

BLACK AND GOLD DINNER CATERER FORMER VIC HIGH STUDENT
By King Lee VHS 1958

When the carver places the roast beef on your Black and Gold Dinner plate May 23, say hello to Keith Campbell, VHS 1987, owner of Fifteen Fifty's Pub Style Restaurant catering the event.

Victoria-born Campbell grew up in the Broadmead area and his parents operated the Lantern House pizza restaurant, currently Il Greco Pizzeria on Tillicum Road and about to be redeveloped.

Campbell attended Tillicum Elementary and Colquitz and Shoreline Junior High schools before enrolling at Vic High in Grade 11 to take part in the auto-body program, still the only one available in the District. His motivation to succeed must have been instilled early, because he had to come all the way from Sidney to attend Vic High.

Housed at the time in the now-demolished Fairey Tech building, Campbell excelled in the auto-body program, and was awarded a post-secondary scholarship to Camosun College in the trade.

By the end of his first year however, he left the program. A few of his classmates' friends had -died from exposure to spray-paint chemicals, and he decided the risk was not one he'd take.

Campbell had experience as a food server and eventually found work as a bartender at Squid Row in Sidney, where he eventually became manager and then general manager.

He was unsuccessful in his attempts to join the ownership at Squid Row, so began looking around for business opportunities. In 1994 with his parents' help he opened Fifteen Fifty's, taking over what was Natasha's Pacific Grill, formerly the Hungarian Village Restaurant. 25 years later, though he remembers well the struggle to build clientele, his business is still growing.

"I've been very, very lucky in my life," said Campbell, looking back at his days at Vic High until now. He also spoke glowingly of his two daughters and two grandchildren and credited his parents and some influential Vic High teachers for contributing to his success. Ed Wignall, Auto Body, Bud Brice, Metalwork, Bruce Malczeski, Social Studies, and Linda Shevloff, English were among his favourite teachers.

Campbell also remembered some of his high-school buddies, Andy Corbett, Brent McKnight, Bill McClung and Neil Meija. In fact, Meija is currently his kitchen manager at 1550s.

He recalled one day at Vic High when an announcement came over the PA asking for the owner of a red Honda Civic to report the school office because his or her car was on fire. One of Campbell's friends had accidentally started the blaze in Campbell's vehicle.

"I loved Vic High. It was a great school." Perhaps it was that school experience that still inspires him to support the community by contributing to school projects.

