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**An Open Letter to my Classmates:
Saint Louis High School, Class of 1962**

By Stephen Kabei

You think you know the “Saint Louis School” of 2010? Think again. You don’t. Not unless you’ve been to the campus lately and talked to the faculty and students.

For one thing, and you probably know this, the School has a different name. Of course, this name change has been in existence for years, ever since the School opened itself up to elementary and intermediate grades. (which by the way, it’s gradually trying to undo, at least the former). You probably know that a woman, Mrs. Patricia Hamamoto, is now the Principal of the School. She was, until recently, the Superintendent of the Department of Education, State of Hawaii. You probably know that few Marianist Brothers and Priests are part of the faculty: 3 to be exact, and none in teaching positions. If you know this, then you probably also know that of all the “Lay Teachers,” some are women (around one quarter of the faculty). Being that there are so many women on the faculty (and also due to the changing of the times) the “hands-on” corporal punishment days of our time are “a thing of the past.” It is. Not even a disciplinary finger, let alone a hand, is put on the shoulder of a Crusader, unless that teacher wants to hear an earful from an irate parent (to include, perhaps, also from the family’s lawyer).

You probably know that the student body of our School is drastically reduced (not necessarily by choice). Our Class had over 200 graduates; the Class of 2012 (graduating 50 years after we did) has a little over 100 students. This Class of 2012 is very lucky. The student body as well as instructional classes, are smaller. (Studies have shown that smaller schools and smaller classes are better as far as education of students go.) Furthermore, the teachers are more available to the students for counseling and tutorial sessions. The female teachers also offer a “women’s touch” that male teachers often lack. Whereas male teachers tend to be tough and hard on the student, the woman teachers offer the counter-balance of a more compassionate and understanding ear. For a troubled, or sensitive student, having such a teacher to trust and seek help from, can make a lot of difference in that student’s development and progress. (I suppose having a woman Principal also helps, although some of you may disagree.)

The School still prides itself on sports participation and achievement, ROTC, religious training (but with more student-faculty “retreats” being offered and conducted throughout the year), and, of course, a very rigorous college-prep academic program, with lots of extra-curricular activities, like we had back in 1962.

So what else has changed in the 47 years since we left our School? In a way, it's still the same school: still Catholic, still all-boys, still same buildings (but, with a few new ones and an old one added), and still providing ROTC. But, other than that, a lot has changed, and in this writer's opinion, for the better. It is a better School. But, it costs a lot more to attend our School. How much did we, or more correctly, in most cases, our parents pay for us to attend our School? Today, the tuition is over \$10,000.00 annually. Is it worth it? Ask the kids who attend our School. You'll be pleasantly and proudly reassured.

Come join us, your classmates, at our future Class reunion activities. And, maybe pay a visit to our School again after all these years, even perhaps with our Class of 1962. We can certainly schedule it—as a matter of fact, we have: the graduation ceremony of the Class of 2012, where we, the Class of 1962, will present the School with our Class Gift. Come join us. We look forward to seeing you. If you have not participated in any of our Class's past reunion activities, you've missed-out on a lot of FUN, camaraderie, sharing of stories (old, new, and developing), the burying of old grudges, anger, antipathy. In a way, being that we're "old farts" now, and getting worse, things have changed: our outlook on life in general, our envy, pride, prejudices, and opinions. (Old dogs can and do change?) In a lot of ways, it's a lot easier to relate to, to communicate and associate with old classmates, that maybe we found hard to do when we were much younger and inexperienced.

Again, come join us and find out for yourself (first hand) that what I'm saying may be true for you. Don't wait too long: time-is-a-passing (and getting shorter) for us all, each passing year. So far 25 of our classmates have passed on. Don't let time and opportunity pass you "bye".

Until we meet again, God bless you all, and Aloha, Classmates.

MEMOR et FIDELIS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Editor's Note: Many of you may have had more recent experiences with our Alma Mater, via your children and/or grandchildren who were students. What do you think about the evolution of Saint Louis over the past nearly half century?