennessee required every student who attended free of charge to return home upon graduation to organize and teach in a Masonic school for three years.

Masonry and Public Schools

From the beginning, Masons have been connected to education

1600s

Education was central to the fraternity, as mentors taught new stonemasons – apprentices – how to safely build castles and cathedrals.

1700s

Many of the men who founded the country's system of government were Masons. They took the same values they practiced in the fraternity – equality, knowledge, truth, service to the community – and ingrained them in the fundamentals of the new nation, paving the way for public schools.

1740-50

Grand Master Benjamin Franklin urged the adoption of a public school system in Pennsylvania and helped organize the University of Pennsylvania. This form of civic education tied to the arts and sciences expanded to include numerous academies, educational societies, museums, and libraries in the state.

1793

A group of Masons laid the cornerstone for the University of North Carolina, the first state-funded college in the country. They were presided over by William Davie – a state legislator and grand master of North Carolina, today remembered as the father of the University.

1800-10

Grand Master DeWitt Clinton, governor of New York from 1817 to 1822, helped found a system of free education before the establishment of public schools in New York City. He became known as the father of public schools in New York.

1840-60

United States grand lodges founded 88 public educational institutions in 11 states, often offering free tuition to

deserving students. They were among the first universities to accept students regardless of religious affiliation. (See “Masonic U,” page 16.)

1862

John Swett, Mason and San Francisco school principal, was elected California superintendent of public instruction. He went on to organize teachers' institutes, established a teacher certification system, won support for school taxes, wrote a revised school law, and provided for textbooks for California public schools. Swett is now referred to as the father of the California public school system.

1920

Public Schools Month began when Charles Adams, a San Francisco attorney and grand master who was passionate about California schools, proclaimed Public Schools Week. Each succeeding grand master in California has continued the observance of Public Schools Week, now Public Schools Month.

1970

The California Masonic Foundation was established to further the education of young people, from kindergarten through college. Today, more than \$1 million in scholarships are awarded by the Foundation every year, and lodges and other Masonic organizations contribute additional hundreds of thousands of dollars.

1994

The Masonic Student Assistance Program was established. To date the program has trained more than 5,900 California educators and helped more than 48,000 at-risk students.



Pre-nursing students gain valuable experience in their field through the service learning program at the Home at Union City.

HANDS-ON

by Cason Lane

LEARNING

Masonic Home at Union City provides valuable experience to local college students

A few years ago, Chabot College in Hayward wanted to give its pre-nursing students a real-world view of nursing – a chance to interact with patients; understand what it means to give knowledgeable, compassionate care; and consider whether nursing is indeed the right career fit.

The community college found just the environment it was looking for in the Masonic Home at Union City. For the past several years, Chabot pre-nursing students have had the opportunity to

receive extra credit – along with some hands-on experience – by volunteering up to 40 hours per semester at the Masonic Home. The Home, in turn, has a hands-on role in the quality of public higher

education in the Bay Area.

On any given day in the Masonic Home at Union City, student volunteers can be found shadowing the nursing staff in the dementia unit; chatting or playing games with residents in skilled nursing or assisted living; or answering phones, setting appointments, organizing medical records, and performing other administrative duties in the Home's medical clinic.

Chabot pre-nursing student Shannon Byrd, 26, values how her volunteer time at the Home is preparing her for the realities of nursing. “You learn from and deal with people who need your help,” says Byrd. “That’s what nursing is about.”

“Service learning raises students’ self-confidence, reinforces what they learn in the classroom, and helps them forge an important sense of civic responsibility.”

Supporting education through service learning

Chabot’s relationship with the Masonic Home at Union City is part of the community college’s service learning program, which integrates hands-on community service experiences into an academic curriculum. After volunteering with a partner organization, students write several papers about their experience and present their observations to the class.

Clara McLean, an English instructor at Chabot and founder of the college’s service learning program, says the concept is an increasingly important component of public higher education.

“Service learning raises students’ self-confidence, reinforces what they learn in the classroom, and helps them forge an important

sense of civic responsibility,” McLean says. “It allows them to apply their skills in the real world – introducing them to career opportunities and bolstering their work skills and marketability.”

Beyond nursing, the Masonic Home at Union City offers service learning opportunities to Chabot students in such fields as communications, psychology, and pre-dental hygiene. From working at the front desk to socializing with residents, the students always find a valuable way to volunteer. Christine Warda, a member of the college’s communications faculty, recalls two students who learned a lot by reading newspapers and magazines to residents.

