

"I met Dan in 1999, a very sharp businessman that I enjoyed meeting. He gave me the original molds to his kid fenders; which we reproduce today. He also gave me permission to reproduce his logo. His passing is a great loss." – George Wilkerson, Teardrop Fix-It-Shop



DAN POCAPALIA
December 12, 1916 – May 7, 2012

Dan Pocapalia passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family at home on Monday, May 7, 2012 after a very rapid decline following the diagnosis of colon and liver cancer. Merely two weeks before his death, Dan drove himself to work in Long Beach, just as he had done since 1945. True to form, when Dan received the information that he had "6 months to a year" to live and that he may become unsteady on his feet, he immediately went down to his work shed and fashioned his own walking cane out of PVC pipe and put a rubber tip on it. Although he did not have the opportunity to use it but for a few days, this reaction to serious adversity, sums up Dan's approach to problem solving with ingenuity flavored with his own unique style (AND the cane worked great!).

Born "Dante Pocapaglia" to Italian immigrant parents on their small farm near the current Los Angeles airport, Dan and his 2 brothers Dominic and Vic, and younger sister Rose, lived a hard life on the farm. Dan claimed he was "following a mule that pulled a cultivator before he started grade school". Dan never could understand why he should waste his time in school and ended his school career with the 6th grade. This was just fine with his father, as now he could work full-time on the farm. Dan's older brother Dominic was the smartest boy in school, so that base was covered for the family. Dan was constantly trying to increase production and suggesting new management techniques for the Mexican laborers. The family had no idea just how close to the Mexican culture Dan was until his last week of his life. For several days he spoke exclusively to the caregivers in Spanish, such as when he was asked if he wanted something to eat he replied..."El Patron no quiere comer!"

During World War II Dan worked for Vultee, starting off as a lowly "rust scraper". Dan self-taught himself the engineering and math required for the job and was quickly promoted up the ranks, ultimately managing the production of BT-13's

and B-24's. In 1945 Dan and Bill Worman formed KIT Manufacturing and produced the classic KIT Tear Drop travel trailer. Dan was a true pioneer in the travel trailer and mobile home industry and remained CEO of Kit until the age of 87. Dan wrote a book "I Love a Challenge" that details a half-century of KIT, which he self-published in 1994.

Dan was a lover of nature and although a multi-faceted outdoorsman, dry fly fishing and Big Horn Sheep hunting were his passions. He was particularly proud of creating the annual sale of the Dan Pocapalia Big Horn Sheep Bronze for FNAWS Wild Sheep Foundation that to date has raised more than \$400,000 for the conservation of Big Horn Sheep in the United States. Dan called his extremely arduous Big Horn Sheep hunting trips "his annual physical" and well, if he didn't come home, he had failed the test! Dan entertained family and friends with his write-ups of his hunting adventures and mis-adventures and recently compiled an assortment of them in another book entitled "Outdoor Adventures of an Attaboy Dude".

Dan was born a farmer and maintained, most possibly, the most diverse and productive acre of ground in Palos Verdes. From avocados and coffee bushes to pineapples, tending the orchard, green house and garden was Dan's daily therapy to alleviate the stress of running a public company. Many have benefited from Dan's labor in this endeavor!

It is particularly true, that behind every great man is a great woman. Dan and MaryAnn were married for 63 wonderful years. When asked the secret of the success of their marriage, MaryAnn has been quoted that "Dan never said "no" to me and ALWAYS ate whatever I cooked - truly an act of love!" Dan and MaryAnn traveled the world extensively with the entire family and touched every continent except Asia and Antarctica. Dan spent weekends at home, working in the garden, building pens for the ever-expanding animal menagerie and teaching his children "Indian tricks", such as making a lizard catching noose out of a long blade of grass.

Dan had many quotes regarding success that he lived by and passed on to his children and grandchildren, such as: "The most important ingredient for success is to START.", "The harder I work, the luckier I get.", "Your first loss is your least expensive loss.", and "Choose a career that you love and then it won't even be work."

Dan once said, "I choose to live a simple life, which does not mean I am a simple person." He passed away in the same style that he lived his life - with efficiency, acceptance, humor, grace, and dignity. Dan will be missed but not forgotten. He is survived by his widow MaryAnn, his children Maria Pocapalia (husband Paul Brounstein), Daniel Pocapalia, Diana Pocapalia, Richard Pocapalia, and Ann Pocapalia; his four grand children, Adrienne Brounstein, Kimberly Brounstein, Richard Kern and Jordan Kern; and his younger sister Rose Butts.