

JIM FONG

8/18/2020

As a longtime friend of Jim Fong, I would like to share my life's memories of him.

When I think of Jim, these are the words that immediately come to mind:

Trustworthy, dependable, faithful.

In 1960, when we decided to move our family nursery business from Redwood City to Half Moon Bay, Sachi and I wanted to send our children to school in San Mateo, so we chose to move to the Highlands. One day, Sharon, our daughter, came back from school saying, "There is this really smart Chinese boy in my class. His name is Randy and the family lives across the street from the school." Somehow later, we got to meet each other and it turned out that Randy's mother was Japanese just like our family. As time went by, we found out that Jim was a Christian but was not attending any church. We

invited the Fongs to our church in Redwood City which is now called Peninsula Hope Church. At that time, we were meeting at the YMCA. The Fong family soon became very active in our church.

Some years later the church decided to look for its own property. We bought this large six acre property in Woodside which could be subdivided. Since Jim's career and background was with California Department of Highways, he became very active and instrumental in going through the designing and engineering process of making this happen. We worked closely together on this project. This is when I really got to know Jim.

Jim was an eternally positive person. He was always an organized, deliberate thinking decision making person. He had a good sense of humor, too. Politically, I think he was sort of conservative.

I think there are a couple of things Jim was really known for. One is that he knew every Chinese restaurant between Palo Alto and San Francisco. He invited me to

many different places. One day he invited me and my wife to a restaurant saying, "This time, I'd like to take you to a really nice restaurant. It's called Pierre's! It sounded like a nice French restaurant so we asked him if we should dress up for the occasion. He said, "do what you want." So, we got all dressed up and drove over to Pierre's. When we got there, we were quite surprised to find out that it was just a Hole in the wall Chinese restaurant. Sorry to say, "I don't even remember how good the food was."

Another thing Jim was known for was for his ability to find the best deals when buying things. Whatever you're looking for, he always had the knack for getting the best deal. I don't know how he did it but he always got the best deal- not the cheapest. When anybody at church needed anything, we would always go to Jim.

My most grateful memory of Jim was when we both worked together on our church's latest remodeling

project. This is when I truly got to know what a great person Jim was.

Originally, our present church property became available through an estate sale. We had to bid for the purchase of this property. There were other bidders, but thankfully we prevailed. There was a quite a bit of criticism from our congregation for the way Jim and I handled the bidding; however, we were able to overcome some of the resentment. [just for the record, we purchased this property for \$86,000.00. It's worth far more now, located in downtown Redwood City] A few years later we started to think about expanding and remodeling this church building. This project took over five years to complete.

Beginning with the fund raising, designing, permitting, construction, Jim was there every step of the way. Jim as our project manager was there.....and believe me, he was there on the site, every day. It was such a pleasure to work with him. He never wanted to take credit for

anything he did, but I can assure you that if it weren't for all his efforts it could have wound up being a totally different story.

I am forever grateful to Jim for all the years of our friendship.

I truly miss Jim.

May his soul forever rest in peace.

Harry Higaki (one week before his 100th birthday.)