

## ***Announcements for Wed. Feb. 16th, 2022***

This is a message from the student council. Today's club highlight of the day is the Model United Nations (UN). Model UN is a great opportunity to improve your public speaking skills through debating global issues. Type of activities include building research, public speaking, debate, conflict resolution skills and participating in Model UN conferences. If you are interested in signing up, contact Ms. Tolliday on Microsoft Teams.

Hey Carson, buy your yearbook before they are gone! There are only 100 books left. Yearbooks cost \$50.00 per book. Keep your Carson memories close to your heart.

**Black History Announcement** by Valerie Jacober  
February 16, 2022

Do you play video games? What, you've never heard of Jerry Lawson? Well, have you seen, ***High Score*** (2020), the documentary series on Netflix? If not, then listen up to find out how he came to be called the "father of modern gaming," in a very competitive and unpredictable business.

Gerald "Jerry" Lawson was born on December 1, 1940, in New York. Although his grandfather was educated in physics, he was refused jobs in that field, due to racist practices. However, he shared his love of building with Jerry, who was making walkie-talkies from scratch when he was 13 and selling them to other kids, as well as building shortwave radios, converters and antennas. Jerry's mother even registered her son with a false address so that he could attend a White school in order to receive a better education than he could in the underfunded Black school system where they lived. At 6' 6" Jerry, stood out in many other ways. In addition to becoming a self-taught electrical engineer, he was the only African American working in the Silicon Valley before it had that name. Jerry's first job was at Fairchild Semiconductors, as a "field applications engineering consultant", basically, a journeyman repairman. Four years later, he went into an arcade and became enthralled with the video game, "Pong" and wondered how putting a microprocessor in video games would improve

them. To fight boredom, Jerry built a video game cabinet out of materials from his job and tested it at a local pizza parlour. It was very popular and when his employer found out, they promoted him to Director of Engineering and Marketing for Fairchild's new video games division, instead of firing him!

In 1976, Lawson led his team to create the world's first cartridge-based game console, the Channel F. It was so popular that and it wasn't long before Atari copied this idea and Channel F went bust the following year! Allan Alcorn, creator of *Pong* said, "We determined at Atari that clearly, the cartridge-based game was the way to go...we...couldn't say we couldn't make one because Jerry had already done it!" Jerry left Fairchild to create his own company, VideoSoft, and then produced video cartridge games for Atari, three years before the "international video game crash"!

Although we no longer need cartridges to play video games, and Jerry's name was suspiciously omitted from the Chanel F patent, Jerry Lawson's invention played a pivotal role in the evolution of electronic gaming. Last year, Microsoft recognized his contributions by donating money to the ***Gerald A. Lawson Endowment Fund for Black and Indigenous Students***, operated by the University of Southern California's Games Program. **Black History. Learn about it!**

