

CITY CURRENTS



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IN MEMORY OF ROBERT E. BURTON

Stars that Illuminate the Night

By Dr. Philip R. Day, Jr., Chancellor, City College of San Francisco



Photo by Joyce Benna

ROBERT E. BURTON

Editor's note: This is the text of the speech delivered by Dr. Philip R. Day, Jr., Chancellor of City College of San Francisco at CCSF's graduation ceremony exercises held Friday, May 11, 2001 at Masonic Auditorium, San Francisco.

Tonight, the commencement ceremony may seem to you a traditional one: the opening with pomp and Circumstance, the singing of the national anthem, and the welcoming remarks of the Chancellor. But this ceremony is not a traditional one. And I would like five minutes of your undivided attention to tell you why. As you can see in the beginning of the graduation program, we are dedicating this ceremony to the memory of **Robert E. Burton**.

I will begin with the offering of a poem for Bob Burton. It is a poem by **Robert Frost** called "Away." It was one of the last things Frost wrote before he crossed the great divide.

Now I out walking
The world desert,
And my shoe and my stocking
Do me no hurt.
I leave behind
Good friends in town.
Let them get well-wined
And go lie down.
Don't think I leave
For the outer dark,
Like Adam and Eve
Put out of the Park.
Forget the myth.
There is no one I
Am put out with
Or put out by.
Unless I'm wrong
I but obey
The urge of a song:
"I'm - bound - away!"
And I may return
If dissatisfied
With what I learn
From having died.

That is something Bob might have said. I can imagine him with a twinkle in his eye saying those very words: "And I may return if dissatisfied with what I learn from having died."

Who was Robert E. Burton and why are we honoring him tonight? Bob Burton was a board member for City College over a period of almost thirty years, the longest serving board member in our history. And we are honoring him because we loved him. He was like many of us in that he rose from very ordinary circumstances. He never attained high position or wealth, but he touched more lives than most people with name and prestige. He was bright, he was witty, he was honest, and above all he was caring.

You wouldn't know how caring he was if you just met him. He might seem gruff or cynical or bordering on the edge of propriety. But then, as one of our faculty members has said, he would come looking for you, get concerned if you were away without his knowing, snoop around until he found out you had a family emergency, then leave voice mail messages until you returned and gave him a full report. Yes, he cared. At board meetings or graduation, you might think he wasn't paying attention given his habit of working incessantly on crossword puzzles. But afterwards, he would ask about some of the students who crossed the stage, and often he would shake his head and say, "How do these kids do it today?" Yes, he cared.

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IN MEMORY OF ROBERT E. BURTON

Stars that Illuminate the Night

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Bob Burton was one of three boys, born in Cincinnati, Ohio, around the time of the great depression. **Phillip**, the oldest, became a state legislator and a distinguished congressman in Washington. **John**, the youngest, also became a distinguished congressman, and currently the dedicated president of the California Senate. Robert was the middle son, who chose to become a school teacher and for much of his career taught adult education for prisoners at San Quentin. Their father, **Thomas Burton**, began as a vacuum cleaner salesman in South Dakota, worked in a Michigan steel mill, played in a band as drummer, and was second baseman in a Class B baseball league. Despite periods of poverty, the father put himself through a YMCA adult school and decided to become a doctor. The family moved to Detroit and then to Milwaukee. Thomas Burton completed medical school in Chicago, living away from home for many years while **Mildred Burton** supported the family by working twelve-hour days for the Catholic Diocese. They came to San Francisco in 1941, settling in the Sunset District, where father completed his internship, established a small medical practice downtown, ran a clinic at Franklin Hospital for poor patients at no charge, and passed on to the sons his strong liberal views and dedication to the disenfranchised. This was Bob Burton's family, a family that has made an extraordinary difference in the quality of life for the people of San Francisco, of California, and of the nation.

None of the accomplishments of Bob Burton and his family were achieved by virtue of heritage or good fortune. They had to work hard to achieve. They had to make do with scarcity. They had to overcome adversity. They had to deal with intimidation and prejudice. They had to cross the line and make their way in a strange land. Bob Burton and his family are lights for our path. They show us that

we too can make our way and become what we can be, no matter how ordinary or how challenging our circumstance. Sometimes it is hard for us to imagine ourselves doing what the "great ones" manage to do, but when we see them as "ordinary ones" doing well and doing good, our path is lightened and our destination made more clear.

