

# BILL WALK—MAN OF

“I think that everyone should early in life establish his own personal goals. These goals, though attainable, should be established at a point which causes him to constantly reach and extend himself to attain them.”

The man speaking is tall and brawny, and for as long as he can remember, he has always had personal goals which he has had to stretch to attain, and he continues to extend himself—he continues to reach his goals.

He is William E. Walk, Jr., originally of Covington, Tennessee, U.S.A., and now of Ontario, California. This is a man of many talents and interests in life and (although he seldom wears a real hat) it is noted by his friends that he is a man who wears many “symbolic hats”. Bill has inherited his penchant for persistence, dedication, and old-fashioned hard work from the ancestry combination of Dutch, Welsh, and German of his father, who died over 20 years ago at the age of 83. His mother, who is still active, energetic, and 93 years young, contributed the ancestry attributes of the Irish, Scottish, and English.

The county courthouse that Bill enjoyed visiting as a youngster remains even today one of Bill’s favorite memories of his home town, Covington.

“Although I haven’t seen it in several years, I can still visualize it,” Bill says of the courthouse. “As I recall, it is located in the center of the square. A statue and cannon commemorating Civil War days stand at the entrance of the Square, and the business district is built in a square around the court building.”

Some of Bill’s relatives still living in Tennessee recount that, as a youngster, he would accompany his father to the courthouse and would sit for hours listening to trial proceedings.

They further recall that even during that early period he was resolute in his conviction that he would some day be an attorney and some day serve on the bench as a judge—both of which goals he was to attain later in life.

Young Bill and his parents moved to the Ontario-Upland area of California in 1923. It was at this time that Bill donned his *First Hat* which was symbolic of his high school and college years. Classmates and friends from this early period recall that even in those years this very energetic lad was always busy and on the go, but always had time to be considerate of others. In addition to his pre-legal academic course, he was active in debating, public speaking, dramatics, school athletics, and was president and speaker of his graduation class.

“Bill was one of the finest basketball centers and rebounders in the school’s history,” recalls Coach Karl Kaiser, Sr. (now retired, but still a member of the Rotary Club of Ontario, Bill’s home Club.)

Romance is one thing Bill’s classmates recall about his college days at the University of Southern California. Oh, they remember him as president of his Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity, as a member of The Trojan Knights, (a college service organization), member of the Skull & Dagger, (an honorary society), and they know how he worked at one regular job on campus and another part-time job off campus. But the romantic story tells how, in their senior year, Bill and a young lady by the name of Louise Emmons were selected as the *outstanding man student and woman student* on the campus, and were voted by their fellow students as the *most popular couple* at the University of Southern California.

“We celebrated the occasion as the guests of the student body for an entire week of dining and dancing,” remembers Louise, who became Bill’s wife a few years later.

One of Bill’s classmates from U.S.C. Law School recalls that Bill had the unusual distinction of being elected each consecutive year as class president while attending law school.

Soon after law school, Bill donned his *Second Hat* in June of 1941. “I recall the date very vividly,” says Bill, as well he should since this is the month and year he and Louise were married and also the same month and year that, as a member of the U. S. Naval Reserve, he was called to active duty with the U. S. Navy. The *Navy Cap* with its accompanying gold braid, which he proudly wore, was certainly symbolic and representative of this phase of life for the next six years. Of his Navy duty assignments Bill says that in his opinion the hand of fate, together with the actions of an individual whose identity he never learned, combined in making him one of the most fortunate people in the Navy. “I was assigned originally to a group of small craft patrolling the North Atlantic as Disbursing Officer,” he remembers. “The weather in that area was frightful and the ships were small. However, after reporting to the home base at Norfolk, Virginia, my orders were changed without any explanation and I was reassigned to the staff of a Vice Admiral who was the Commander of the Service Force Atlantic Fleet. The interesting thing is that the Admiral hadn’t requested the assignment of a young Reserve Officer for his personal staff and even representatives of the Navy Department couldn’t explain the

# MANY HATS

*Judge, lawyer, businessman, hard-working community servant, sportsman, father, husband—'versatile' is the word for Rotary's President for 1970-71*

By J. LEWIS LIESCH

unusual change of orders. This duty led to the experience thereafter of serving on the staff of four Vice Admirals during the six-year period."

