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## World-renowned Moraga Rotarian Cliff Dochterman is gone

Submitted by Gary Irwin



Photo provided

Prominent Moraga Rotarian Clifford L. Dochterman died a few days before his 96th birthday following a brief illness. Cliff had been past president of Rotary International (world president) in 1992-93, and had served as director and/or trustee on many boards and committees, and was recognized as a pioneer in developing the Polio Plus effort, which has almost eradicated polio from the earth. He had a lifetime association with Boy Scouts of America, and was named Citizen of the Year in Moraga in 2014. He was a skilled orator, and was invited all over the world to speak, with the consensus that he has spoken to more Rotary Clubs and Rotarians than any other person.

District 5160 Governor Kathy Suvia said: "Rotary International lost a hero and a legend yesterday. But our District lost a good friend." Moraga Rotary President Brian South said: "Cliff never showed arrogance for his international fame, he was great man for all the right reasons, a very common man."

He was also a very important member of Rotary Club of Moraga, which he joined in 1994, having previously been in the Berkeley and Stockton Rotary Clubs. Though he never held an office, he was always a Director-at-large, and could always be counted on for his knowledge of Rotary history, custom and practice, and for general common sense. He and his late wife Mary Elena (also a Moraga Rotarian) brought the "A Nite at the Races" dinner/auction/horse race fundraiser to Moraga Rotary, and 18 annual events through 2020 were held. Cliff was

instrumental in building the All-Access Playground at the Moraga Commons, and urged his Club to build a bigger park than was originally envisioned.

It was a very sad Moraga Rotary lunch meeting after his death, but many Rotarians rose to offer anecdotes about Cliff and his very many contributions to his Rotary Club and to the world. Jim Campbell, a past district governor, recalls hearing lots of Cliff's speeches and noted that he spent a lot of time talking to people in the House of Friendship, the social gathering place at conventions.

Debbie Roessler recalled how Cliff would volunteer as security guard for the White Elephant Sale (benefiting the Oakland Museum), and few people could believe that a person of his accomplishments would do so. Frank May remembered how he loved to be the popcorn man at the OMPA Swim Meet, and was very proud of his record of 971 bags sold over that weekend. He said Cliff was always caring and kind with his advice, and he brought out all the best in people.

Dianne Wilson, former executive director of Moraga Royale, recalls how she showed a video of one of Cliff's hilarious speeches to her mother in the hospital, and found that several doctors and nurses were enjoying it also. Evie Michon, then a prospective member at her first Rotary lunch, sat at Cliff's table, and decided to join immediately afterwards.

Lillian Roodveldt remembers that, at an International convention, Cliff was asked by a young Indian woman if he could help her stay in the U.S. after completing her studies. Cliff declined, saying that she should return to India and apply her skills there. On a later trip, he encountered the same woman who was now the director of the hospital he was touring.

Jim Tait, president of the Tranent Rotary Club, located east of Edinburgh, Scotland, mentioned via Zoom that Cliff and Mary Elena were mentors to his daughter Eilidh when she was a Youth Exchange Student at Campolindo, sponsored by Moraga Rotary. His Club shows a video of Cliff telling the history of Rotary to all their new members. Tranent Rotary Club has participated via Zoom in many Moraga Rotary meetings, and Tait even gave a very interesting program at one meeting.

Cliff's family will hold a Celebration of Life in Moraga on Jan. 14 at 2 p.m. at the Holy Trinity Serbian Church in Moraga. Friends are invited.

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[back](#)

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