

## ALUMNI DINNER

BY STAN GILLIAM, '41

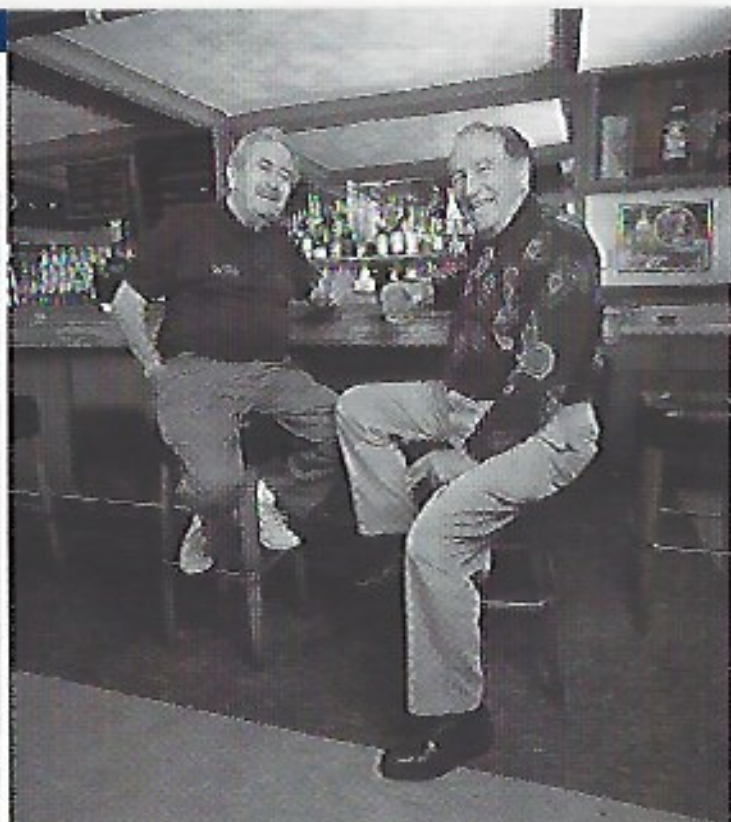
If I say the origin of the annual alumni dinner is "shrouded in the mists of time," it's only because that sounds more poetic than the bald admission, "I forget when the first one was."

The first gathering, chaired by Jack Stassi and probably about 35 years ago, was held upstairs at the Elbo Room, a watering hole next to "Honest Jim" Doyle's barber shop (and reputed bookie joint) at 20th and L. The one clear recollection I have is that after coach Jim Flynn singled out the late Pete Archerda as the greatest athlete in the history of the school, Pete -- this was before he became "the late," obviously -- broke down and wept. Those who knew him best said Pete always did that.

As Jack recalls it, others on that first committee were Ted Gardner, Bob Roche, Al Westlake (who actually was a Sac High grad), Jim Westlake, William P. Carmody and Frank Lemos. Gardner, Al Westlake, Carmody and Lemos are all deceased.

From there the clambakes migrated to the Trio, then on Broadway between 15th and 16th. Bill Blanas, a Brothers Boy, of course, was a part owner, and it seemed only right to drop some money with one of our own. Another alumnus, Joe Marty, then presided over El Chico, directly across the street. So did he walk over? Of course not. He emerged from a cab, explaining that Broadway was just too dangerous to chance on foot.

Details are hazy, probably because there was much more serious partying in those days, but I also do recall an occasion when another "old boy," then an Oakland cop, no longer functional, was taken to his motel and gently put to bed, out like the proverbial light. His two Samaritans made their way back to the Trio -- where their recently unconscious friend was awaiting their return. Everyone agreed it was a miracle.



*Stan Gilliam and Jack Stassi at the scene of the crime.*

After a couple of years, and with the fire marshal about to invoke overcrowding statutes, the party moved to the school. The only ones seriously affected were Blanas, whose profits diminished, and Marty, whose transportation costs escalated.

Don't ask me the year, although I do have a charter membership card in the Christian Brothers Alumni Association signed by Ted Civitello, the treasurer. Just tell me in what year Ted held that office, and I'll tell you when the move was made.

I must confess that at one of the more recent gatherings, I decried the absence of "all the old-timers." It took one of my contemporaries to put it in perspective: "Hell, we're the old-timers now!" ♦