

Obituaries

William Hyde Irwin

Well-known Brookdale resident William Hyde Irwin, an author, artist and horticulturist, died this morning in his home. He was 79.

He was active in many local clubs, and was known for his art and prize-winning rhododendrons.

Irwin was born in San Francisco. His parents were Hallie and William Henry Irwin, a journalist, author and playwright. He moved with his mother to Brookdale soon after his birth. He attended first and second grades in Boulder Creek, and graduated from a private Los Gatos school in 1920.

He majored in entomology at Stanford, but while there became interested in the arts. After graduation in 1924, he attended the California School of Arts and Crafts and then went to Paris to study. He spent four years abroad studying art and traveling, before returning to this area to paint and edit various publications.

He worked at several commercial art, display and publicity jobs in Brookdale and San Francisco. He built the Santa Cruz County exhibit for the 1939 Treasure Island Fair. He edited Riptide, a weekly newspaper published here from 1938 to 1953, for a brief period of time.

After Pearl Harbor, Irwin enlisted in the U.S. Army and built airfields in the China, Burma and India theater of the war.

While in the service, Irwin married Watsonville native Grace Benteen, an associate professor of art education at San Francisco State College. He returned to school and earned a master's degree at U.C. Berkeley.

The two built a house on the family property in Brookdale, and took up residence there in 1955.

It was then Irwin became interested in horticulture, hybridizing and propagating plants. He was past president of the Monterey Bay Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society, and won that society's bronze medal. He was also a member of the American Horticultural Society and the California Horticultural Society.

He wrote and edited the Pogonip Club bulletin for 17 years, under the name of "Nipper." He wrote two privately-printed historical books. One, Augusta Bigler Farms, was a history of the family farms and the development of Sacramento Delta tule land into agricultural islands. The other was The Letters of William Birelie Hyde, a civil California civil engineer of the mid-1800s.

Hyde was a member of the Santa Cruz Art League, the San Francisco Art Association, the California Water Color Society, the Chicago Society of teachers and the Carmel Art Association. He was also a member of the Pogonip Polo Club, a member of the Stanford Quad Club, the California Historical Society and the Boulder Creek Historical Society.

He is survived by his wife.

Services are pending. Norman's Family Chapel in Soquel is in charge of arrangements.

logging operations. She was instrumental in having a state historical marker placed there.

She is survived by a son, Robert Dodge, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, all of Los Gatos. Interment was at Los Gatos Cemetery.