



RADM Donald Grote Iselin

September 5, 1922 - March 9, 2012

ISELIN, Rear Admiral Donald Grote

89, died March 9, 2012, in Santa Barbara where he lived for the past 24 years.

Born on September 5, 1922 in Racine, Wisconsin to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Iselin, Admiral Iselin attended Marquette University for two years before enrolling in the United States Naval Academy where he graduated at the top of his class in 1945. Following graduation, he married his high school sweetheart Jacqueline Iselin on June 9, 1945. They were married 63 years before Mrs. Iselin passed away in July 2008. Admiral and Mrs. Iselin were the beloved parents of Karen Maureen Iselin (deceased), Donna Iselin Broom, Michael Iselin, and Madeline Iselin Morici (deceased). He is survived by two children, eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

He served aboard the USS Providence at the end of World War II as part of the Mediterranean Occupation Forces prior to his selection to the Civil Engineer Corps. After earning Bachelor and Masters degrees in civil engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, he completed The Advanced Management Program at the Harvard Business School and served the U.S. Navy in positions of increasing responsibility until May 27, 1977 when he assumed duties as Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers.

Admiral Iselin was a leading engineer who oversaw major projects such as

design and construction of the nation's first large-scale nuclear power plant for producing electricity; and a water desalination plant in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba when Fidel Castro terminated the Navy's water supply. He was a technical advisor for Navy construction projects during the atom bomb tests at Eniwetok. During his career, he earned a reputation as an innovator who, under hostile military conditions in Vietnam, implemented a new system of construction called "Level of Effort," which is still in use by the Navy 45 years later. He earned numerous awards, including: the Society of American Military Engineer's 1958 Morell Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, the Navy League's Stephen Decatur Award, and four Legion of Merit awards.

He was a registered engineer in the District of Columbia, past president of the Society of American Military Engineers, a commissioner of the American Section Permanent International Association of Navigation Congresses, an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects, a member of the National Academy of Engineering, and served on the board of directors for a number of organizations.

Upon retiring from the U.S. Navy in 1981, Admiral Iselin joined Kaiser Engineers as a Group Vice President for Construction, Design, Finance and Personnel. After five years, he retired from Kaiser and spent the next 15 years working as an independent management and construction consultant. Well into his later years he remained professionally active, including serving as a senior member of a panel overseeing construction activity for major projects at three nuclear power laboratories.

While to the world he was Admiral Iselin, to family he was "Buddy," always ready to help fix a balky air conditioner, repair potholes in the family driveway, or roar with laughter as he read Winnie the Pooh stories to grandchildren. He is best remembered seated at the head of the dinner table, transforming a mundane trip for pizza into a side-splitting epic adventure that ended with a valuable lesson for those paying close enough attention.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

199 North Hope Ave
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 687-8811
http://www.archdiocese.la/directories/cemeteries/info.php?cemetery_id=3

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

MAR 13. 10:00 AM (PT)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church
1300 East Valley Rd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 969-6868
<http://www.olmc-montecito.com>

Tribute Wall

MD

“ I remember seeing RADM Iselin going out of the exchange at Port Hueneme in uniform. He passed an enlisted person who did not salute him. Being the gracious person he was, RADM Iselin greeted the individual with a hello and a smile and went on his way. I have often thought about this scene I witnessed, as an example of a truly caring and humble individual. Sincerely, Martie DelManzo

Martha DelManzo - March 15, 2013 at 07:52 AM

RF

“ I met Donald in Pensacola, Florida in the summer of 1980 at a ceremonial function. He was a gentlemen with a warm heart. I will always remember his participation in the mind-control exercises performed there.

Richard Franklin - March 29, 2012 at 02:08 PM