

Harald Sundean dies at 95

Championed new hospital

By ERIN K. QUIRK
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SANTA CRUZ — Harald A. Sundean, a longtime Santa Cruz resident and the driving force behind Community Hospital, died Tuesday of natural causes. He was 95.

Sundean left his mark. Traces of the beekeeper-entrepreneur can be seen at the Pasatiempo Inn, at Branciforte Avenue subdivisions and in medical professionals throughout the county.

"He certainly is one of the most unusual people that I ever met. He was a hard businessman but a great philanthropist," said Stanley Monteith, a retired physician who worked with Sundean at Community Hospital. Sundean ran the hospital like a business, he said, sometimes to the frustration of the doctors.

Sundean was the first person to sell boats at the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor after it opened, a family member said. He also owned one of the first discount stores in Santa Cruz in the 1960s, Saving Sam, across from what is now the Pontiac Grill on Front Street.

Born to Swedish parents in Lincoln, Neb., Sundean was known from a young age as an entrepreneur. At age 12, he worked as a paperboy for three newspapers, designing his own routes and recruiting his own customers.

He moved to Santa Cruz in 1923 with \$20 in his pocket and worked as a painting contractor for \$3.50 a day. According to Sentinel files, when he got a raise to \$4.50 a day, he wrote a letter to his family, who lived on their Minnesota farm:

"What a fabulous land this is," he wrote. "I have come to the land of promise, the land of milk and honey."

In the mid-1940s he began running two businesses. He painted in Santa Cruz during the winter but his honey supply business in Red River Valley, Minn., was becoming more successful.

He commuted between them with his family in tow each sum-

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mer and winter. With thousands of beehives, he became one of the most successful beekeepers in the nation during the sugar-short war years. His family recalled a favorite saying of his: "Bees board themselves and work for nothing."

Sundean decided to build Community Hospital of Santa Cruz in the late 1950s because "a lot of nice people said it was needed," and because his children were entering the medical profession. Sundean's ambition was not to design an institution but "a nice type of family-style operation," according to Sentinel files. He built the hospital on his own land with his own money.

The hospital opened in 1959 with

49 beds, and offered acute-care services. In 1963, the hospital had 99 beds and in 1971 had grown to 180 beds. By 1977, the hospital added an alternative birth center which later served as a model throughout the state.

Sundean retired in 1978 when he sold the hospital to American Medical International for \$7.7 million. Proceeds went to the Sundean Foundation, a non-profit family organization that builds hospitals, churches and furthers the principles of Seventh-day Adventists.

Sundean also built Pasatiempo Inn and many subdivisions around Santa Cruz. His family said he named many of the streets near the subdivisions. Carol Avenue near Branciforte Avenue was

named for his daughter.

Sundean is survived by his wife, Grace Sundean, and his son, Dr. Harold Sundean, both of Santa Cruz. He also is survived by a brother, Earl Sundean of Minnesota; a sister, Mildred Johnson of Ohio; eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

His first wife, Edith Sundean, and his daughter Carol Nelson died before him.

Services will be 2 p.m. Saturday at the Santa Cruz Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1024 Cayuga St.

Smith and Arnold's Chapel of the Four Seasons Funeral Home, 1050 Cayuga Street, Santa Cruz is in charge of arrangements. Burial will be at Oakwood Memorial Park.