

“What drove me to want to be an officer is the way of living a professional life. You have a regular schedule and you’re being self disciplined all the time, and you think all the time.”



Junior **Yubo Song** stands with one of his English teachers in China who taught him for years prior to his move to the United States. Song’s English education was mainly focused on British-style English.

by Winnie Wilson
associate editor

Yubo Song, a widely respected and hard-working member of the Oxford High School community, immigrated to the United States a year ago. Since he has made the move overseas, Song has actively sought out and participated in a wide array of activities throughout the Oxford community.

Song came to the United States halfway through his junior year after living in China for 17 years. The adjustment to American-style schooling was difficult, as the usual conditions in which Song was accustomed to were much different.

“I’m from China. It’s northeast China, the first industrialized city called Anshan, or the son of the republic. We have had a really big steel industry in China since the 1950s. It was a highly polluted city and it’s not a big city compared to [other] Chinese cities. There are four million people in the city but it’s small. Because it’s a small city, it’s hard to get into the good colleges or schools. We have really highly competitive learning and basically that’s how we are smarter than Americans,” Song said. “School would start at 7 [a.m.] and end at 11 [p.m.] and you have six hours of homework. I’d wake up at six and get in bed at four.”

Song was brought to the United States through an immigrant family program that his aunt had applied for. The program allows for siblings of American citizens to come to the United States from China.

“16 years ago, in 2005, my aunt and uncle came here [to America]. My aunt got her American citizenship and at the same time she applied to this program for my dad and aunt. This is how me and my cousin came here,” Song said. “It’s a really long line, and you have to wait for 12 years and then another three or four because of the Chinese-American relationship.”

Shortly after starting classes at Oxford High School, Song joined the Marine Corps

JROTC program which sparked his love for serving others and the country.

“The thing that drove me into ROTC is that my first day here, last January, the school started and I didn’t know anyone and I remember there was an emergency in the common area,” Song said. “We couldn’t stay in the common area, so I walked into the building and used the math hall restroom. I met Captain Baxter, and he is such a polite man and always says ‘hi’ to you regardless if he knows you or not and he said ‘hi’ to me. He told me to join ROTC and he took me to the classroom and showed me around. I still remember the first day I introduced myself. My first sentence said ‘I don’t speak English,’ and my second sentence was ‘I’m joking.’”

Song devotes much of his time to the MCJROTC to ensure success and productivity throughout the program, and he serves as a leader in the organization this year.

“I am currently the operations officer of the ROTC, where I plan everything we do as a unit and I make the schedule for the ROTC, which also includes some funding from people,” Song said. “I can’t give you a number for how much time I spend, it’ll be too big. I have spent more than one thousand hours doing ROTC things.”

In addition to the MCJROTC, Song also holds a leadership role in Chargers Supporting Veterans (CSV), a club dedicated to veteran outreach.

“CSV is a club where we support veterans. It was a few students at the school’s idea and I think it’s pretty dope,” Song said. “There are two local veterans just in our school in the ROTC room so it makes communication with them easy. They help us and tell us how to better think about veterans. Many people think military people are serious all the time and are killing machines but they aren’t, they are like everyone else.” Song also serves the greater Oxford community as a first responder. He was introduced to this possibility at the Oxford High School job fair last May.



Junior **Yubo Song** stands with his uncle and a few of his uncle’s PhD students from Ole Miss over Thanksgiving Break. Song has been living with his uncle’s family since moving to the United States.

“I met with the police and fire department at the same time,” Song said. “The fire department has a thing where you can become part of the fire department when you turn 18 years old and if you’re physically qualified. I feel that the school may need a fireman or first responder when something happens and no one knows what to do. I filled out an application in June to become a part of the fire department in August. I am certified as a basic life support provider which means I can do the AED and CPR and the Heimlich when someone’s choking.”

According to Song, filling his schedule with extracurricular activities reminds him of his busy daily schedule in China.

“One of the reasons why I want to volunteer with the fire department is due to my transcript which the school couldn’t do correctly, I am 18, and a junior, and I have a less stressful schedule,” Song said. “I want to try to find a life like mine back in China where you wake up at six a.m. and sleep at four a.m. Learning skills and gaining experience is very important to our lives, so I can learn a skill that can help myself and help others. Another thing is a lot of friends I know are going to enlist and say they are going to serve the country by next summer, and I’m like ‘I already serve this country now.’ I also like living in danger, and the most dangerous places are also the safest which is why I chose to [be a first responder]. There’s also so many things that come with it, but the major thing is I can help those around me when they actually need help.”

The language barrier was also a difficulty for Song as he entered American schools at a relatively advanced level.

“I learned English from a teacher who came to China from the Netherlands, and we became good friends and talked all the time. I developed a British English accent. Here, [people speak with] the southern Mississippi accent. That thing is killing me. The ‘y’all’ and that kind of stuff. That’s kind of the hardest thing about

my accent because I don’t know how it sounds to you guys. I feel like I speak perfectly but according to others no. Speaking English is really not a hard thing but listening and reading is the hardest. I still can’t hear perfectly and as for reading, I just can’t read at all. I feel dizzy when I watch English,” Song said.

Song also faced hardship when he first came to the United States due to racism and xenophobia. He highlights the importance of raising awareness of these situations to prevent them in the future.

“If you got to talk about racism, racism is always there. To be honest, someone threw a pizza at me when I first got to school in the cafeteria to eat. I didn’t do anything back then and let it go. I don’t even know who did that to me. Most Chinese just want to stay out of trouble, but I’m like h*ll no,” Song said.

Song has very high goals and aspirations when it comes to his future and schooling.

“The Naval Academy is my first choice, but I do want to go to the Marine Corps as an officer for 15 or 20 years. I also want to go to a college with a really good ROTC program. I have a 4.3 GPA, it used to be a 4.4 but I got a B in English. My second choice is Yale. After college, I just want to commission as an officer in the Marine Corps. Marine Corps is hardcore. What drove me to want to be an officer is the way of living a professional life. You have a regular schedule and you’re being self disciplined all the time, and you think all the time. You think before you move, and that’s just kind of the life I want to be in and how life in China is. In America, there’s more freedom, so it’s a way to appreciate this country and it can give me more opportunities and higher education,” Song said. “After this I do want to end up in law enforcement. I like chemistry and want to major in forensic chemistry which is why I want to go into law enforcement and be a crime investigator or CSI.”



Winnie Wilson • theCharger

“You think before you move, and that’s just kind of the life I want to be in and how life in China is. In America, there’s more freedom, so it’s a way to appreciate this country and it can give me more opportunities and higher education.”