

HONORING THOSE WHO SHAPED HIS LIFE

Bill Adams, a California businessman, never forgot the value of his Marianist education.

BY JOHN SCHROEDER

Chaminade High School, a Marianist school in Santa Cruz, Calif., closed more than 70 years ago. Even so, those who visit the Chaminade Resort & Spa conference center that operates on the property today can learn something about that long-ago Marianist presence. Why? Because Bill Adams insisted on it.

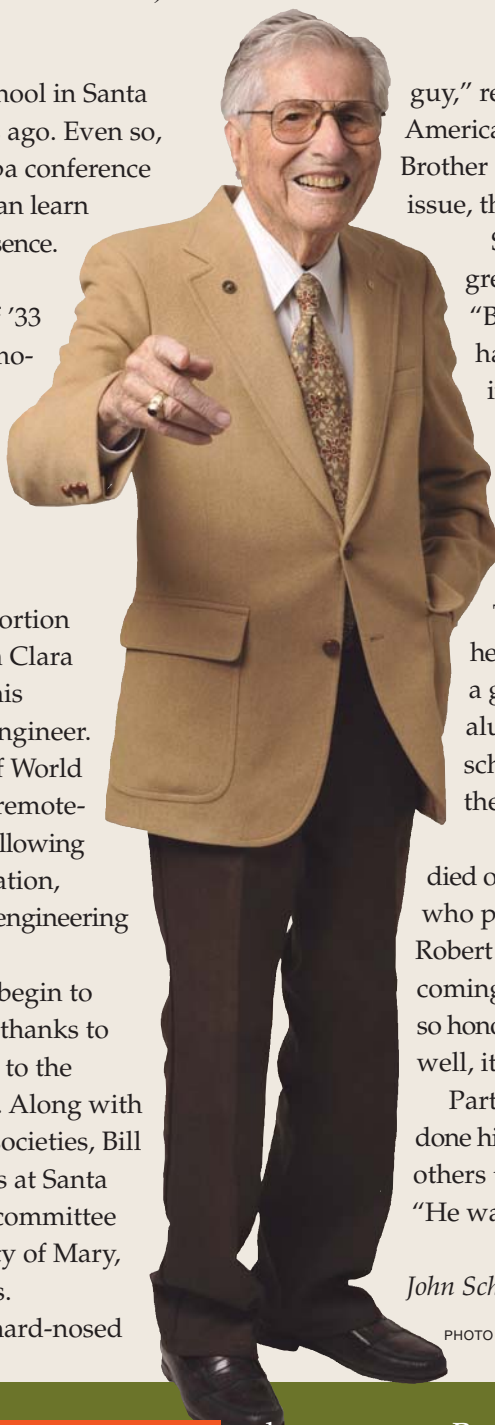
Some years ago, the Chaminade Class of '33 alumnus took the lead in having a commemorative plaque installed at the site because he wanted people to remember the high school — and the impact its graduates have had all across the country.

AN INDEFATIGABLE SPIRIT

Bill could have laid claim to a substantial portion of that impact. After graduating from Santa Clara University in 1937, he quickly established his credentials as an accomplished industrial engineer. Working for General Electric at the outset of World War II, Bill led the effort to design the first remote-controlled turrets for high-altitude aircraft. Following the war, he joined Food Machinery Corporation, where he worked for 34 years in a variety of engineering leadership positions.

But a distinguished career track doesn't begin to describe what Bill accomplished in his life, thanks to an indefatigable spirit and a deep devotion to the organizations and institutions he held dear. Along with active engagement in several professional societies, Bill served in numerous alumni board positions at Santa Clara University, and on the development committee of the former Pacific Province for the Society of Mary, among many other volunteer commitments.

"Bill was a very generous guy — and a hard-nosed



guy," recalls Marianist Brother Robert Juenemann. Bill, an American of Swiss heritage, was "an insistent Swiss," says Brother Robert. "Once his mind was made up about an issue, there was no more discussion."

Since the two first met in the 1960s, Brother Robert grew to admire Bill for his kindness and his tenacity. "Bill never missed an alumni dinner or luncheon. He had a tremendous love for the the Marianist presence in Santa Cruz," he says. "He remembered the great teachers he had in high school, and the foundation they laid for the rest of his life."

In more recent years, the work of Marianist Father Jim Heft and artist Joseph Aspell (a former Marianist brother) also deeply touched Bill's heart. To say thanks for the Marianist impact on his life, he established a living endowment in 1990 — making a gift that now totals more than \$54,000 to underwrite alumni activities, fund scholarships to Marianist schools and provide support for elderly members of the Marianist community.

Active almost to the end of his 96 years, Bill Adams died on Sept. 10, 2013, joining his beloved wife Marijane, who passed away in 2005. "He loved his wife," Brother Robert recalls. "You could not talk to Bill without Marijane coming into the conversation. He'd always say he was just so honored that she agreed to go out with him. But she did ... well, it made his life."

Part of Bill's character was to remember those who had done him a favor — both large and small — and to encourage others to remember as well, according to Brother Robert. "He was a good man, a very generous man." ■

John Schroeder is a freelance writer from St. Louis.

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