

Marco Ruteleo Herrera

August 19, 1955 ~ September 14, 2025

I often think about a conversation I had with Marco while waiting for an AP Test to start. He was telling me about race and identity, and what it was like for him growing up and feeling like he had to choose between his friends who were telling him to not work hard in school because that's what white people do. He said it's much harder to figure out your identity, and you have to confront your race at a much earlier point in life if you're not white. He told of a meeting he recently attended where everyone was asked to go around the room and say their racial background and one lady said "I'm and my race is … umm… I'm just normal…". She didn't even recognize that normal to her may be something very different from normal to someone else. It was a conversation that has profoundly impacted the way I view the world and helped me have a lot more compassion for the silent challenges people face who don't look the same as me. The point of this comment is not the discussion about race, the point is that a discussion I had with him over 25 years ago is still so memorable and continues to be meaningful to me. I'm so grateful to Marco for the positive impact he has had on my life.

- Jonathan Landon

Marco, my friend and mentor, always and forever on my mind…You were a great help and confident to me and to many young people at West High…Rest in Peace, my friend, you need it and deserve it! Until we meet again!

- Orin Johanson