



My name is **Paul Pinza**. I am a native of San Jose, California who has lived in the South Bay my entire life. My father is also a San Jose native (though he lived in L.A. for a couple of years thanks to law school), but my mother was born in rural New York and lived in a few spots as her family gradually moved west. My parents met at Santa Clara University and still live in the house where they raised me along with my younger brother and sister.



*Mom and Dad, newly married and off to Hawaii.*

When I was finishing my Bachelors in Theatre Arts at UC Santa Cruz, I had realized that making a career as an actor or director involved way too much self-promotion. I had a part-time job visiting elementary schools as Arnold Aktivlistener, the Conflict Terminator (picture Hanz and Franz from *SNL* wearing the classic Terminator shades), and this side-hustle in the got me thinking about teaching as a potential alternative. In the Winter, I would be cast in a touring production of *Twelfth Night*, another chance to visit schools and, on occasion, workshop the Bard with students. In one session, my partner and I successfully taught a room of seventh graders an Elizabethan drinking song, while convincing the shy and stubborn girl to pass out on cue in a perfectly timed comedic collapse. That's how I found my calling to teach.



*Jeff as Oscar, me as Felix.*

I taught high school English and coached the speech and debate team for over a decade, but the stage kept calling me over the years. I struck an instant friendship with our school's Drama teacher, who was hired to teach English and Drama the same year I was (and he's still there, at the same high school, doing great work.)

He pitched the idea of putting on a faculty play each year as a joint fundraiser for both our programs. This wild venture debuted with the two of us as *The Odd*

*Couple*, followed up by Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*. I invited my sister to come down from San Francisco to see that one, and she could bring that co-worker of hers that she'd been trying to set me up with. That way, the two of them could bolt right after the show if there was, shall we say, *no interest* in hanging out afterwards. Turns out there was interest, and Rhee and I have been hanging out ever since, including almost twenty years as husband and wife, and eighteen years as the proud parents of Donovan, who



Cast photo of *The Mousetrap*.

will be starting Sonoma State in the Fall.



Donovan

Rhee

I am entering my 25<sup>th</sup> school year as an educator, and just my second outside of high school. In 2012, I had the honor of serving on the Curriculum Framework Committee with the California Department of Education, crafting the initial draft of the state's framework for K-12 English instruction and integrated language development. Soon thereafter, I earned my master's with a thesis on assessment for English language development and began a decade (so far) of administrative work as an associate principal, a principal, and now as a Dean of Language Arts. I believe that elevating the language of connection and collaboration can dismantle the colonial structures that plague our schools, and I am extremely excited to join this cohort, build new relationships, and engage in these conversations.