

Meet One of Our Pioneers — Vivian Macdonald

By Marge Green

Tom Brokaw wrote a best selling book entitled "The Greatest Generation." Many residents of PKS are members of that generation and agree wholeheartedly with the premise of Brokaw's book. Most members of that generation were ordinary men and women whose parents probably were forever marked by the Great Depression. These ordinary young men and women put aside everything they were doing, answered the call of their country, and literally saved Western Civilization.

This month, in addition to writing about a new neighbor, I want to tell you about an early Pine Knoll Shores family which in small ways helped make our town the haven it is by just being themselves and helping out here or there as the need arose. Many of you know Vivian Macdonald, but may not remember her husband, Bill, who died in 1991.

In March Vivian celebrated her 90th birthday. She and Bill Macdonald had a wonderfully full life together, experiencing the usual ups and downs. Vivian was born in Bayside, then a suburb of New York City, on March 26, 1915. She felt it important to say that she was born and lived at the same address until she married. That is rather unusual in this day and age when most of our children are very mobile. Vivian had a twin sister, Marjorie, and an older brother, Jack.

At a 17th birthday party for the twins, a cousin invited some of his fraternity brothers from Lehigh University. Among them was Bill Macdonald, who immediately intrigued Vivian. Vivian said she and Bill knew from almost their first date that they would marry as soon after his graduation from Lehigh University as was practicable.

In those days a girl's father had to give his permission and his standards were often strict as to the intended husband's prospects. Dad's blessing was all important and sometimes that could cause a wedding date to be further in the future than one liked.

While she was waiting, Vivian took up a hobby that has been a lifelong joy. She took art classes at night and bonsai classes and flower arrangement courses at the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. Anyone who visits her home comes away with a feeling of awe.

Vivian and Bill were married on July 18, 1936 in Bayside and moved into their own apartment in Elizabeth, New Jersey. In January of 1938, they were blessed with fraternal twins, Jean and Bill Jr. Seventeen years later another son, Garen, was born.

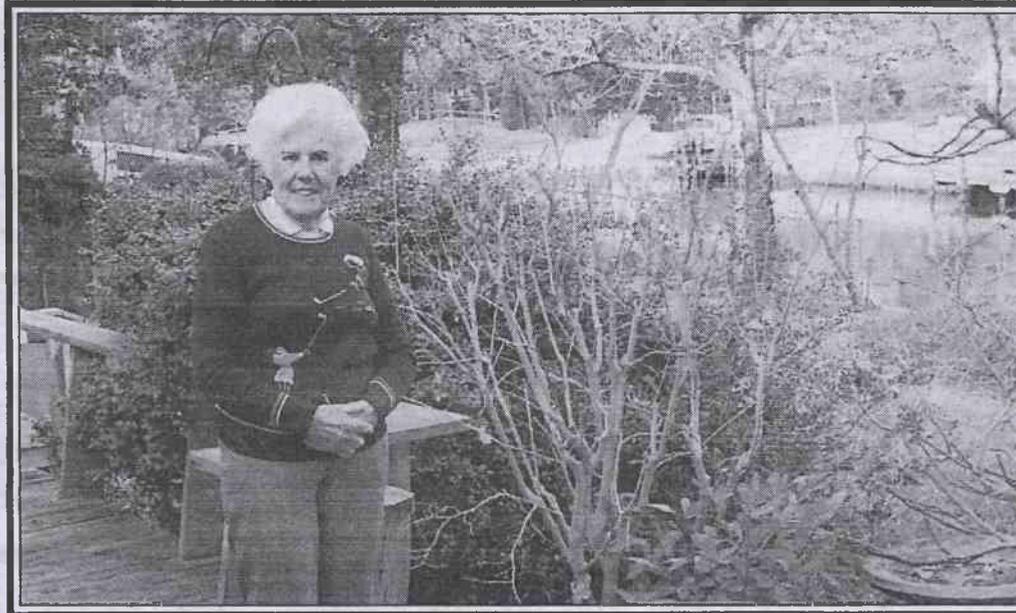
Bill and Vivian had an interesting and busy life as he climbed the corporate ladder

and she raised their family. Things that we take for granted today were new in the 30's and 40's. Air conditioning got its start in 1912 and was still in its infancy in the late 30's. When Bill, as a young engineer, was looking for work he noticed a help wanted sign in the window of a Carrier Air-Conditioning office. He went in and came out with an offer to start the next day. From that day forward he never looked back, remaining with the Carrier Corporation until his retirement 41 years later. He was responsible for setting up new manufacturing plants and offices, a role that required him to move his family quite a few times. They lived in many places in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York.

