

HARRY OBEDIN
(June 11, 2020)



USCG CDR, Harry E. Obedin, Ret., a Shoreline resident since 1973, died at age 81 on Thursday, June 11, 2020. Harry was laid to rest on Sunday, June 14, at an outdoor ceremony amongst family and friends at Shoreline's Herzl Memorial Park.

Born in Philadelphia to loving parents, Samuel-a door-to-door Fuller Brush salesman, and Dorothy-who worked at Sears, both of whom had been orphaned, Harry attended the famed Central High School and selected the US Coast Guard Academy over more than a dozen other scholarship offers. After the Academy, Harry earned an MA in public administration at American University, and served the Coast Guard in the Philippines, Ft. Lauderdale, Washington, D.C., and Seattle (for icebreaker duty and then as Head of Boating Safety). Harry and his wife, Neale, built a real estate business over the years. Neale sold houses and Harry managed them, often taking care of rental homes for other Coast Guard families and experimenting with the construction of energy efficient homes with unique building materials.

Harry's boundless energy, optimism, curiosity, and intelligence became gifts that moved the world forward through concrete solutions to myriad problems. Among Harry's many contributions were tracer bullet systems first used by the US military in Vietnam to properly aim missiles and reduce collateral damage from mis-aiming; a system used by Western Navies to land rescue helicopters on ships in stormy seas; and even a boat-shaped roof for a church on Batanes Island in the Philippines where, as a young man, he also won renown for policing fair elections. Harry is the first USCG Officer ever to win the Coast Guard Medal, after leading his crew to put out a fire on the Italian Vessel, the Andrea Gritti, which was filled with explosive fertilizer in the Ft. Lauderdale Harbor, saving Ft. Lauderdale and forever changing the protocol for handling such crises.

Sometimes Harry's creativity was more whimsical. He created the \$10,000 winner-take-all Tug of War for Seattle Seafair. He also started the first modern singles club in the US in the 60's. Junior Officer's Protective Association (JOPA) met weekly in DC, and was enormously successful, becoming the second-biggest beer purchaser on the East Coast. Harry sold his part of the club to buy an engagement ring for Neale, whom he had met when checking out a rival upstart. Harry also published a children's book, Peter Penguin and the Polar Sea, which started as a letter home to his small children to explain his time in Antarctica.

Along the way, Harry and Neale built a family as they built their business. Harry successfully managed and grew the endowment for Temple De Hirsch Sinai and became an active Rotarian in the International District Rotary in time for that club's historic vote to accept women as full members, later transferring to the University District Rotary.

In the end, Harry's life was best characterized by generosity. Everyone could win with Harry if they wanted too. If you wanted to be part of Harry's success club, you could. If you wanted to learn how to buy real estate and make money for yourself, he'd teach you. Harry's formula was

pretty simple, actually. Behave decently, act fairly, work hard, defend home port, give something back, and tip your waitstaff a LOT every single time they serve you because they too are working really hard.

Harry leaves behind his wife of 53 years, Neale Obedin, children David Obedin and Cheryl Obedin Rivkin, grandchildren Naphtali, Ariela, Dalia, and Binny, and extended family, colleagues, Coast Guard classmates, business associates, and friends who will miss his love, mentorship, sense of mischief, and swapping sea stories (about the sea and real estate too. Harry could tell a sea story about anything). Life will be less rich for all of us without him.

To donate in Harry's memory, please consider Coast Guard Mutual Assistance for Coast Guard families at <https://www.cgmahq.org/give.html>.

July 19, 1938 - June 11, 2020