This monthly article highlights one of our branch members. We hope that you enjoy knowing a little more about your fellow members and the interesting life they have had. If you have someone you would like to nominate or if you would like to help author an article, please email the editor, Ron Nakamoto, at ron.nakamoto(at)yahoo.com.

HARVEY DIXON — Former Big Sir

If you need to unplug your sink you hire a plumber. If you need to tackle poverty and education you work with a social scientist and a legislator. If you have a unique idea and are seeking funding you go to a Venture Capitalist. Well,in our case all we need to do is to go to Harvey Dixon as he has done it all. Who else do you know that has served as Vice President of Engineering, Operations, Finance; ran a Medical Diagnostics Company; served as Executive Director for Urban and Social Systems in the post Lyndon Johnson “Great Society” era; and was one of the first to serve in optimization studies for complex logistics systems. Flexibility, adaptability, determination and will are apt descriptors for Harvey.

Born on a farm near Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, Harvey grew up in a large family of ten. His father was a blacksmith and ran a wagon-building business in the small town of West Point. His family moved for a time away from the town as it was his father’s view that a town with a beer joint and a pool hall was no place to raise boys. He lost his farm during the Great Depression and moved back to restart his business and raise his family. West Point had no electric power until Harvey had reached the grade. Up to ten he studied with a kerosene lamp. Electric power came after the Tennessee Valley Authority set up under President Roosevelt developed dams to bring electricity into the area. *(Editors note: Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is a U.S. government agency established in 1933 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to control floods, improve navigation, improve the living standards of farmers, and produce electrical power along the Tennessee River and its tributaries. TVA continues to operate today with no government subsidy.)*

Harvey would always be helping out with the family chores and recalls developing a talent to be able to grind corn with the family gristmill to exactly the proper coarseness that the farmers liked to use as “mash” in their stills for making moonshine. He went on to complete high school and lettered in both basketball and football. He was the Class President and Valedictorian at his high school graduation in April, 1945. During this period World War II was still raging and all the boys were being drafted to serve. Anticipating this, Harvey tested to become a pilot with the Army Air Corps and the Navy. However the war finally ended and the training programs were shut down so he decided to attend Coyle Electrical School, a trade school, to learn basic electronics so he could pass the Electronic Technician test offered by the Navy. He did enter the Navy and was assigned to Moffett Field as an Aviation Electronics Technician. He spent the balance of

his enlistment repairing radio transmitters and receivers on top of Hanger One (the one with the skin removed) and the High Frequency transmitters mounted just off Moffett Boulevard. He completed his service and subsequently enrolled at Stanford in 1949.

After graduating from Stanford with a B.S. and M.S. in Industrial Engineering, Harvey started his career with Sylvania Electric Products and then migrated to SRI in 1954. *(Editors note: It was an election year with Dwight D. Eisenhower running for a second term against Adlai Stevenson. The Korean War was over and the country was speeding towards prosperity.)* In 1956 Harvey was selected to be a project leader for a U.S. Air Force study to assess how a new heavy transport aircraft could be used given the very rapid advances of jet engine technology. The aircraft eventually became the C-132. It was expected to be able to transport a payload of up to 200 tons. By comparison the heaviest payload transport aircraft used in World War II carried 12 tons. *(Editors note: The Department of Defense was developing contingency plans to "Force project" anywhere around the globe. The Cold War was heating up and the need to prepare "Operation Plans" for various scenarios and locations was urgent.)* The project was focused on calculating the number of aircraft, route and total time required to deploy an Army battalion of troops with full gear to any location. Harvey, supported with a team of mathematicians, statisticians and software programmers, wrote a series of seven separate programs that was the first computer-based simulation of a logistics air transportation system in the United States. The mainframe used was the IBM 650 *(Editors note: The IBM 650 was the state- of-the-art computer in 1956. The vacuum tube based computer occupied an entire room. The total usable memory was 2,000 words.)* The output of each program was used as the input for the next program. This groundbreaking work modernized the task of logistics planning for the U.S. Military. *(Editors note: The Dept. of Defense always realized the importance and challenges of logistics planning and the inefficiency of each Service optimizing for their own needs. In 1987 under Ronald Reagan and Cap Weinberger a single command, the US Transportation Command, was formed to unify Air, Sea and Land transportation planning and execution. USTRANSCOM is still evolving its logistics planning systems with its latest program Advanced Transportation for the century.)*

During his time at SRI Harvey worked on a number of interesting and often groundbreaking projects to include a series of studies with the Office of Civil Defense and Mobilization to assess when the rail transportation system could be reconstituted after a nuclear attack. His breakthrough research and analysis of the fallout radiation hazard led to a change in national policy. In fact, during a shared cab ride from Baltimore airport to Washington D.C. with Dr. Edward Teller, his results were discussed and Dr. Teller was surprised by the conclusions.

Following the rash of laws passed by Congress during the 1960's to support the "Great Society" Program of President Johnson, SRI formed a new division called the "Urban and Social Systems Division". Harvey was named as the first Executive Director for the organization. His leadership and drive working on major problems resulted in the largest organization in the United States doing Social Science research.

After serving for seven years as Vice President, Finance and Administration at SRI, Harvey eventually moved to Palmer Partners, a Venture Capital firm based in Boston,

MA. It is unusual to join a Venture firm late in life but Harvey, the ever active person, played tennis often with John Shane who started the firm and was asked to join based upon his experience, extensive network and his ability to evaluate technology and people quickly. He successfully concluded his career after opening a West Coast Office on Sand Hill Rd. evaluating proposals and periodically serving as CEO for start-up companies.

Harvey met his wife at a USO function in San Jose. They were married in 1950 and were together until 2014 when she passed away (64 years!). They have four children (three girls and one boy) and ten grandchildren. Two of his daughters live locally and one lives in Michigan. His son lives in Southern California.

Harvey joined SIR in 2001 and has served in many leadership positions including Membership Director, Director and Big Sir. He believed every member could help the Branch in some capacity and worked to identify a five- year succession plan which has contributed to a healthy and active Branch. He is also active in the United Methodist Church in Los Altos and currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Los Altos Church and on the Investment Committee of the California-Nevada Conference. *(Editors note: Methodism is a group of historically related denominations of Protestant Christianity which derive their inspiration from the life and teachings of John Wesley. Methodism is characterized by its emphasis on helping the poor and the average person. These ideals are put into practice by the establishment of hospitals, universities, orphanages, soup kitchens, and schools.)*

Harvey continues to support volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity, plays golf and also plans to join the Bowling league and Bridge club after he gets settled at his new location at The Forum. He exercises regularly and is active in golf and with our Trail Birds. He was injured a few months ago in a traffic accident but expects to be able to rotate his shoulders and be back on the golf course by late summer.

His parting message to his fellow Sirs is “... enjoy today and live for tomorrow.” Harvey, we hear you!