

A Visit with Mike Chow, SLC '62

by *steve kuna*

There are many fond memories of my times at Kalaepohaku.

I especially remember my teammates and bond formed through athletics and scholarship. This was a window in time so embellished with youthful dreams and innocent intent. But as much as a dream often spurs achievement, so does doubt linger nearby, ever-present, always a reminder, that sometimes a fine line defines the difference between dreams and reality



Mike Chow
Tackle

Mike was an All Star performer for the Crusaders

Mike Chow is my classmate, former teammate and lifetime friend.

We played together at SLC and later, for the Rainbows.

He reminds me so much of my SLC era, our introduction to young manhood, and the formational role it would play in the years to follow.

Mike is a guy who always tried to measure up to all the expectation of Christian character, humility, achievement, service, and family.

Mike Chow is at the old Maunalani Home, and I was recently visiting and trading talk.

He told me of his boyish dreams of flying.

As a young boy, Mike, would sit outside his Palolo Valley home and gaze with wistful aspiration at the airplanes approaching or ascending from Honolulu International Airport and imagine boldly, someday, he would become a pilot and learn to fly a mokulele.

With the passage of time, Mike kept this dream to himself...still unsure of its career course or opportunity.

"I was absolute in my desire but I didn't see or know of many pilots of my ethnic profile or community. It was a quantum leap for a Palolo-kid to dream, and I didn't want to be told otherwise".

Chow said, shrugging his shoulders with an animation of gesture.

"So I kept my thoughts to myself and ground away at academics until an opportunity arose, after I graduated at Manoa, and enrolled in the Hawaii Air Guard."



A quantum leap for a Palolo-kid to dream

Mike would earn his wings after a year at flight school in Texas, and went on to serve 25 years in the Hawaii Air Guard before retiring as a Lt. Colonel.

Mike once took his F-15 Eagle to MACH 2.1 in a dive.

“Speed is relative...I didn’t know how fast I was going until I looked at the instruments”.



As a civilian, Mike became an Aloha Airlines pilot and attained Captain with Senior Pilot status. He proudly points out that he flew the charter flights for the Warrior Football road games. It must have been a special treat for two former SLC classmates because Ron Lee, UH Offensive Coordinator and former SLC teammate was on board those flights.

“That was a special moment for us...but no, Bra Lee didn’t ask me to grab the wheel”.

(Mike chuckles).



Bidding “Farewell” to Aloha

Mike retired from Aloha in 2004 after 28years of service.

This was the same kid that once played catcher for his dad’s baseball team, even though he didn’t like the sport.

His dad, a soft spoken unassuming man, gave Mike the option to play and made it clear it was his son’s decision to make, and either way, his dad insisted, he would be happy with his son’s decision.

“I didn’t want to let my dad down”,

When pressed for an explanation....he pondered and offered,

“I guess that’s the reason I kept my ambition to fly close to myself....as kids, we just wanted to measure up...we wanted to please our parents”.



“Mike’s daughter HAL Capt. Stacy Brandon carries his dream into the 21st Century”

Measuring up.

Pleasing our parents

So simply stated.

So delicate a thought, so blessed an accomplishment....and, so reminiscent of our instruction at SLC.