

William Alfred Lucking Jr. 1917 - 2007

William Alfred Lucking Jr. left on his final adventure at first light Feb. 5, 2007.

Bill was born June 10, 1917, in Detroit, Mich., to William Alfred and Catherine Eustis Lucking.

Bill came to the Ojai Valley in 1926 and always considered it his home. He was educated at Ojai Valley School (he admitted that OVS decided on the basis of his grades that he was not their kind of student). He graduated from the Webb School in Claremont and earned his undergraduate degree at Dartmouth College.



Bill served in World War II, enlisting in the Navy Reserve in 1940. He acted as a skipper on sailboats on coastal defense, trained for dirigible duty and finally served as executive officer on the radar picket Pritchett (DD-561). The destroyer barely survived the great typhoon of Dec. 22, 1944, and was badly damaged by kamikazes. It was on the Pritchett that Bill earned a second Bronze Star, using a whaleboat to rescue sailors from the sinking USS Callaghan. He retired with the rank of commander.

After his discharge, Bill considered careers in medicine, law or orange ranching, settling on the University of Michigan Law School. He, his wife, Helen, and three older children spent three years near Ann Arbor, but hurried back to Ojai as soon as he graduated. He passed the California Bar Exam and in 1950 began his practice of law in the Ventura Theatre building, in partnership with Bruce Johnston. Many of the country's present lawyers, including judges Jack Smiley and Fred Bysse, were his partners. He retired in 1990.

Bill married three times, to Helen Burnett, Lavon Carsner Eicher and to Lucy Chellstorp Kelly.

Bill was a lifelong Republican and was active on the Republican Central Committee for a number of years, much of the time as chairman. He was a delegate at the 1960 Republican convention in Chicago that nominated Richard Nixon and remained active in party circles.

He had a lot of fun, but his mind was always busy. He was a voracious reader and student of almost any topic one could imagine, including biblical archeology and nautical and world history.

However, it was as an outdoorsman and rancher that Bill was happiest. He purchased his ranch in Matilija Canyon as unimproved land in 1956 (he said it was the sweetest land deal he could imagine) and built it into a producer of perfect citrus and avocados. He was thrilled with his prospective Pixie crop. Bill was a master sailor and sailed across the Atlantic and around the Great Lakes and the Mediterranean. He excavated in Turkey, sailed around Turkey and Greece with his wife Lavon, traveled canals in France, England and down the Rhine, rode horseback in Death Valley, in Oregon and with Navajos in Arizona. On his travels he made an eclectic collection of maps, ancient pottery and other artifacts.

Bill was for many years a hunter, and openings of game seasons were eagerly anticipated. He was a horseman, riding with Rancheros Adolfo from 1951 to 1994 and riding, diving and boating with the Ventura County Sheriff's Posse. He dived in the Virgin Islands and the

Grenadines and in Turkey and Greece, also exploring the sunken Winfield Scott off Anacapa Island. He was a pioneering bodysurfer who was founder and kahuna of the South Jetty Swells Bodysurfing Association. He surfed five days a week for 40 years and in his last competition won second place, at the age of 75, in the 55-and-up age class in the World Bodysurfing Championship.

He was extremely proud of having earned, at the age of 75, a license to serve as master, the license being granted by the United States Coast Guard.

Increasing age and frailty reduced his activities somewhat, but he still loved to travel. He and Lucy went to Antarctica and the Great Lakes; down the Rhine, Douro and Danube; and were, before his death, planning a revisiting of Portugal. He and Lucy also enjoyed simple pleasures, such as having breakfast at their table at the Ojai Cafe Emporium. During retirement Bill served as a trustee for the Monroe Foundation, which supports Smart Start for children; and the CREW, which is a nonprofit environmental youth employment program.

Bill always lived life on his own terms, and when he realized that life as he wanted it to be could not continue, he left the hospital because, he said he wanted to be at home, in front of the fire, with his arm around Lucy. Family came from all corners and some of his children and grandchildren went on a hike up Kennedy Canyon on his beloved ranch. That pleased him, because ultimately it was family that was most important to him.

