

[A] A CASUAL CHAT Ted Shinta gives a speech to students in the Student Union. Photo provided by Naveen Karun

[B] A TEST OF ENDURANCE Braving 9,500 feet of elevation, Ted Shinta cycles through the Davis Double Century. Shinta rode multiple times across the country, both by himself and with friends. Photo provided by Koda Shinta

[C] IN THE MOUNTAINS Ted Shinta bikes through the high sierra region of Alpine County on one of the most challenging routes in the West Coast. While enjoying the beautiful scenery, Shinta biked a total of 103 miles on the trail. Shinta had loved riding bikes from his early childhood and grew up frequently playing sports with his friends in his neighborhood. Photo provided by Koda Shinta



DAVIS DOUBLE CENTURY
Davis, California
May 10, 1980

AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL

Ted Shinta's family, colleagues, and students reflect on Shinta's impact on their lives

While many know Ted Shinta through Robotics or his Engineering courses, few know of his childhood spent on orchards. Shinta was the only boy amongst his four sisters, with Gwen Koda being the youngest of the four, and Koda stated that growing up with sisters has taught Shinta to be more understanding towards the women in his life. According to Koda, while Shinta would spend most of his free time biking around the neighborhood with friends, he always ensured to spend time with her as well.

"We just hung out at the house, and we had a very large yard," Koda said. "We had a big sandbox and Ted would build forts and tunnels in the big mounds of soil, and he had figurines of all kinds of things. We [also] used to climb trees. Our neighbor was an apricot grower, and we were friends with his kids. So, sometimes during the summers, we would help cut [and dry] the apricots. And it was just a very simple type of childhood we had together."

According to Koda, Shinta's humility and patience were two of his most admirable qualities when they were growing up. She believes this is what makes him such a unique, loveable teacher.

"Ted has always been really smart," Koda said. "No matter what, he's always been very intelligent [and] very much an academic. His good quality is that he never was a snob about [it]. [He'd never be] like, 'I know more than you. And you're not smart, because you're much younger. And I know so much more than you.' He's always really patient in explaining everything. I would say he's confident about what he knows, but he's very humble about it. Even at a young age, he was really patient with other people."

Having spent all four years of high school with Shinta as his mentor, senior and Robotics Vice President Naveen Karun voices his appreciation for Shinta's endless support. According to Naveen, Shinta's overt passion for engineering is amongst his primary motivators for pursuing engineering in and after high school.

"When I joined high school, [engineering] was a possibility, and I wasn't completely sure what I'd be doing in the future," Karun said. "But taking his classes, doing robotics, learning from him, [and] just seeing how much he's done [has motivated me] — he was a machinist himself, and he has enthusiasm for what [he] has experienced. Those things all just made it pretty obvious to me, [that] that's what I want to do."

According to Karun, Shinta has helped familiarize him with the machinery he now uses on a daily basis, training and shaping him into the person he is today. He makes particular note of Shinta's contributions to the Robotics Team, stating that he has contributed his own money to buy snacks for and support the team. Yet according to Photography Teacher and colleague Brian Chow, Shinta's contributions to the team run far deeper than that.

"He's really dedicated," Chow said. "A lot of the things that the students are using in his lab he paid for [with] his own money. We're not talking a small amount. We're talking major pieces of equipment, 10s of 1000s of dollars of equipment that he's put his own money and time on maintaining and fixing and even purchasing."

Chow voices his admiration for Shinta's teaching skills as well, noting that Shinta's dedication to his job is an inspiration to him. Furthermore, Chow states that Shinta has reinvented the Engineering Department and is always looking for ways to improve, yet also understands his boundaries and does not get easily discouraged, which Chow believes is rare and one of the best qualities that his coworker has. According to Koda, Shinta has always been very ambitious, with him embarking on the journey of a lifetime in the 1980s.

"He decided to go bicycling across the country by himself," Koda said. "That was around 1984. He rode all by himself the first time, and then he rode again, across the country a few years later with a friend. A good memory for me is thinking, 'well, he's going off and doing this bicycle ride all by himself, [and] camping as he [goes] along.'"

"He's always really patient in explaining everything. I would say he's confident about what he knows, but he's very humble about it."

—Sister Gwen Koda

THANK YOU, MR. SHINTA

"He cares a lot about the fact that a lot of students have a high pressure to maintain their grades and [juggle extracurriculars]. Whenever he notices that a student is feeling especially stressed, he gives them snacks — he always has snacks out for the kids who hang out in his room or are just in his classes — and that's something that I've never seen another teacher do. It's very nice of him, very generous."

STUDENT MAYA PULLARA (11)

"Mr. Shinta is always there to help guide and support the team. Whenever we ask him questions or need his advice, he's always happy to help us out. For instance, he's always there at competitions watching the robot and giving us advice on what we should do, as well as chaperoning us and making sure that everything's running smoothly. To Mr. Shinta, you're pretty much the biggest reason [that] this team [is] as big and successful as it is, and we really, really appreciate that."

STUDENT PAARTH MISHRA (12)

"He's one of the best individuals at the school of the most approachable human beings

ever. I just think of him as outstanding in every way, shape, and form. He's very good at woodshop and at engineering — he knows everything. He has humility and humbleness and really just wants [students] to have a better understanding and a better life."

COLLEAGUE PETE PELKEY

"I think he's good for the school. He puts so much time into [Robotics]. He's committed. He does care. I've [told him] 'You know, this is a lot of work for you, and you're getting older.' He's older than me, and I'm tired all the time. He really puts in so much, and I don't think younger teachers realize how hard it is to keep doing that when you get in your 60s."

COLLEAGUE JAY SHELTON



TOUR OF THE CALIFORNIA ALPS
Alpine County, South Lake
July 8, 1988



[D] SUAVE IN A SUIT Ted Shinta poses in front of the camera for his high school yearbook photo. In high school, Shinta grew up amongst orchards in Fremont and later moved to Las Palmas Park. Photo provided by Koda Shinta



[E] AN AMIABLE MENTOR Ted Shinta instructs junior Chloe Hung on how to use the manual mill to shape and cut solid materials. Throughout the years, Shinta was more than willing to pass his knowledge onto his students, as he patiently guided them step-by-step. Photo provided by Naveen Karun