

Rise Up West

By David Truitt

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Last Thursday, June 25, 2015, the community came together in downtown West to celebrate the recent accomplishments of our state champion West High School baseball team and Quentin Dancer, our 100 and 200 Meter Sprinter.

As you already know, the Trojan Baseball Team finished 30-2-1 on the season and defeated Bishop High School, 4-3, in the state finals to claim the University Interscholastic League (UIL) Class 3A state championship. Also, junior, Quentin Dancer, won gold in the 100 Meter and silver in the 200 Meter in the state UIL track meet.

To me, this event was a true testament of the uniqueness and spirit of West. I chose the title of this article for a reason. I believe these young men did more for our community than they have or will ever realize or know. The athletic accolades of Quentin and the baseball team are immeasurable. What they were able to accomplish transcends the medals, trophies, and news coverage. I believe their work was a charge and reminder to the community to continue to "Rise Up".

First and foremost, the community response to the event was simply amazing. Over the span of less than two weeks, Major Tommy Muska, Judge David Pareya, Chief Hudson and the West Police Department, Chief Nors and the West Fire Department, the Extra Bases Spirit Club, Rick and Stefanie Adams with the West Athletic Booster Club, Coach David Woodard, Coach Cory Beckham, Coach Lath Boykin, Carla Sykora, Kayla Hinojosa, and the West ISD Board of Trustees and administrative team were able to pull together a parade lineup, dinner options, spirit wear, press coverage, and celebration program. From the individuals who donated and drove the vehicles in the parade to the event coverage by KWTX, Channel 10, and Ed Sorensen and Rusty Garrett, the event was incredible. We simply released a time, date, and location for the event, and the community responded in mass. Oak Street and Main Street were packed with black and red clad fans of the mighty Trojans. For me, another unique part of the program centered on the return of several members of the 1999 state championship team. This team definitely left a great, long-lasting legacy for all future teams to strive to match.

Next, this event reminded me of a special quote. During the celebration, I shared this quote by deceased actor Christopher Reeve. He said, "Once you choose hope, anything's possible." I felt this quote was perfect for the past track and baseball seasons, because I believe without a doubt that the coaches, athletes, families, and community all chose "hope." Hope has everything to do with one's attitude. It is an attitude that must be focused on an outcome. This outcome, though, cannot be centered on just anything. It must be founded and focused on a positive outcome, or the best possible outcome.

Since my arrival in West back in January, I have noticed a change in the atmosphere and climate of our community. Yes, there are many exciting things going on across our community. Just in West ISD alone, we are on track to complete the new Middle School and High School complex in May. We have begun work on plans for a new softball, baseball, and track complex behind the new campus, as well as work on the 1923 high school complex. We are even adding a new safe room/cafeteria to West Elementary. New roads, homes, businesses, museum, and economic development vision are all going strong. It is an

exciting time to be in West and even more specifically... a West Trojan! Quentin and the baseball team probably do not realize all they have done to help move our community forward and inspire this sense of hope. Through their hard work, determination, perseverance, tangible acts of service and excellence, I know our community can and will continue to thrive.

Finally, I would like to end with a simple reminder about how blessed we truly are in West. I have worked in several school districts over the years and met thousands of students in Houston, Katy, and Waxahachie. In just five short months, I have learned what you already know. We have some of the best students and student athletes around. I would put our students and student athletes up against any students in the state, nation, or world. The staff of West ISD and I are truly fortunate and blessed to be a part of this great community.

Again, congratulations to Quentin and the baseball team. Thanks again to the city and community for your thoughtless acts of service to West ISD. Thanks to the West High School band, Dazzlers, and cheerleaders for cheering on Quentin and the team. Also, thanks to Michelle's House of Flowers, Pizza House of West, Slovacek's, Dr. Pepper, and Muska Insurance for providing food, drinks, and the decorations. The parade, ceremony, and trophies were for you, the community and West Trojans everywhere. The event was a true testament of the "hope" we all have in West and West ISD. Go Trojans! Continue to Rise Up!