

This monthly article highlights one of our branch members. We hope that you enjoy knowing a little more about your fellow members and the interesting life they have had. If you have someone you would like to nominate or if you would like to help author an article, please email the editor, Ron Nakamoto, at [ron.nakamoto\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:ron.nakamoto@yahoo.com).



PATRICK WONG

“People born in the year of the Tiger are brave, competitive, unpredictable, and self-confident. They are very charming and well-liked by others.” This is what the Chinese horoscope prescribes and if you’ve met Patrick Wong, our youngest SIR member, you would nod your head in general agreement. Patrick joined Branch 35 after meeting Dave Ogle and Bill Hall on the golf course at Sunnyvale. They were playing a casual game and were paired together as a group. Our best Branch ambassadors are our active members and this was the case that peaked Patrick’s curiosity to visit and join.

Patrick was born and raised in Miami, FL. He was the youngest in a family of five. His parents owned and ran several Chinese restaurants (Limehouse and Ruby’s) where Patrick, along with his brother and sister, helped with the never-ending work. His father was “old school” and used only an abacus to handle all the accounting. He recalls his father writing employee names and amounts on pay envelopes filled with cash and coin paid out every week of the year. His grandmother immigrated to the U.S. and helped raise Patrick and taught him to speak Cantonese, as that was all that she spoke. The family restaurant helped sustain the entire family to include Patrick through college. Most of our members remember Elvis, Patty Page and Perry Como when we were in our youth. Patrick remembers Led Zeppelin, Motown’s Jackson Five and Queen.

Patrick attended North Miami Beach High School, the same high school that Sheryl Sandberg (Chief Operating Officer of Facebook) attended. He enrolled as an engineering student at the University of Miami and had to buckle down with the heavy engineering curriculum but always made time to watch his beloved “Hurricanes” football team. His fellow classmates at that time included Jim Kelly (All American, NFL quarterback for the Buffalo Bills who played in the Super bowl four times), Vinny Testaverde (All American, Heisman Trophy winner and NFL quarterback for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers) and Bernie Kosar (All American, NFL quarterback for the Cleveland Browns). (Editor’s note: In 1983 as a freshman, Bernie Kosar completed 61.5 percent of his passes for 2,328 yards and 15 touchdowns, leading the Hurricanes to an 11–1 regular season and a berth in the Orange Bowl against top-ranked Nebraska, which had won 22 consecutive games. In the game, Kosar passed for 300 yards and two touchdowns, and the Hurricanes topped the Cornhuskers 31–30 for Miami’s first national championship. Kosar earned Orange Bowl MVP honors for his performance. Patrick was there, screaming and yelling with the rest of the Hurricane fans.)

Post graduation, Patrick accepted a job with AT&T's Bell Lab in Chicago and worked on the Number 4 Electronic Switching System (4ESS). (Editor's note: The 4ESS was a class 4 telephone electronic switching system that was the first digital electronic toll switch introduced by Western Electric for long-distance switching. It was introduced in Chicago in January 1976 to replace the 4a crossbar switch.) He worked on both the hardware and software for the 4 and later 5ESS. Having demonstrated excellent engineering design work, Patrick was awarded with a one year paid sabbatical to pursue a Masters degree in Engineering at the University of his choice. He chose Stanford.

Patrick immediately took to the Bay Area with its excellent weather, short sleeve winters and friendly natives. He returned to Chicago after graduation to continue design and development on projects to further advance the evolution of telephone switching systems. Stanford and his time at work evolved his belief that business and product marketing was where the action was. As a first generation American, English was his primary language and Patrick spoke it so well that he was quite comfortable and in fact excelled in his product marketing positions. He also pursued an M.B.A. from the University of Chicago after work, to round out his education.