According to one of Bill's former shipmates (now a retired Admiral), "Bill was the only Supply Corps Reserve Officer in the history of the Navy to be selected to serve as Aide and Flag Lieutenant to a Vice Admiral of the line with succeeding duty on the staff of four other Vice Admirals."

Following World War II, Bill took off the officer's cap and gold braid and applied himself to the active practice of law in one of the oldest firms in San Bernardino County, California. It was at this time he assumed his *Third Hat*—that of an attorney. This hat is representative of his membership in Western San Bernardino County Bar Association (in which he served as president), State of California Bar Association, American Bar Association, State of California Trial Lawyers Association, American Trial Lawyers Association, American Judicature Society, and member of the Conference of California Trial Judges.

But notwithstanding this recognition in the legal field during his years of private law practice, Bill often referred to himself as "just a country lawyer". It is interesting to note, says one of his former law partners, that this same "country lawyer" served as legal counsel to corporations, banks, and was at one time legal counsel to the world's largest vineyard. His legal talent pertaining to specialized laws applicable to wineries is well recognized in California. It was in this field of endeavor that during the year 1957, while serving as Rotary District Governor, Bill had the unique experience of traveling to the Vatican in Rome. Here he met Pope Pius XII and personally assisted the Abbot Primate in the



WILLIAM E. WALK, JR.

preparation of legal documents involving the Benedictine Order and Assumption Abbey (Brookside Winery) pertaining to the production of brandy and sacramental wines.

*Hat Number Four* is the hat that symbolizes Bill as a community and business leader. His service to the community includes having served as Trustee and President of the Ontario-Montclair School District, association with Upland College, University of Redlands, San Antonio Community Hospital Advisory Committee, County Blood Bank, Ontario Planning Commission, and the Bellevue Cemetery Association, as well as a member of various fraternal organizations. Bill is presently a member of the board of directors of the First National Bank and Trust Company, Brookside Wineries, Mills Winery, and Best Tile Company. Bill has also been the recipient of several honors, including the Chamber of Commerce Award, Sons of Columbus Honorary Membership Award, and the recipient of the

Brotherhood Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, as the Protestant representative.

Bill's *Fifth Hat* is in the field of politics. Although he is not now in active politics, those with whom Bill has worked in the county and state and on the U. S. national level reads like a political *Who's Who*. They include friends from both major political parties—a Governor of the State of California, U. S. Senators, a former Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and the present occupant of the White House, Washington, D.C. An indication of the calibre of Bill's friends is illustrated by a letter he received upon his nomination as Rotary International President from the President of the United States:

"Dear Bill:" the letter started, and there followed a personal congratulatory message which was signed, "Dick Nixon"

Perhaps the *Sixth Hat* should be more accurately described as a Mexican sombrero. This is symbolic of his great love for his second home "south of the border" and his great affection for his *compañeros* in Mexico. The residents of one particular village in a remote area of Sonora, Mexico, are well acquainted with "Don Pancho Guillermo" and some of Bill's friends who have accompanied him to the area each November for 17 years. During this visit food, clothing, and medical supplies are left for the villagers. Gifts are also distributed and

they are opened by the children a month later on Christmas.

"When we first started our annual trek, the families in this remote area obviously knew nothing of the traditional Thanksgiving holiday in the U.S.A.," says Bill. "Now it's a three-day fiesta for everyone. We not only use this occasion as a time to visit our friends in this area, but we manage to do some hunting for quail, ducks, geese, and pheasants."

The mention of deep sea fishing in La Paz, B.C., Mexico, with still other companions brings to his eyes a gleam of pleasant memories in this region.

When Judge Walk assumed his judicial robe, which resulted from an appointment to the judicial bench by Governor Ronald Reagan of the State of California, Bill symbolically donned his *Seventh Hat*. This judicial bench appointment fulfilled another of Bill's boyhood determinations, as well as the prophecy of the dean of the law school which he attended.