“Both of them are non-native English speakers, and they were nervous about reading out loud,” Warda says. “The residents were very welcoming and helpful.”

Lasting relationships

Students develop meaningful connections with the residents and staff, and many come back to volunteer on their own time – even after the semester ends. Shannon Byrd has already earned two semesters’ worth of extra credit, but she continues to volunteer because she finds it personally rewarding. In the Traditions unit, for example, she enjoys painting the women’s nails; taking residents on walks or out to lunch; or singing, reading, and dancing with them.

“I really enjoy talking with the residents and listening to their

stories,” says Byrd, a former veterinary technician who enrolled at Chabot to prepare for a new career in nursing. “I like hearing about their different perspectives on life.”

The residents enjoy the college students, too. Carlene Voss, the Home’s coordinator of volunteers and community resources, says the average age of residents is 88, so the presence of college students is always welcome. “They bring a new energy,” Voss says.

A preferred program

While the Home accommodates Chabot students studying in a variety of fields, the pre-nursing program remains one of the most popular volunteer opportunities. Biology instructor Patricia Wu says that though the program is purely optional, her pre-nursing students are quick to sign up.

“In a recent semester, I had 43 students in the volunteer program,” Wu says. “They get a true sense of what the nursing job is like.”

“They get a true sense of what the nursing job is like.”

When it comes to service learning opportunities for her students, Wu has many local hospitals and clinics to choose from. But of all her options, she likes the Masonic Home at Union City the best – so much so that in a recent semester, the Masonic Home was the only option that she offered to her class.

Continued on page 22



Even after semester's end, many students return to the Home to volunteer their own time and continue friendships with residents.

“I really enjoy talking with the residents and listening to their stories.”





Students from four public colleges and eight local high schools are a daily addition to the Home at Union City.

She says that Voss' well-organized volunteer program streamlines the effort for her and provides a great experience for students.

Widespread support

Beyond Chabot College, the Masonic Home at Union City extends its well-oiled volunteer program to support other public education institutions by hosting nursing and EMT students from California State University, East Bay; dietetics/nutrition students from San Jose State University; and students from various programs at Ohlone College in Fremont.

The Masonic Home is also an important learning environment for eight local high schools, whose students volunteer to learn about occupations such as physical therapy, dietetics, and medical administration.

The Masonic Home's service-learning partnerships throughout the public education community unite classroom and real-world experience that brings course topics to life. It's a union that enables the Homes to support public education in a uniquely Masonic way. ❖

Connecting With the Homes

MASONIC OUTREACH SERVICES (MOS)

Masonic Outreach Services (MOS), a program of the Masonic Homes of California, provides our fraternal family access to the services and resources they need to stay healthy and safe in their homes or in retirement facilities in their home communities.

These services include:

- Information and referrals to community-based senior providers throughout California
- Ongoing care management at no cost
- Financial support

MOS also provides interim financial and care support to those who are on the waiting list for the Masonic Homes of California. Contact us at **888/466-3642** or intake@mhccuc.org.

ACACIA CREEK COMMUNITY

To learn more about the Acacia Creek community, visit acaciacreek.org or contact:

Acacia Creek at Union City

510/429-6479 or 888/553-7555
dwiley@acaciacreek.org

CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY SERVICES

For program information, contact **626/251-2227** or hramirez@mhccov.org.

SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

The Masonic Homes has speakers available to come to your lodge to speak about our range of services.

For more information, contact **888/466-3642** or communications@mhccuc.org.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE PROFILES

Leadership Development Special Committee, 16 members

The committee's purpose is to organize and present training programs for the leaders of California lodges and Grand Lodge and provide other assistance to the grand master as requested. The Leadership Development Special Committee oversees programs such as the Secretaries' and Wardens' Retreats, Lodge Management Certification Program, and the annual Masonic Symposium.

Investment Committee, 8 members

The committee's purpose is to advise Grand Lodge on appropriate investment policies, guidelines, and recommendations for the investment funds of Grand Lodge and its entities. With the approval of the grand treasurer, the grand master, and the respective governing boards, the Investment Committee monitors and manages Grand Lodge investments.

GET INVOLVED AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Grand Lodge of California relies on members to provide volunteer leadership for the important work done by its committees and boards.

Committee and board positions are opportunities to share your expertise, enhance your leadership capabilities, and make a difference.

For information about the committees and boards, including a purpose statement and list of members, log in at the Member Center on freemason.org, go to ROSTER, then click on Boards and Committees.

If you are a warden, master, or past master who is interested in being considered for an appointment, please send an email to communications@freemason.org.

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