

Y. B. Dato Harry H. Hicks, S.P.M.J.



Harry H. Hicks was born in Oakland, California on September 27, 1920 in his Grandmother Adella Fischer's house at 449 East 59th Street. He is the son of Henry & May Hicks. Harry's father, Harry Sr., was orphaned early in life, had only a 3rd grade education, was credited with helping hundreds of men in their business careers, rose to the Vice – Presidency of New York Life Insurance Company and was both a friend and trusted advisor to President Herbert Hoover. He instilled in his son the ideals of independence and integrity.

By nine years of age, Harry was a "Packer & Guide," leading groups on horseback and pack mules through the passes of the High Sierras in California. At eleven, at the request of local school principals, he gave lectures in area schools on his extensive nature collections (from wildlife to insects and minerals). As an early teen he joined the Sea Scouts, traveling the Bay and Coastal waters of California. At 15 he left a note on the dining room table announcing that he and a friend "have gone to Mexico and will write," later to admit that they'd "been gone longer than expected." That followed with another trip to Mexico the next year with "Joe the Bug", a well known entomologist. Many of the rare insects they collected on this trip became valued additions to the California Academy of Sciences collections. At one point in the trip Harry became quite ill, probably a brain fever, walking

delirious in the jungle at night and collapsing, to be found, nursed, brought back to health by a tribe of Indigenous Indians and left where they found him on a trail four days later. Joe the Bug was packing up to leave as he thought Harry had died. This did not please Harry, but not as much as if he had suffered the reverse.

After a short move to Michigan with his Mother and Father, and graduating from Gross Point High School, in 1939 Harry entered and then graduated from Stanford University in 1943. Being a little short in necessities while in school, and aware that his father had told him that he would supply the pick (education) and Harry would have to supply the shovel, he telegraphed: "Dear Dad, How sad; Thanksgiving misgivings, would you miss giving? Kiss giving, Harry." The reply was "Dear Son, You are on your own. Affectionately, Dad." Harry had seven jobs by that weekend, and by graduation ran the catering and Coke concessions for all events on the Stanford campus. This was the beginning of his very successful business career. Later, when Harry became an investor, he made a point of assisting start-up companies and entrepreneurs in socially oriented companies, a practice that he continues to this day.

During World War II, Harry was one of six pilots (out of approximately 600) asked to volunteer for extremely hazardous missions and projects. As part of the assignment, Harry became a "Brodie Pilot" attached to the War College in Washington D.C. under the O.S S., and was highly trained to fly a plane in ways that were contrary to normal patterns but essential for their missions.

Harry has survived two plane crashes, one during WWII. In one instance, while flying over the mountains, he landed a plane that was on fire on a 45 degree incline, skimming a rising slope (as there was no flat land) until the plane stalled. After impact at about 35 mph, and after saving the lives of his three passengers with his skillful piloting, Harry pulled the one injured passenger to safety (while he himself was hurt) just before the plane exploded.

Harry met his wife of 37 years, Cecilia Bergeda while at the "Gaeties," Stanford's Annual Big Game stage performance and show, where they danced a "fancy ballroom dance number" together. The couple married in 1951, living first in Menlo Park before designing and building a remarkable home in Portola Valley's Westridge area. Cecilia, was an outstandingly talented, beautiful and intelligent woman, majored in drama and graduated from Stanford in 1944. She then moved to Los Angeles, where she became a director at the Pasadena Playhouse, and gave play readings and produced staged productions for worthy causes. She worked in various capacities from directing to story selection for Universal Studios and other major studios. At one time, in order to get background for a movie on the newspaper business, she took a job as a copy girl at the Los Angeles Times and within one week was made their night editor, which she enjoyed for several months, until the studios demanded she return.

Mr. Hicks and his partner purchased Peninsula Lumber Co., where he invented a double-sided, redwood fence without knots (very popular with sub-divisions) that allowed neighbors to share the costs, called the "H" fence. His businesses grew to include full landscaping services, installation of swimming pools and ultimately to the creation of subdivisions and major developments in the state. He later established and served as

President and Chairman of the Board for a number of construction and development companies in California.

One of his firms, Associated Contractors, developed The Cove, a waterfront apartment complex with boat docks near Tiburon, which won many honors including major national awards. Harry even brought the Emperor of Japan's gardener over to design a portion of The Cove's gardens. Another firm, the Olympia Company, built a number of developments in the Monterey Area which received many accolades. In each community which Mr. Hicks developed projects, he received letters from Mayors and community leaders thanking him for his creative designs and environmentally sensitive projects. For example, he would imagine living in each apartment during the design process of the complexes (and actually stayed in some of the units in order to verify his concepts) in order to make sure that his designs would be "great places to call home" for the people that would live in them in the future. In Pacific Grove, he built a complex around the large rocks and trees to accommodate the Monarch Butterfly's migration, to assist the butterflies and to connect people with nature. This was before it was "required." For Harry, it was just the right thing to do. Harry was one of the first "green" builders in California! He also built the last Frank Lloyd Wright house built while Frank was alive for his parents, in Oakland.

