

WILLIAM ALBERT DANIELS A LIFE IN RETROSPECT

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There are those men and women in our society that have accomplished greatness in their professions whatever they might be - science, government, industry, medicine, the military, engineering, social sciences, education, sports, and a host of other meaningful endeavors. These are the people that deservedly are remembered by the public and in literature for their great accomplishments. Then there are those of us ordinary folks that don't achieve special stardom or particular public recognition in our life times. Most of us fall into the ordinary category and also accomplish important things as far as we're concerned. We grow up, get educated, marry, get jobs, work hard, and raise families just like the stars do. I'm proud to be one of those working stiff ordinary guys.

I was born in San Francisco on October 1, 1927 as William Oscar Daniels (later changed to William Albert Daniels). My parents were Oscar Samuel and Isabel Lillian Daniels. My father was born in Kentucky and did not finish high school. My parents were poor, suffered through the Great Depression in the 1930's but were able to scrape by. I attended grammar school, junior high and high schools in Oakland. After high school graduation in 1946 I joined the Merchant Marine with a friend (Dick DeCoe). However, a year at sea convinced me that sea life was not for me. I then quit the Merchant Marine and enrolled at UC Berkeley in 1948. Unfortunately, after three years at UC the Korean War and the Army Draft caught up with me and I ended up in the Army Signal Corp. It was during this time, on April 18, 1953, that I married Margaret Elizabeth (Betty) Browning, the love of my life.

The Army transferred me to Europe in 1953 to serve in a communications unit through 1954. I spent time in Bremerhaven Germany, Verdun France and later headquartered in Metz, France. Fortunately Betty was able to join me in late 1953 and we lived off base in Metz. We had a great time together, and visited many European countries on tours sponsored by the Army.

When my Army tour was up Betty and I returned to Berkeley and set up housekeeping on the top floor of Betty's mother's home at 1019

Euclid Ave. I then re-enrolled at UC Berkeley to finish up my Chemical Engineering major. It was during this time that my daughters Dianne and June were born (Dianne October 16, 1955; June, on June 14, 1957). I graduated UC on January 26, 1956 with a BS and interviewed for work as a chemical engineer at Union Oil Company, Standard Oil, Stanford Research, Shell Oil, and Food Machinery Corp. I accepted the offer from Union Oil Company, at a salary of \$400 per month (the going rate for chemical engineers at the time), and began work at Union's Oleum Refinery at Rodeo, CA.

Five other graduate chemical engineers and I spent two years in Union oil's training program. At the close of the program in 1957, the Union oil personal manager advised us that there were no further jobs for us, as the company was cutting personnel due to the severe recession at the time. We were effectively fired. I was unable to get work at any of the companies I had previously interviewed with, as those companies were also cutting personnel. However, the Union Oil personal manager stopped me as I was about to leave the refinery and said you have electrical and electronic engineering background; how would you like to Join the Union Oil Pipeline Dept. in Los Angeles? There being no other job opportunities for engineers, I accepted the offer. So Betty and I packed up our belongings and our two daughters and moved to Los Angeles.

Arriving in Los Angeles in 1958, we found the smog situation was terrible. Betty said let's go home. But we stayed and rented a small two bedroom home in Whittier, at 1163 Watson Avenue. I began work at the Union Oil Pipeline Department located at 9653 Santa Fe Springs Avenue. Meanwhile our girls were growing. In 1960 Betty became pregnant with Charlie, so in need of more room we purchased a three bedroom home in Whittier at 1421 East 4th Street. Charlie was born on January 23, 1962. My work at the Pipeline Department was progressing and required that I be away periodically from home on Engineering or Construction projects for Union Oil. In 1963 Union Oil transferred me to its Corporate Engineering and Construction Department, as the company went through a major reorganization.

As time went on, Betty and I found that our home on 4th street was becoming inadequate as our family continued to need more room, so we bought a larger home in 1965 in Whittier, located at 1316 East ridge Drive (later to be renumbered 14305). We expanded this home with an addition including a new bathroom and a Jack and Jill room for the girls. Meanwhile the girls attended Mar Vista and Ocean view elementary schools. Charlie also attended these schools.

As the kids grew, Betty and I took them on numerous trips to national parks and to the farm in Washington. Betty was involved with the kids supporting their various activities. In 1966 as a family we spent the summer in Anchorage Alaska while I was involved in rebuilding the Union Oil Anchorage Marketing Terminal, which was severely damaged by the 1964 earthquake. My work increasingly required my being away from home, so the responsibility of raising the children largely fell to Betty. Again the family spent the summers of 1968 and 1973 also in Anchorage while I continued to work on Union Oil projects.

After elementary school, Dianne, June and Charlie attended and graduated from East Whittier middle and California high schools. Dianne went on to graduate from UC Berkeley in architecture, June graduated from UC Fullerton with a degree in graphic arts, and Charlie graduated from Pasadena Art Center with a degree in photography.

About 1972, Betty began to exhibit personality changes, depression and some measure of schizophrenia. This was of great concern to our family and had a depressing effect on each of us. We attempted to get medical help for Betty. Medications were of some help until their side effects became too severe. Betty would not acknowledge her problem unfortunately and would not seek help. As time went on, Betty's condition appeared to moderate to the point where she still could function. But she was unable to fully recover and her problem persisted throughout the remainder of her life.

June worked for Wells Fargo Bank for a time, then married Jack Grothe in 1984. At the time Jack was beginning an electrical contracting business working out of his home. His business grew and developed into a general contracting business, with June an active member of the business and current President of the Company (JG Enterprises). June and Jack have two daughters (April and Emily) and a son Jonathan. After graduating from Art Center, Charlie pursued photography and opened a Dark Room facility in Los Angeles. He later left the photography business and began a career in Real Estate. Charlie married Lisa Mikaelian in the year 2000. They have a daughter Holly and are currently living in Mammoth Lakes, CA.

I retired from Union Oil in 1987, after 31 years, having participated in 25 major projects for the company as project engineer or project manager. However, after a brief stint as a Realtor after I retired from Union Oil, I went back to work in engineering and construction field for several companies, including Union oil. This continued for another 26 years until my final retirement in 2013.

In 1999, Dianne was killed in a tragic auto accident while traveling as a passenger with her boy friend in Nevada. The tragedy had a devastating effect on the family and still does to this day. Dianne is buried at Rose Hills in Whittier. Dianne was just beginning to be successful as architect largely in residential projects and had developed a significant clientele.

Betty's unfortunate condition continued from the year 2000 until her death on April 21, 2014. However, she continued to function fairly well with family help and enjoyed her daughter June, son Charlie and her four grandchildren. June provided love and companionship to Betty throughout her remaining years. I miss Betty every day.

As I look back on my life, the most endearing period to me was my marriage to Betty and the loving experience with my three children, and grandchildren.