We were privileged to have Bob Burton among us at City College for all of those years. He was not content just to serve on the board once a month. He came to the campuses almost every day, had coffee with us once, twice, or three times in the morning, made his rounds among friends, went off to his work day elsewhere, then returned for evening functions, special events, celebrations and graduation. Bob was one of us. He cared for us. And we loved him dearly.

That is why we are dedicating this graduation to his memory. He was one of those stars that illuminate the night. And it could be said of him what Juliet said of Romeo:

*When he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with
night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.*

Friends, family, and admirers of Bob Burton, when you look up at night and see the stars, remember him and consider that you too can make the face of heaven so fine that all the world will be in love with night.

Health Science Department in partnership with San Francisco State University congratulates the graduates

- Community Health Worker Certificate • Drug and Alcohol Studies Certificate
- Health Care Interpreter Certificate • HIV/STD Prevention Education Certificate

Graduates of CCSF Certificate programs in Community Health Worker, Health Care interpreter, HIV/STD Prevention Education and Drug and Alcohol Studies held a special graduation ceremony May 25 in Conlan Hall.

Delivering the keynote address was **Darryl Inaba**, CEO of the Haight Ashbury Free Clinics.

Student speakers were **Denise Powell**, Community Health Worker Certificate; **Sandra Duffy**, Health Care Interpreter Certificate; **Lars Holland**, HIV/STD Prevention Education Certificate; and **Oscar Macias**, Drug and Alcohol Studies Certificate.



Students are pictured receiving their certificates during commencement exercises held May 25 in Conlan Hall.



Darryl Inaba, Pharm D., CEO of the Haight Ashbury Free Clinics, was the keynote speaker.



Oscar Macias, student speaker, talked about the accomplishments of this first class of graduates in the Drug and Alcohol Studies Certificate Program.



Graduates of the four certificate programs, along with their relatives, friends and invited guests are pictured applauding the accomplishments of the students.

Photos by Steve Kech

Hotel and Restaurant Foundation awards scholarships

The Hotel and Restaurant Foundation distributed \$125,000 in scholarships to students for 2001-2002. Recipients included students at City College of San Francisco, Santa Barbara City College, San Francisco State University, University of San Francisco, Cal Poly Pomona, Diablo Valley College, Contra Costa College, Mission College and Cabrillo College.

CCSF students receiving awards from the Foundation at a luncheon held May 18 at the Hotel Nikko in downtown San Francisco included: **Pablo Andrada, Jonas Andersson, Michelle Bernstein, Cheryl Burr, Ausrine Buzick, Chia-Ling Chiu, Jennifer Davis, Jonny Dones, Clarissa Flores, Iyara Giminski, Stein Hagen, Daniel Indelicato, Ayako Iino, James Keys, Michael Kollaszar, Elizabeth Kuester, Kuniko Kuroha, John Mardikian, Tomoko Mori, Naomi Nakai, Jennifer Orozco, Kameelah Rahman, Nicole Rendon, David Rodriguez, Peter Rott, Chanh Saelee, Brian Santos, Toshimichi Takahata, Tyla Tevini, Akiko Tokoro, Catherine Vollert, Douglas Wagers, Lavani Wright and Zing-Han Ye.**



CCSF students prepare to advance to the podium to introduce themselves and accept their scholarships from the Hotel and Restaurant Foundation.

Bruce Perry spoke at CCSF May 18



Photo by Pat Moore

Dr. Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph.D., a pioneer in the study of childhood brain development, spoke at a second free day-long seminar May 18. Again, it was sponsored by the CCSF Child Development and Family Studies Department. Dr. Perry whose study proved that environment plays a key role in how the brain grows, particularly during the first three years of life, is the author of more than 180 journal articles, book chapters and scientific proceedings.



Among the guests at the 53rd anniversary luncheon of the Hotel and Restaurant Foundation held at the Hotel Nikko in downtown San Francisco were CCSF Scholarship Coordinator Elaine Mannon (left) and Hotel and Restaurant Department Chair Ed Hamilton.



Thomas W. LaTour, Chairman, Kimpton Hotel & Restaurant Group, delivered the keynote address. He stressed that each person in business today should think of themselves as a unique "brand," and develop an appropriate marketing plan to ensure their success.

John Scopazzi (center), who just retired from CCSF after a long career as chef-instructor in the Hotel and Restaurant Department, is pictured with his wife Jill (left) and Associate Vice Chancellor Phyllis McGuire (right).



Photos by Steve Kech