

## How the Dragon Became the Valley Oak Mascot!

In 1978, after having several unofficial mascots, Valley Oak decided to find a permanent one. A 6th grade boy named Mickey Norwood brought the idea of a dragon to his class and school. Mickey emigrated with his mother from Thailand, his father was an African-American soldier killed in the Vietnam War. Using his artistic talent, Mickey drew the first Valley Oak Dragon. Mickey also wrote the following story about how the dragon came to Valley Oak:

*A long time ago, there was a valley that had all of the oak trees in that area and there was a family of dragons that lived there too. There was a Mother Dragon, a Father Dragon and a Baby Dragon. This family was protecting all the oak trees from a monster. This monster had big teeth and big hands and a big mouth and also big feet. This guy doesn't like oak trees. Everyday, he'd come to the valley oak trees and take them apart. He'd throw some of them into the water and he'd cut some up. But the Father Dragon protected these oak trees and he'd chase the monster...away he'd go as fast as he could.*

*My name is Mickey. We lived near the oak tree valley. One day, my Mom and I decided to go camping in the oak tree valley. On the first day, we set up the tent and got everything ready. Then we had meat for dinner and went to bed.*

*The next morning, I went walking along the lake in oak tree valley. I heard a sound come from a cave. When I went in, I was a big shadow. I went close and saw a dragon. My eyes opened wide and the dragon turned and looked at me. It was a great big baby dragon taking a bath!*

*"Well, hello little boy", said the dragon.*

*"Hi", I said.*

*"Would you like to hand me that soap over there?" asked the dragon.*

*That soap was as big as a watermelon! Besides that...it was too tall. "I can't get it" I told him.*

*This made the baby dragon start to cry. He cried louder and louder. Then the father dragon and the mother dragon came in. Father said, "Who are you little man?"*

*Well, I...I...I just tried to get that soap, but I ..." I said.*

*"Ho, ho, ho. Do you believe that mother? Hoo, ha, ha" laughed the father. "Come here a minutes, Mother. Give me your ear. I have a plan. Here...you...sssssss. Understand?"*

*"Yes, I understand" said Mother.*

*"OK. You go around to the other side and I'll stay here. If he tries to get away, grab him"*

*"I had this feeling that I had better get out of there. I took off for the mouth of the cave. I was sure I could make it. I knew I could. But suddenly, something pulled me back. It was the father dragon.*

*He said, "Stick around sonny. You ain't seen nothing yet, little man!" The mother dragon was lighting a fire and the father was washing a knife.*

*But suddenly, a monster came into the valley and he began to bite and cut and tear the oak trees apart. So mom and dad dragon went to chase the monster away. But they didn't know that there were two monsters and that one came to kidnap their baby! He was coming in the back door.*

*The mother and the father dragon were too far away to be called. So I whispered, "Hey, Baby Dragon, untie me!"*

*So the baby came from his little pool and untied me. I said to him "Here is what we are going to do. SSSSSSS. OK?"*

*"Yeah!" said the Baby Dragon.*

*"In half a minute the monster came in the back door.*

*"OK...NOW!" I shouted and I threw banana peels all over the floor. The monster got all confused and the baby dragon shoved him onto the peels. He slid into the fire place and most of his hair burned right off. The monster was so afraid and hurt.*

*About this time, the other and father dragon came back and saw what was happening. The monster ran and ran away as fast as he could.*

*After that, the mother and father and baby dragons became good friends of mine. And the monsters never came back.*

*Years later, there was a school built in the oak valley. It was called Valley Oak School. The boys and girls decided they'd be Valley Oak Dragons in honor of the Dragon family that protected these valley oak trees for so long.*

During a school-wide election on October 11, 1978, children and adults voted in the Valley Oak Dragon as the school mascot. According to an article in the October-November 1978 student newspaper, the Valley Oak Leaf, the four finalists were the Dragons, Bikers, Vikings and the Bulldogs. An assembly was held to watch a presentation in favor of each finalist. Mickey and his class dressed up like a long and colorful dragon and entertained the assembly. The Valley Oak Dragon was the clear winner!