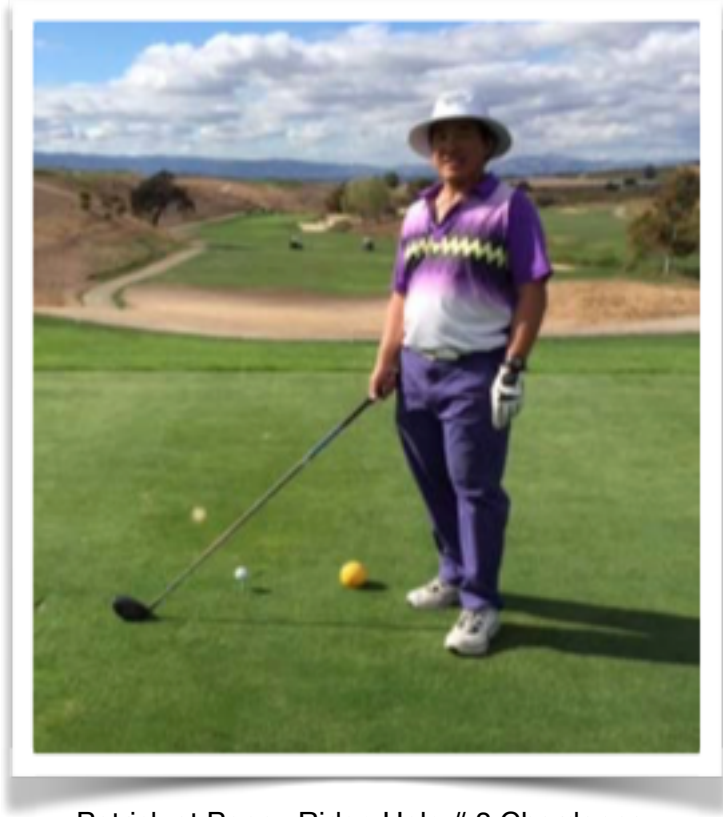
Armed with a strong resume of telephony experience at Bell Labs, an M.S. in electrical engineering and an M.B.A., Patrick decided to move back to the Bay Area and accepted a position with SynOptics Communications. (Editor's note: SynOptics Communications was an early computer network equipment vendor in Santa Clara who popularized the concept of the modular Ethernet "hub" and high-speed Ethernet networking over copper twisted-pair and fiber optic cables. SynOptics was merged into Bay Networks and eventually bought out for \$9 billion by Nortel to form Nortel Networks.) Patrick moved onto Combinet, a new start-up that provided telecommuters and remote offices with high-speed remote access to enterprise networks. Combinet was acquired by Cisco for \$114 million. Patrick became another Silicon Valley success story. However, since he was mid-career he decided to continue to work and moved onto Madge Networks (Editor's note: Madge Networks was one of the world's leading suppliers of networking hardware. Madge Networks developed Token Ring, Ethernet, ATM, ISDN, and other products providing extensive networking solutions.), Finisar (optical components company) and later to Heartland Payment Systems (payment processing and technology provider).

After twenty years in engineering and product marketing roles, Patrick did what few of us would or could do, he decided to retire and enjoy life while he still had some bounce in his step. He travels regularly back to Miami to visit his mother and family. He likes to take long trips around the world to include Asia (Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore), Europe (Italy, England, France, Germany) and the Caribbean (Mexico, Jamaica, Cayman Islands). He plans a trip every two to three years. At home, he watches the stock market and stays current with a handful of stocks. His favorite money book is Tony Robbin's "MONEY Master the Game: 7 Simple Steps to Financial Freedom". Robbin's best advice was to stay away from mutual funds and his best practice was to follow a balanced portfolio of long-term bonds, stocks, international, short-term bonds and gold.

As a younger guy, Patrick is single and very active with his hobbies which include bowling, golf, bicycling, hiking, travel and fantasy football. He at one time was an eleven-index golfer but lack of practice and too many distractions has caused his index to escalate. In Patrick's words; "I am determined to get back into form and am back on the driving range practicing at least two times a week and playing three times a week, mostly on my own. Once my game gets better I will

start playing with Sirs more often. My bowling activity is much better. When I joined the bowling league I didn't have a ball and my bowling was at best hit and miss (more miss than hit). I like to use my mobile phone and found 'Best Bowling,' a software application which allows me to visually log every score and pin layout in order to provide trending data on bowling strengths and weaknesses."

As engineering habits are hard to break, you can usually see Patrick logging in his score and strokes for his bowling and golf games. He is always analyzing his hits and misses and moving to improve his performance. He regularly stops by Homestead Lanes in Cupertino to practice to improve his game. He has bowled up to twelve games in a two hour practice marathon just to improve his ball release. It seems to have paid off as his game has improved and now everyone wants him on their team.



Patrick at Poppy Ridge Hole # 8 Chardonnay Course. What a day for golf!

Patrick has enjoyed his retirement and is looking forward to many more years of a stress free life. He marvels at the highly organized Golf Activity and thoroughly enjoys the friendships he has made at the Bowling Activity. Although he may be the youngest member of our Branch he enjoys the company of the "older guys". Patrick hopes that someone will start an investment activity, which he wants to join.

So we conclude this profile with a passage from one of his favorite songs sung at the Hurricane football games, Queen's number one hit, "We Are The Champions".

"We are the champions, my friends,
And we'll keep on fighting 'til the end
We are the champions,
We are the champions,
No time for losers
'Cause we are the champions of the world"

What a great philosophy for life. Don't be surprised if, when you see Patrick, he throws up the "U" gesture with his hands which is the University of Miami Hurricanes' sign that he bleeds Orange and Green, the colors of his alma mater.