

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: ROOSEVELT'S TRUE WORTH GOES UNRECOGNIZED

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Re 'The fight to save Roosevelt High School,' June 1: My grandfather, Walter A. Rabold, was the architect and engineer for the State Board of Education from 1920 to 1930 and provided services for school districts that did not hire their own. He pioneered the use of new technologies in schools and much admired Roosevelt High School for the excellence of the technologies employed. Roosevelt's massive air-handling system is as good as you can get without evaporative air conditioning, and it gave us comfortable classrooms without the expense of the modern technology. That air-handling system, combined with the radiation heating system, also gave us the cleanest, most comfortable classrooms during the winter. Except for the then-traditional use of coal, Roosevelt was a model of environmental efficiency and cleanliness.

My grandfather also admired the excellence of the architectural details and artistic decorations that extended even to the water fountains. Roosevelt is exemplary of an era when fine marble and original artists could be incorporated into public buildings without an outcry of unnecessary expense.

Demolition of Roosevelt High School would be one more example of the triumph of monetary crudity and expediency over historic and cultural responsibility. Civilization seems to be only skin deep when money is involved. We agonize over the trade-offs implied by scarcity instead of celebrating the opportunities presented by the reality of abundance.

Roosevelt High School is timeless and priceless and a stellar example of environmentally responsible technology.

It seems a shame that there is no creative vision for Roosevelt, but that seems to be predictable from the narrow thinking of the pragmatic and culturally sterile baby-boomers on the board of education.

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