Bill leaves a large and loving family including his wife, Lucy; children, Helen "Lana" Fredell of Ojai, William Alfred "Bill" Lucking III and his wife, Bonnie, in Ventura, Ruth Col of Las Vegas and Carly Ford and her husband, Ernie, of Ojai; stepchildren, Terry Arousse and family, Scott Eicher and his wife, Kathy, and Barbara Hanley and family, all of Ojai, Karen Waldrop and her family of San Diego and Kris Greer and her family of Durango, Colo.; sister, Catherine "Patsy" Wygant, her husband, Benyaurd, and her children, Charles Starbuck and Susan Deering; former wives Helen Sieger and Lavon Roberts; grandchildren, Virginia Hansen, Heather Sciuto, Andy Fredell, William Alfred Lucking IV, Blythe Alapa, Alison Lucking, Catherine Manguson, Lt. j.g. Stephen Col., U.S. Navy, Heidi Col, Chris Ford, David Ford and Spencer Ford; six great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

He was predeceased by his brother, Charles Lucking.

At Bill's request there will be no funeral. Instead, a celebration of life will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17, at the Ventura Yacht Club, 1755 Spinnaker Drive, Ventura.

The family wishes to thank Dr. Doug Nelson and the hospice care of Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association for their patience and kindness.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Ojai Youth Tennis Foundation, P.O. Box 482, Ojai, CA 93024; The CREW, P.O. Box 1532, Ojai, CA 93024, Attn. Walter McCall; or the Museum of Ventura County, 100 E. Main St., Ventura, CA 93001.

Arrangements are by the privately owned and operated Clausen Funeral Home, Ojai.

Published in the Ventura County Star on 2/10/2007. Guest Book

Guest Book for William Alfred Lucking Jr.
February 20, 2007



My family and I are honored to have met Bill at his wonderful home. He and his family were very gracious.

I was touched that a man who had done so much and was so very knowledgeable about so many things, was as good a listener as a speaker. I hung on every word as he would speak with humility about adventures he had around the world.

I know that his family and friends must feel a great loss. I was hoping to have at least a few more talks with him.

Chris Moomey (Pasadena, CA)

February 18, 2007

My condolences to my friend Ruth and her family. I am sure that he is greatly missed.

Judy Jensen Nadeau (Simi Valley, CA)

February 12, 2007

I worked for Bill when he had his office in the Ventura Theater Building. I enjoyed working for him and admired his intelligence. He will be remembered as a good and loyal friend to my deceased husband, E. Perry Churchill.

Nadine Churchill (Ventura, CA)

February 12, 2007

Bill Lucking will always be an inspiration to me of how to live life to the fullest: with vim, vigor, and vitality...AND, you better not touch anything displayed on the coffee-table!!

Julie Fowler Westerfield (Santa Barbara, CA)

February 12, 2007

I had the honor of knowing Mr. Lucking by virtue of my employment at his law practice years ago. He was truly admired and respected by all who knew him - especially me. He was truly one of a kind and I feel fortunate to have known such a wonderful and interesting man. My sincere condolences to the family.

Janice Ball (Ventura, CA)

February 11, 2007

I did not have the honor of knowing Mr. Bill Lucking, I have had the great fortune of friendship and connection with his daughter Ruthie. Seeing her wonderful success and determination as a

teacher, has given me some simple understand of his heart.

I know this man was a champion among men. I also know I would have been proud to call him my friend. What greater tribute in life is there, than passing ones wonderful spirit for living on to our children.

Carl Disotell
Carl Disotell (Anchorage, AK)

February 11, 2007

Bill was and is a friend of my wife (Maggie) and myself. She has fond memories of his encouragement in her swimming, needless to say he swam like a fish.

He left his mark all over the world.

Sail on Bill

Bill Mors (ojai, Ca)

February 10, 2007

Commander Lucking was a great leader and a remarkable inspiration throughout our grueling service aboard the Prichett in World War II.

I FEEL PRIVILEGED TO HAVE SERVED WITH HIM.

Harold Venturino (Las Vegas, NV)

February 10, 2007

God takes our loved ones from our homes but never from our hearts. I never knew Bill as I live in England. He was my fourth cousin twice removed. A truly remarkable man. Helen Cox (nee Lucking) (Enfield)

February 10, 2007

Bill was one of the last true gentlemen. A great friend.

Sarah Heath (Holualoa, HI)