

## **RICHARD J. O'NEILL**

### **BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS AND INFORMATION**

Name: Richard J. O'Neill (Richard Jerome O'Neill)

Birth Date: May 3, 1923 (Los Angeles, California)

Family: Married (1951) to the former Donna Newman (Deceased July 2002).

#### Permanent

Residence: The family ranch, Rancho Mission Viejo, located East of San Juan Capistrano in South Orange County.

Education: O'Neill attended the Hawthorne Elementary School and Beverly Hills High School (Winter, '41). Following World War II, he attended California Polytechnic State University ("Cal Poly"), San Luis Obispo. (This coming June – June 11, 2005 – Mr. O'Neill will receive Cal Poly's "President's Medal of Excellence" award.)

#### Military

Service: O'Neill served as an enlisted man in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Participating in several major military actions, he traveled throughout the world during the war.

Childhood: A sixth generation Californian, O'Neill spent much of his childhood on the 200,000-acre Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores. Today the O'Neill ranch, now known as Rancho Mission Viejo, consists of approximately 23,000 acres. The cities of Mission Viejo and Rancho Santa Margarita and the community of Las Flores were developed on ranch lands. Currently, the community of Ladera Ranch is the most recent family development.

Business: O'Neill maintains an active interest in a variety of business ventures and real estate investments. Those interests include thoroughbred horses (racing), cattle ranching, and – with partners – San Juan Capistrano's historic El Adobe restaurant.

### Community

Service: O'Neill is an active supporter of Hereditary Disease research efforts. Perhaps, one of the major contributions known to Orange County residents is O'Neill Park, a multi-acre recreational area which was carved out of a portion of the ranch. O'Neill is also known for his support of historical and artistic projects, including a major contribution to the building fund of the South Coast Repertory Theater in Orange County and the restoration of one of the original homes in San Juan Capistrano in conjunction with the local historical society, whose headquarters is located in The O'Neill Museum. Moreover, O'Neill devotes much time to the Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy, a 1300-acre wilderness preserved from ranch lands. O'Neill is also benefactor of the Athletic Scholarship program at Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo) and of the Heart of Jesus Retreat Center in south Santa Ana.

Politics: O'Neill began his political career as a student volunteer in the presidential campaign of Harry Truman. He served on the 1956 Presidential Delegation and, in that same year, began an active association with the California Democratic Council. He continued to work on behalf of the Democratic ticket in 1960; and was active in Democrats for Cranston in 1964. O'Neill also became a member of the Orange County Democratic Central Committee in 1964 and served three terms as that group's Chairman. In 1967, O'Neill became a member of the Executive Committee of the California State Democratic Central Committee; and, in 1968, he joined the steering committee for Senator Alan Cranston's successful statewide campaign. O'Neill was elected Southern Chair of the California Democratic Party in 1974 and has continued to support Democrats at the local, county, state, and national levels throughout the years. O'Neill was elected State Chair in January 1979 and served a two-year term. O'Neill's keen interest in local, county, state, and national politics continues.

More: O'Neill has owned – with partners - some of southern California's greatest bars and restaurants: The Glen in Beverly Glen, Los Angeles' Blarney Castle, Bull 'n Bush, H.M.S. Bounty, Black Forest, and Tiny Naylor's.

Dick O'Neill is also a great sports fan. From London in 1948 through the Munich games of 1972, he attended every Olympic Games. Presently, he continues to enjoy his long-term involvement in thoroughbred racing.