

Diablo Honors.....

Harry Baggett

By Dee and Tony Geisler

Winemaker, author, friend, veteran, community leader, father, grandfather, sportsman, professor, husband, world traveler, bread maker, marble champion. Harry Baggett has filled many roles in life and has been our great neighbor in Diablo for 55 years.

Harry was born in Laurel, MS, on November 19, 1929. Harry's family moved a great deal because of his father's job as a "saw filer" (sharpener of band saws) at lumber companies. Harry lived so many places growing up that we think each of the mill towns should have a sign when entering the town, "Harry Baggett Slept Here."

While in elementary school, Harry became known as the "Marble Champion of Chester, California." He carried a pocket full of marbles and would play games "for fun or for keeps". In 1947, Harry enrolled at Chico State and earned a Bachelors degree in business administration.

He joined the U. S. Navy during the Korean War and "took trips on his uncle's (Sam) yacht (a destroyer)" after receiving his officer training at Treasure Island. During his 2-1/2 years of active duty, Harry traveled to Hong Kong, Manila, Japan and South Korea earning a ribbon with a battle star. In the Naval Reserve, he earned golden oak leaves and promotion to Lieutenant Commander.



Harry in 1960



Harry & Jacquie's Wedding

Harry met his eventual soulmate and love of his life Jacquie Broderson at an officers party in Long Beach. Jacquie had followed two teacher friends to move from Minnesota and took a job in a legal office. Jacquie then relocated to San Francisco to work as an executive secretary. Harry followed eight months later when he was discharged from the Navy and enrolled at San Francisco State to earn a teaching credential. He married Jacquie in 1954. They moved to Richmond where Harry taught business courses at Harry Ells High School and worked on his Masters Degree in Business Administration at San Francisco State at night. He continued his studies in the summers and earned a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.

Harry loved teaching. His "break in life" came when he was teaching introduction to business and was unhappy with the text. He authored supplementary practice materials and in 1966 the first edition of the practice materials was published. He authored new editions every five years for many years. His materials are still in use in high school classrooms. He authored additional textbooks, conducted workshops on teaching methods and spoke at conferences in his field.

He and Jacquie bought a lovely home at Grizzly Peak in Berkeley with a view of all five bridges. One day while driving to Diablo Valley College on Grizzly Peak Boulevard, Harry encountered heavy fog. He suddenly had a strange feeling and pressed on the brakes to stop. The fog cleared for a moment, and he saw he was a few feet from going over the cliff near Grizzly Peak Vista Point. That night he told Jacquie, "This weekend, we look for a home in the Diablo Valley." In November 1966, they bought their home in Diablo.

Harry taught at Diablo Valley College from 1966 until 1985, then at The Center for Higher Education, the extension campus of DVC, until 1993 when he retired. He was awarded "Teacher of the Year" at the Center for Higher Education.

The Diablo of 1966 was very different from the Diablo of today. Alameda Diablo was lined with sixteen foot tall oleanders and had no gates or fences. Harry and Jacquie enjoyed walking to Alameda Diablo in the evening. By 9 p.m., Diablo was very dark because there were only a few lights visible in homes behind the oleanders. No homes had outside lights on at night.



Harry & Jacquie in 2014

They quickly made friends. When they moved in, Bill was in third grade and Susan was in first grade. Jacquie met mothers with children at Green Valley Elementary School looking to share driving the children to school. They were members of Diablo Country Club for 37 years. The children swam with friends and played tennis. He and his son had a lot of fun at the Diablo Father/Son picnic/fishing day at Lake Diablo. They enjoyed three annual Diablo Property Owner Association events: the Newcomers Party, the Ice Cream Social and the Annual Dinner. Harry's favorite events at the Club were the Christmas and Easter parties with the children and then grandchildren. He enjoyed Saturday Men's Tennis and breakfast afterwards in the Men's Grill and liked inviting friends to the Silver Racket Tournament—especially when he won!

The Baggetts bought a horse for Susan and kept it corralled in the quarter acre behind the house in the summer. When Harry arrived home after work, he would ride it to the Post Office and up Mt. Diablo.

Harry has had many friends and neighbors who have contributed to making Diablo a very special place. Special friends were Bob O'Neill, Bill Rei, Jim Stone, Don Kinkel. Arnold Blackmur and, in recent years, Tony and Dee Geisler and Ray Brant.

Harry's hobbies have been tennis, hunting, fishing, backpacking, genealogy and traveling. He and Jacquie traveled extensively, visiting 49 states and 36 foreign countries on 5 continents. For many years, Harry baked all the family bread and was a home winemaker for 15 years. *Bodega Baggett* won prizes in the Contra Costa Home Wine Makers Club Annual Competition.

Jacquie was an avid genealogist and a founding member of the San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society. Her hobbies were tennis, bridge, gardening, writing, and volunteering, and she was an avid reader. Jacquie passed away in September 2015. Harry's son Bill is deceased; however, Harry has two grandchildren Scott and Elizabeth Baggett and his daughter Susan Russell and her two children, Gregory and Emalee.



This one didn't get away!

Harry has been an outstanding civic leader in the Diablo community having served as secretary on the DPOA Board, where he produced the first Diablo Homeowners Directory. He also was chairman of the Diablo Advisory Committee to the Diablo Municipal Advisory Council (DMAC).

We thank Harry for his many contributions to Diablo and for being a friend and neighbor for 55 years.

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