The cataclysmic event of the 20th Century, World War II, finally beckoned him and he was

As fate would have it, their visit coincided with a massive rain storm. Vivian felt if they could like the place then, they were sure to like it when the sun was shining. They bought their lot in 1972 and moved into their house in 1974. At that time, the canal was more or less a drainage ditch and was not bulkheaded. There were very few houses even though most of the roads were in place. Verne and Jim Wallaces' house (Martynowski's today) had just been completed when the Macdonalds started their house. Initially, they were the only two families in the cul-de-sac, to be followed by the Birkels in 1977 and the Meads several years later.

The drainage ditch turned into our present canals in 1974. The new bulkheads upset the many resident alligators that were hard pressed



mobilized with his Bordentown, N.J. reserve unit as a second lieutenant. He served for four years at the Picatinny Arsenal. After the war, Bill and family moved back to the New York City area and started moving again. Vivian said she hated to put up the good curtains for fear that another move was just around the corner.

You can easily see that Vivian and Bill had a fairly interesting life moving about as much as they did. It is no wonder that they were looking for a nice quiet place to retire where they could enjoy fishing and boating with a little RV travel thrown into the mix. By that time Garen was the only one home. In 1971, he and Vivian went down to Charleston, S.C., to meet Bill, who was returning from a business trip to Japan. They stayed at Hilton Head looking around to see if they might like it for retirement. Florida was not at all in contention for their retirement. They drove up the coast, going to such places as Myrtle Beach and some of the island communities along the route. They had seen an intriguing advertisement for Pine Knoll Shores in National Geographic that featured a beautiful sunset over the ocean beach.

for food because there were not too many dogs and cats to go around. Vivian said she could hear them at night calling to one another, especially in the mating season. The sound was like that of a lion roaring. Fish shared the canals along with the alligators. Vivian said she would sometimes get a creepy feeling while fishing in the canal. It was as if something or someone was watching you. She said more often than not it was Charlie, the blind alligator. I asked her how she knew he was blind. "That was simple," she said. "He would come up close when I was fishing and I could see that one eye was closed over." After awhile, Charlie became a nuisance. His carcass was found one day along the water's edge near the golf course.

Pine Knoll Shores developed slowly. The area east of the Oakleaf bridge contained mostly weekend cottages. Few people there were permanent residents. The land west of the bridge was occupied by mostly permanent residents. The only grocery store was the IGA on the causeway. In the early 70's Shopping Town opened in Morehead City. Roses and Eckerd's were early occupants, followed by a men's store and a few specialty shops.

The Macdonalds started motor homing when they were still in New Jersey. They had a boat in Connecticut and would go there for weekends, using their motor home. Once they came to Pine Knoll Shores, they sold the boat and bought a newer, larger motor home. They parked it initially at a campground so they could supervise the building of their home. Then later they would go to Florida for January and February staying at time-share camping sites.

Bill Macdonald and Bill Robbins set up the fire company for the Town. Vivian was a firelady, meaning that she actually fought fires. During her five years she fought major fires at homes on White Ash Drive and Yaupon Drive and the cart shed at the golf club. I had to laugh when she said she was the lieutenant of the fire department. The reason for this was the fact that she was the only one who could shift the gears on the antiquated fire truck.

Vivian and Bill both avoided the political scene. They were early members of Pine Knoll Shores Country Club. She remembers the first dinner they had at the club. It was a fish fry in the men's locker room in a building that still did not have a roof. After the second nine holes were completed the club went into bankruptcy and was sold to the members, who renamed it Bogue Banks Country Club. Vivian was the second president of the Ladies Golf Association, which had about 25 members. Through the years Vivian has held many positions in the LGA.

Vivian is a charter member of the Garden Club. She went to her first meeting the day she and Bill moved into their new home. She told Bill to take care of the move and she would see him later. She has been an active member ever since. In 1964 she finished the requirements and became a Master Flower Show Judge. She also took courses in bonsai and started a bonsai club here and is still active in demonstrations, shows and exhibits.

To catch you up on Vivian and Bill's family in the years since their marriages, Jean Ann, one of Vivian's twins, now lives in Big Canoe, Georgia. Jean Ann has three children and now is the proud grandmother to ten grandchildren. Bill, the other twin, died four years ago. He and his wife, who now lives in Crescent City, Florida, had two children. Garen and his wife live in Dover, Pennsylvania, and have two children. Bill and Vivian's family grew from three children to seven grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren.

Before I took my leave of Vivian, I asked her, as she looked back on her 90 years, what was her most satisfying experience. Her answer was, the love of her husband and her family and the joy she has had watching her children grow into responsible citizens raising their own families. She also feels blessed to have lived in Pine Knoll Shores where she has so many friends. Life has been full and rich. Who could ask for more?