Mr. Hicks was an avid polo player, and he purchased and donated in perpetuity the Santa Barbara Polo Fields for Polo to the Santa Barbara community, which has catered to teams from all over the world. Mr. Hicks played polo across the globe and was based at Menlo Circus Club in Atherton as well as the field in Santa Barbara. Harry played with teams that continued to win many tournaments until he retired from Polo shortly after his 75th (!) birthday.

Mr. Hicks enjoyed traveling the world and while in the Far East he became acquainted with a number of royal families, and in particular with the previous King of Malaysia, the Sultan of Johor and his family. The Sultan's father requested that the U.S. government grant the rare privilege to Mr. Hicks to accept a title from a foreign country. This was approved, and the title of Dato was given to Harry. Cecilia therefore was called Datin (somewhat similar to Lord and Lady). They became warm friends of the Sultan and his family and often visited them in Malaysia and entertained them at their Westridge home in Portola Valley. The current Sultan, whose grandfather had bequeathed Harry's title, made his first visit outside the country to the Westridge home, where he enjoyed the "hidden room" Harry had designed and making turkey sandwiches at midnight, something of a rarity for the young prince!

Harry was invited and accepted membership in the renowned Explorers Club, an international professional society for explorers and field scientists worldwide. He traveled the world to remote jungles, and to outlying places and peoples that were rapidly changing and/or disappearing. While there, he indulged his interest and collected things cultural, historical and artistic. His discoveries often illuminated previously unknown or unconnected parts of history. In fact, one discovery literally changed the history books by two thousand years, a Vedic Aryan head. His paper on this discovery was initially published by the prestigious "Journal of Indio European Studies" and there after written up in a

number of languages, books and articles in the world. He has accepted various requests to lecture at symposiums of scholars on this subject.

The great British historian and mythologist, Geoffrey Ash, in the Preface to his book "Dawn Behind the Dawn" wrote, "...Then a decade ago, things began to happen. Mr. Harry Hicks of Menlo Park, California, introduced me to a strange art object he had acquired in India. If this was as old as it appeared to be, it suggested a radical new insight into a certain ancient society, an insight that could bring some order into the mass of facts I had previously found so confusing...this book is the result."

Harry Hicks' distinguished ancestors include Richard, Earl of Cornwall, who was elected King of the Romans in 1256 and King of the Germans and the Holy Roman Empire in 1257. He died in 1272. His first son, Henry Ricks (Richard's son), called Henry Hicks, was the 1st. He was immortalized by Dante and was murdered in 1271 while at his prayers within a church at Viterbrin upon his return from the Holy Land, by Guy de Montefort in revenge for the death of his father (the second Simon). So Richard's second son, Edmund, became Earl of Cornwall. He died without issue (children), and King Edward the 1st "was found next to him in blood" and was found his heir. It was stated that Richard and his sons Henry (Harry is Henry Hicks the III) and Edmund were "Princes of blood Royal of England" and "Have diverse arms."

Mr. Hicks and Cecilia served on the boards of the Westridge Company and the Hicks Foundation for Cultural Preservation (P.O. Box 111, Menlo Park, CA 94026). After years as big game hunters with over 14 Trophies in Roland Ward's Book of World Records, due to their great knowledge of and affection for all wildlife, and along with other similarly inclined hunters, they became instrumental in the formation of Wildlife Conservation International. This organization later evolved into the African Wildlife Foundation, one of the largest conservation foundations operating in Africa. They jointly played an active role on the African Wildlife Board for over 30 years. Harry also owned much of Elkhorn Slough, which he sold to fellow friend and board member David Packard in 1984. David always told Harry it was his favorite piece of land in the world, and his daughter now manages the property with an environmental focus and awareness.

Harry Hicks has two grandchildren Kristina and Roland Hicks Jr.. To his great sorrow, his adored companion, Cecilia, passed away September 8, 1998 and his son, Roland Arthur Hicks, died January 24, 2007. He has shared his life for the past 13 years with his partner Dede Whiteside.

After 61 broken bones (from two plane crashes and over 55 years of Polo) he remains a man of great vigor, with an independent creative nature. He enjoys membership in The Explorers Club, and is an active member of the Northern California Chapter. At 94, he is working with his partner Dede on several projects that promise major historical discoveries. He is also pursuing another love of his life, art (sculpture & writing) and is an active member of his community.

Harry Hicks passed away on June 28, 2019.