

REQUEST TO RENAME OLYMPIC'S SOFTBALL FIELD TO COACH RON REDDING FIELD

It comes as no surprise to those who know Ron Redding that we are here tonight to request of the School Board that the softball field at Olympic High School, which was championed by Ron for many years be named in his honor.

Ron was a student of this district, graduating from Mt. Diablo High School. His career goal was originally to become an attorney, but while studying at the Oklahoma Military Academy he chose to pursue a career in education, following in the footsteps of his late mother, Nawatha, who taught in this district for 32 years, and his sister, Rebecca.

After teaching at other district schools, Ron found himself at Olympic in 1990, overseeing the school newspaper, *The Torch*, while also teaching English, Government, P.E. and Guitar, a subject he has also taught at adult school, teaching over 5,000 students over the years.

During his fifth year at Olympic, Ron saw the need for athletic activities at the school and developed a coed softball team, starting with a bat, glove, and a couple softballs. For years the team practiced and played in a rocky corner of the campus originally used as a kickball field when the campus was an elementary school. Through donations and Ron's determination, the team added a backstop, benches, and received a van from Chevron to help the team as it played against rivals in Division 4 of the Continuing Education Athletic League and the Concord All-Stars.

As Ron and his team persevered despite scarce resources, Ron also advocated for his team by making his dream of a authentic softball field an eventual reality. Former Secondary Education head Dr. Alan Young occasionally saw Ron and his team practicing on the kickball field and promised that "we're going to build you a ball field."

In 2007, thanks to Ron's tenacity and Measure C funds, Olympic celebrated the opening of a regulation softball field. One year later, Ron turned over his coaching responsibilities to colleague Jesse Forsland, who has continued as the team's coach.

As Representative George Miller, an annual guest in Ron's Government classes, has said, "Ron has never lost his touch in caring about young people, reaching out to them and giving them purpose. He really makes the classroom come alive and successfully connects the dots between the challenges his students face in the classroom, at home, on the street, and with the government structures in place to serve them." It may be added that the life lessons Ron taught his many team members over the year, such as perseverance, teamwork, overcoming obstacles, and reaching one's goals, have served his many students, and the community, well.

Former students also recall Ron's commitment and passion. In a *Contra Costa Times* article written about the opening of the ball field, one former student, who had been unable to play baseball at his former school due to low grades, said, "What I learned here, and especially from Mr. Redding, is that just because something doesn't work out, that doesn't mean you quit on life. Something good can come out of everything." Another student was quoted as saying, "If you're serious about showing him you want to turn it around then he's in your corner for however long you need him." Teachers Ron has mentored over the years feel the same way.

Because of Ron's dedication to the education of our community's children, both in the classroom and on the field, we, the staff and faculty of Olympic High School, respectfully request that our school's softball field be renamed the Coach Ron Redding Field, in honor of the man whose passion for students made our field a reality.