

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](mailto:ron.nakamoto(at)yahoo.com).

DOUGLAS W. MCGEE



Was it destiny to have lived your life the way you chose or was it more a series of encounters and events dictated by chance? Read on and in Doug's case, you decide. Here is this member's life story.

"I drove west to California in 1962 with the choice to work in either San Francisco or San Bernardino. Along the way I picked up a hitchhiking Marine and Airman. At Barstow I needed to decide whether to go north or south. The three of us huddled on the road and I flipped a coin. The coin landed tails so the Marine and I said goodbye to the Airman and we headed south. That coin flip led to the interesting career that I have had. But, ... there is more! The coin flip also led to a chance meeting with my future wife. By happenstance, it was her last day at the firm. On a bet with a fellow employee, I called her several months later. The attraction was mutual and we have been happily married for some 54 years and together have five

children, six grandchildren and two great grandchildren." ... Chance or destiny?

Doug grew up in Roanoke, Virginia. He is the oldest of three children. His father was a career Army officer who moved often. He remembered walking alone on his first day of school when he met up with a future schoolmate who asked him what grade he was in. Since he didn't know what a grade was, he asked, "What grade are you in?" The boy said – the third grade so Doug said, "so am I". It took several weeks for his mother to figure out he was doing third grade work. The teacher put him back to first grade and within two weeks he was advanced to the second grade and within a month back to third grade. He remained two years ahead of his age group throughout high school and college. While Doug says he enjoyed his classes his only regret was having had to try dating girls that were older and taller than he.

When his father was reassigned to Fort Knox, Doug enrolled at Richland High School and quickly integrated with his fellow students as editor for the school newspaper and class officer. He was physically too small for most sports, so he volunteered as team manager for the high school football team. He loved school and did well even though he rarely read a book as he had a photographic memory.

Doug finished high school at the age of sixteen and received a scholarship from Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI) through the sports program. As team manager of the high school football team he promised to help secure three of its best players if VPI would also include him in the program. VPI did enroll the players and took on the spunky runt as logistics manager of the team. A hint of the successful future of this capable young man was that he worked part time to supplement his scholarship, managed the away game logistics, and enrolled in ROTC. He graduated at twenty and later completed his MBA from Wharton.

Doug coveted working for a local firm, Addressograph-Multigraph in Roanoke but had to wait until his 21st birthday, which was a requirement of the company. He was on their doorstep on his birthday. He travelled a lot and five years later was transferred to the west coast. After a few years working in the San Bernardino office and having completed his Marine Corp obligation Doug decided to seek a bigger challenge. His broker suggested he could easily become a financial planner as he quickly grasped the many facets of that discipline. He trained to become a financial planner with Reynolds Securities in Los Angeles. He did well and was soon tapped for management and advanced to become the Southern Regional Vice President and later Western Regional Vice President of Reynolds Securities. His office was one of the first residents of the Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco. At Reynolds, Doug's job was to acquire, reorganize and right-size regional companies into the worldwide enterprise. Reynolds Securities became Dean Witter and later Morgan Stanley. The most difficult part of acquiring companies was being viewed as too young and inexperienced with many of the employees and officers being ten to thirty years older. His positive "can do" attitude usually won the day.

Doug completed his career as Executive Vice President at Birr-Wilson in San Francisco but still wanting to keep busy so he transitioned into practice as a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) for Prudential Securities in Palo Alto. Doug loved his work and his clients loved him. He always said, "I only work half a day ... twelve hours". As a CFP Doug would often provide lectures on financial planning and retirement and even briefed Branch 35 some time ago. Life was good until a mini-stroke caused severe damage to his eyesight. This, freak incident forever changed Doug's life as he was declared legally blind but as a former Marine he felt "It is what it is..." and was determined to "Never Give Up". He continued to work for the next 15 years using a special computer screen, a large font printer and a magnifying glass to read. After 48 years in business and at the age of an energetic 77, Doug decided to retire.

Family is very important to Doug. He is proud of their two sons Mark and Steven who reside in San Francisco. Mark is a Senior Director- Partner, Solution Manager at VISA and Steve is an independent consultant specializing in corporate innovation and leadership both in the US and Europe. Jeannie, his wife devotes her time to oil painting. (There are some beautiful paintings around their home. My favorite is the cows overlooking the dinette table.) If you ask him he will gleefully recite the twenty-six reasons he loves his wife by describing her attributes from "A- Z" e.g. "A" Artistic, "B" Beautiful ... "Y" Youthful, "Z" Zestful. It is a treat to hear him recite it. Ask him.

The McGee's love to travel and have seen many wonderful places in Europe, Asia, Australia, South America and recall a marathon trip visiting ten countries over fifty days. The British Isles is probably Doug's favorite travel location because of his Irish ancestry. He was thrilled to tour the Muckross House on which our local Filoli Estate was modeled. His family was also the guest of the Lord Mayor of Cork who invited them into his chambers and shared a libation from the private bar hidden behind a door. The Mayor was wearing a \$700,000 ceremonial collar around his neck as a symbol of his office. Another memorable thrill for him was playing the famous St. Andrews golf course with his son Mark.



*Pinning lieutenant bars
on his grandson at the
Eisenhower Memorial.*

Doug now resides with his wife at The Forum in Cupertino – an independent living community. He couldn't be happier in the beautiful and peaceful country surroundings. Residents are very friendly and inclusive and there are numerous activities to enjoy even with his eyesight situation. Retirement keeps him busy with occasional golf with his sons, fitness training, walks around the area and tracking the stock market. .

Like his “flip of the coin” story, Doug's life has had many lucky flips in his favor. In 1962, on his way to California, he stopped in Las Vegas and happened to see Ann Margaret at the Sands Casino Lounge. He boldly asked her to dance and she said, “Yes”! It was a thrill to actually dance with his favorite movie star.

As my interview with Doug wrapped up I asked him what was his life's message and as a former Marine you would have guessed it, “Live your life like a Marine! Don't take no for an answer and never give up.” Even in the face of adversity and the loss of his eyesight Doug is cheerful and continues to enjoy his life. He tries to attend every monthly meeting so be sure to say hello to him. We salute you Doug, Semper Fi.