

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: KIPPY & JEAN CHIN

Campion College's academic success is in large part due to the commitment of its hardworking and loyal group of teachers. Among this group are the well-loved husband and wife who have been members of the Campion family for over 30 years: "Kippy" and Jean Chin.

Many think that this couple met at Campion, but Kippy and Jean have known each other since they were teenagers. They both attended the University of the West Indies at the same time: he studied Chemistry and she, Botany. After graduation, Jean took up a job at Campion [the all-boys predecessor] teaching Integrated Science to Forms 1-3, while Kippy was appointed chief chemist at the Cane Farmers Association. The two later married and when their first son, Kesang, was born, Kippy decided to enter the teaching profession with the encouragement of Campion's Past Principal, John MacKay, in order to spend more time with his family. Kippy started off teaching Chemistry in 6th Form and, after a few years, added Advanced Math—subjects which he still teaches today. As for Jean, she has been teaching Biology to the CSEC group for a number of years among the numerous jobs she generously takes on around the school.

As proud parents of Campionites Kesang and Dave, the Chins continue to spread their parental care and attention on the two generations of Campion students whom they have taught so far. As master veteran teachers, they are able to convince their students that the topics are not intimidating but conquerable, and so, have left indelible imprints on these young minds. The Chins have dedicated their lives to teaching and helping so many students—including some of Jamaica's top doctors, engineers and scientists—achieve their dreams.

As any Campionite who has had the honour of being taught by the Chins will tell you, the most difficult thing about this amazing couple is trying to keep up with them, especially Jean. However, we did tie them down for just a few minutes to answer some questions which we thought Campionites would want to know after all these years!

How do you get the students to understand the many hard concepts you teach?

Kippy Chin: I recognize that what I am teaching is difficult. It was difficult for me at school. So I try to break it down and bring it to their level.

How do you make it so much fun? What are your tricks?

Kippy Chin: No tricks! I'm really an actor and in the classroom I have an instant audience. I like teaching. I use examples from everyday life and experiments.

Jean Chin: The children that come here are very bright. I never did a course in magic so have no tricks - what you see, is what you get.

What are some of your fondest memories at Campion?

Jean Chin: There was usually some scientific activity going on in the Junior Science Lab after school [in the early days of Campion Hall] as the fellows wanted to build transformers and have balloon races on strings across the lab or fix up the “green-house” that was set up at the back of the lab. They’d also want to dissect lizards and any other poor stray animal that they could catch. I learned a lot from them—some of them were very, very bright! My students continue to add to my education.

Have you ever had a scary moment in the lab?

Kippy Chin: Back in the 80s the lab caught on fire. No students were in there but I went in to try and put it out and got some burns. The Fire Brigade came and everything was okay.

Jean Chin: An interesting event that I remember was the time a frog, being dissected during an A-Level Practical Exam, pulled itself from the pan and attempted to jump away. It had already been cut mid-section and the skin pinned out. The student, a doctor today, nearly freaked out. I found it hilarious.

You have both had excellent results with your students. Do any of them stand out?

Kippy Chin: Yes, the school has always been strong in science. They are so many good students but if I had to pick one I would say David Sangster (Class of 1980) who went to MIT and now works in Silicon Valley. He was not a bookworm, used to romp all about the place, play football and everything but was naturally bright and always top of the class.

Jean Chin: Ian Gooding (Class of 1981) is the boy that comes to mind as I love art and he was so artistically gifted (and courteous and fun). He was into Star Wars and I still remember the Yoda-like puppets he made for his A-Level Exams. He has the credits on some of the Disney-animated films and I always look for his name when I go to see movies of that genre. On the female side, Kathryn Stewart [Current 6th Form Supervisor and Class of 1985] towers as she has done—and continues to do—so much for her alma mater. In my opinion, too few Campionites give back, or are heard of until it’s time for their children to enter high school. Big up Katie!

What does it feel like to teach generations of students and their children?

Kippy Chin: It makes me feel old! [Laughs]

Jean Chin: When I find out, I'll be sure to tell you. I don't think about things like that. I just try to do everything I have to do, count my blessings, give thanks and enjoy myself each day.

Mrs. Chin, what other areas are you involved with at Campion?

Jean Chin: I used to be in charge of the Houses—I initiated the Radley Reid Road Race, the Culinary Competition and also a Scrabble competition so Houses could have more interaction. While serving as moderator of the Lifesavers Health Team, I decided it would be fun to stage a Benefit Concert each year and invite parents, alumni and present students to participate and so we use to have Lifesaver's Concert. Today, I try to be a good Grade Supervisor and advise the Science Club when necessary and I just do anything that I get asked to do—if I want to do it and have time to do it well.

What was it like having your spouse and children here at Campion with you?

Kippy Chin: I taught both of our sons Chemistry and Math. They loved it because of how I am with them.

Jean Chin: Well, I only saw the boys if I happened to be teaching them or after school when they came to the prep-room I use as my "office" to do their homework. Kippy came to teach 6th Form, so our paths diverged after leaving the car when we arrived at school and only crossed when we were in the car on the way home. There was/is one big bonus with having him here – if I want a solution made up, or need a second opinion on some experiment I wanted to try I could call on him.

What would some of your current students not know about you?

Kippy Chin: I used to coach the Manning Cup team here and down at St. George's [my old high school].

Jean Chin: That I'm really here collecting samples to take back home.

Now Mr. Chin, everyone wants to know: Why is your nickname "Kippy"?

Kippy Chin: That is a long story. It is my "stage name". My real name is Kesang like my father and my son. My father's best friend's name was Kippy and he asked my father to call me that as a nickname to remember him. I met him a few years ago. I thought there were only two Kippys in the world but we saw on National Geographic that there was a boy in Africa named Kippy and perhaps there are more.

We also know you follow horseracing, how come?

Kippy Chin: I grew up with it through my uncles and so on. I am not a real gambler, I don't bet much money. I usually break even. But I like to use my math on it—look at the times, use time rating, but it doesn't always work because, you know, it is Jamaica and so there are other factors. And, as a mathematician, you know about the odds.

Finally, what dreams do both of you have for Champion?

Kippy Chin: I hope we continue to be strong in science, to do well.

Jean Chin: If I can be said to have dreams for Champion, it would be that, like every other school in Jamaica, it produces graduates that are honest, hard-working, sensitive to the needs of others, protective of the environment, willing to show others how to help themselves, and generous—to each other and to their alma mater.