

Meet A Branch 22 Member TALE OF A SIR by Jack Hayes PBS

Tale of a SIR Lou went to Burnett Elementary, Portola Junior High and on to Commerce High School. He was playing varsity ball as a freshman when the All City second baseman ahead of him was unable to play and Lou took his place. That second baseman was Gil McDougall, long time Yankee infielder and World Series standout through the "*Fabulous '50s*" in major league *baseball*. (Lou's story doesn't *turn* out quite like Lou Gehrig's when Gehrig substituted for Wally Pip and Pip never regained the Yankee first base position. In Lou's case McDougall to the line-up and Lou changed to another infield position) Lou had a great high school career, was named MVP and was selected to a prep All Star game at Seals Stadium

A flashy, tough, high school All-Star infielder from Commerce High School at a time considered to be San Francisco's "Golden Age of Baseball" when the city was feeding the major leagues and the Pacific Coast League with talented and famous players, Lou Liberati played against, and alongside, of some of the great city baseball legends of the time. He may not be able to move to his left as quickly as *he* once did but *he* now wields a "hot "putter and is a "stalwart" on the local SIR circuit. Lou was born 75 years ago in the family home on Valparaiso in San Francisco with a mid-wife assisting. His mother and his grandfather were born in Italy. With roots deeply bound to the Adriatic Sea, fishing was in the bloodline and preserved as the family settled in San Francisco. Lou recalled that his grandfather, father and uncle all were fishermen and influenced his interests and life choices.

Lou's father died while he was in high school and Lou went to work in a cabinet shop after high school. He fished with his grandfather on the Sacramento River and went to Alaska to fish for the first time. He married Joelene, with whom he had gone to school, and they started their family.

Lou went into construction, formed his own company, Liberati Construction, and began to build homes in Marin County, in the Reedlands, Larkspur and Ross. He estimates that he built around 30 new homes and remodeled many more. Not content with just doing that, Lou worked a second career at the same time -in another state! He describes how an uncle called him with an invitation to return to Alaska for the salmon season. He accepted and that led him to buying his own boat and license. For thirty years, Lou fished for salmon each summer, taking his catch to the Red Salmon Cannery over the full season. Each year he traded with a partner for seven weeks off from the building trade each Summer until he sold the boat in the late 80's.

Lou and Joelene live in a home on Magnolia in Larkspur that Lou remodeled and have been married for 55 years. Their three children and three grandchildren are all here in Northern California—Novato, Forest Knolls and Ione.

Lou may not be able to hit a good fast ball now but he has not slowed down. He recently served as Club Italia president for two years, helps coordinate local SIR golf and, when I talked with him was describing a golf-reunion time at the Peppermill in Reno with other Alaskan fisherman. Deep Italian heritage, semi-pro baseball at "Big Rec " and Funston, fisherman by trade, Commerce High alum--this is a San Francisco classic--Lou Liberati

Submitted by Jack Hayes PBS