

# Distinguished Alumni

## Distinguished Alumnus Award - 1997

### Donald Hastings Harcourt '50

Family and friends who knew you best have fondly and respectfully dubbed you, "The Gentle Giant." The title fits. Your ample, strong persona is dwarfed only by your strength of character, kindness, and unpretentious nature. Your expansive intellect, memory, and depth of knowledge on numerous subjects delighted all who knew you. Your magnanimous generosity to numerous charities, schools, and the Santa Barbara community was significant, constant, and quiet.

As the grandson of the founder of Harcourt, Brace & Company Publishers, you were exposed to some of the century's greatest writers and thinkers: W.E.B. DeBois, John Maynard Keynes, Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost, Sinclair Lewis, Gertrude Stein. Perhaps this background prompted your own famous storytelling skills. You never forgot a friend or a warm human relationship. You took delight in relating tales about yourself and shared adventures with others from experiences garnered over your whole life's journey. This was your grandfather's and father's real legacy to you.

Your family relocated to the Santa Barbara area from Connecticut and New York in 1943 when you were eleven years old. After two years at Laguna Blanca School, you arrived at Cate. You made a big impression on your classmates, faculty, and Mr. Cate for being a top scholar, athlete, and trustworthy leader. On the Mesa, track and field, baseball, and skeet shooting were your favorite sports. You wanted to experience it all. When you reached your junior year, you transferred to Webb to play football, a sport not offered at Cate. You played for Pappy Webb and your lifelong friend, coach Les Perry.

At Stanford you played football and then captained the swim team at UCLA while earning your degree in economics. You returned to Stanford for a second degree in electrical engineering. As a first lieutenant in the Air Force's Strategic Air Command and navigator/bombardier you discovered your life long love of flying. You went on to attain a transport pilot's rating while qualifying in many different types of single and multi-engine aircraft. You ran Santa Barbara Aviation, another family owned business, for your father before going off on your own business endeavors. Your interests and investments were in areas of real estate, oil and gas, electronics, aviation, banking, and securities. You and your partners founded Islay Investments in Santa Barbara, which develops, owns, and manages apartments, office buildings, warehouses, and shopping centers locally and throughout the state.

Among your many philanthropic interests, Cate School is privileged to have been held in your highest regard. To honor the role Cate played in your life and an important teacher, you helped establish the O. Curtis Crawford Chair in 1982. This Fund is now the School's largest teaching chair and has grown to over \$1.8 million. You always gave generously to the School's capital campaigns. In fact, you inspired others by being one of the first major

donors to the first capital campaign, the CWC Fund, in 1975. In addition to the many tangible gifts, your extraordinary loyalty to Cate was demonstrated by your faithful service on the Board of Trustees since 1987 and your strong involvement as a Cate parent.

You could have rested in the security of your family's fortune, Don, but you chose instead to build your own successes. You were never interested in gaining notoriety for your generous contributions, but insisted that all of your gifts be designated as anonymous. Your friends and family overwhelmingly testify to your high ethical standards, character, fairness, and humbleness. Perhaps the highest tribute comes from your son Scott '98 when, at your memorial service, he said, "My father's life reflects his appreciation of honesty, integrity, charity, modesty, and brevity."

Your absence on the Mesa has left a vacancy that can be filled by no one. In recognition of your personal and professional accomplishments and especially in recognition of your overwhelming devotion and service to the Cate community, the Cate School Alumni Association honors you, Donald Hastings Harcourt '50, as Distinguished Alumnus for 1997.