

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@yahoo.com.

Bob Garten – Golf Activity Chairman



Sometimes you run into someone (someone's life story) and you just have to marvel at how lucky we are to be Americans. Robert "Bob" Garten's life story certainly qualifies. He has lived the American Dream.

Born in West Virginia's Appalachian Mountains in a "Coal Miner's Daughter" cabin, Bob attended a one room school with eight grades and one teacher. Raised on a subsistence farm, Bob enjoyed a simple and self-supporting farm life. Bob's father, a pilot trainer during WW2, was killed in an airplane crash when Bob was just three. His grandfather, a teacher, principal, farmer and post-master all at the same time, had a great influence on his desire for an education.

From those humble beginnings Bob went on to Gettysburg College and later to Johns Hopkins University for a PhD in chemistry. He continued his education with post-doctoral studies at Stanford University. Dr. Garten's specialty was in the field of heterogeneous catalysis, a technology important in petroleum refining, pollution abatement, chemicals and pharmaceuticals manufacture.

Dr. Garten's career started at Exxon's Research Laboratory as an R&D scientist. At Exxon he was responsible for research in synthetic fuels, catalytic reforming, hydrogenation, hydrodesulfurization, acid catalysts, and catalyst preparation, characterization and regeneration. While at Exxon Dr. Garten developed the use of Mossbauer spectroscopy for the characterization of multi-metallic catalysts important in gasoline manufacturing. Later Dr. Garten joined Catalytica Inc., a start-up company specializing in the discovery, development and commercialization of advanced catalytic products and processes through the tools of molecular engineering. Molecular engineering is the purposeful manipulation of catalytic materials at the molecular level to facilitate specific chemical reactions. It is based on an iterative process whereby the chemical and structural properties of catalysts are changed in a systematic and rational manner until the desired catalytic reaction is achieved. Dr. Garten held the positions of Vice President of Research and President of Catalytica Combustion Systems. He has authored or co-authored over 40 publications and holds 12 U.S. patents.

At Catalytica Bob spent much of his time traveling the world to develop partnerships with other companies. He recounts some fond memories of many trips to Japan to work with business partners. The business meetings would often migrate to dinner where he

enjoyed the many medicinal benefits of sake and, on one occasion, an entire meal of "Fugu" aka pufferfish. This fish delicacy, if not prepared properly, could be the last meal. According to the Tokyo bureau of statistics, there are between 20-44 cases of tetrodotoxin poisoning annually. Since Bob today is not slurring or drooling his conversations, we believe there is no lingering after affects ... that we can see.

Bob and his wife Marilyn met as sophomores at Gettysburg College. As life would have it, soon after he met and was smitten by her, she informed him that as a Spanish language major she would be spending her junior year in Spain. It all ended well as they have been married 51 years and enjoy the families of their three sons and their two grandkids.

Bob joined SIR Branch 35 in 2000 to enjoy some golf and meet new people. In 2002 he was asked and volunteered to take over the Chairmanship of the Golf Activity. He has crafted a professional activity with some 113 members. The activity is organized and operates with a number of volunteers that do everything from negotiating with the various golf courses, running the twice a week tournaments, and going wild at the annual golf banquet (as wild as old guys can get). His management philosophy is to actively encourage members to volunteer and run the club, as evidenced by his annual golf committee meeting which has some 20+ members crafting the rules and schedule for the next year.

Bob firmly believes in the America Dream and the opportunities our country provides to all who are willing to educate and apply themselves. He enjoys all that dream has provided in retirement - a great family and the opportunity to have great friends through Branch 35 and SIR golf. His leadership and team-nurturing disposition has made the golf club one of Branch 35's premier activities and a source of pride to its members.