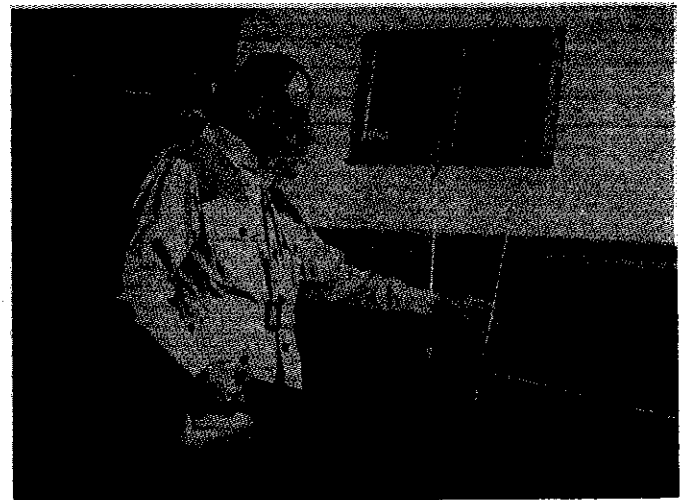
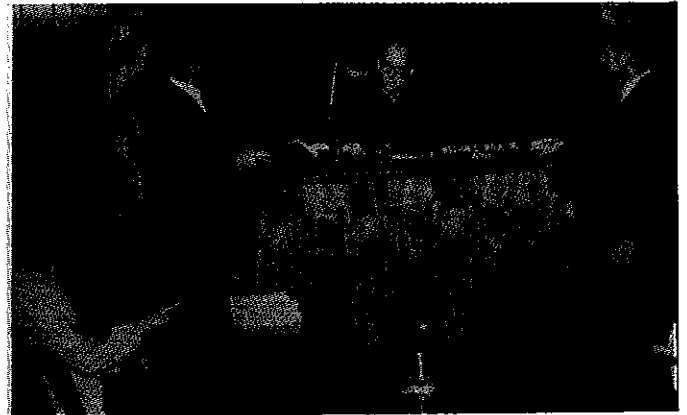
*Hat Number Eight* certainly is representative of the one Bill wears as a family man. He and Louise have two children—Barbara Ann and Bill Walk, III—to whom they are devoted. Daughter Barbara holds a Master's Degree, and she and her husband, Barton Ellerbroek, are both engaged in the field of education in Tustin, California. Son Bill graduated from the University of Redlands last month and plans to enter gradu-





"A small family but close"—the Walks at home in Upland, California: Bill and Louise seated, their son-in-law Bart Ellerbroek, their daughter Barbara Ann, and their son Bill III.

Judge Walk on the bench in his court in California . . . (below) Sportsman Walk stocking his trailer for some fishing and hunting.



ate school. "We are not a large family, numerically speaking," comments Louise, "but our family has certainly been closely knit in our enjoyment of vacations and weekends which include camping, fishing, hunting, and travelling in the U.S.A. and Mexico as a family unit."

Louise has consistently over the years taken an active part in the ladies organizations and clubs in her community.

"I think I became, in essence, a Rotarian in high school," Bill says. "I was taking a public speaking course and they had a contest called the *Crombie Allen Rotary Peace Contest*. \* First prize was \$25. So I studied and researched everything I could find about Rotary, wrote a speech, and was successful. But more important, I read so much about Rotary and its programs that while still in high school I was determined to some day become a Rotarian."

Since joining Rotary in 1947-48, Bill has served Rotary at all levels—Club, District, and International. He was District Governor in 1957-58, has attended all

\* Crombie Allen was a newspaper publisher and Rotarian in Ontario. He served as Trustee of The Rotary Foundation, died in 1946.

but one International Convention since 1957. He served as First Vice-President and on the Board of Directors of RI as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board, Parliamentarian, member and chairman of various RI committees, and chairman of The Convention Committee of Rotary International for the 1968 Convention in Mexico City. Now Bill serves as the 60th President of Rotary International.

Rotarians of the world can feel great pride and satisfaction in the fact that this is our President—the man who states as part of his Rotary program for the year that Rotarians can help solve our environmental problems and that the economic gap, the generation gap, the sociological gap, and the ecology gap can be bridged and that Rotarians must be the ones to help *BRIDGE THE GAPS*.

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