

# Don Brock: A PKS Thank You

By Phyllis Makuck

## HISTORY STORIES

Reflections of Pine Knoll Shores

Donald George Brock Sr. died at the age of 81 on December 24, 2015. Don worked in various capacities developing Pine Knoll Shores from 1967 to 1989, so we thought it fitting to devote this month's history column to his accomplishments.

When Alice Hoffman's heirs, the Roosevelts—Teddy III, Grace, Cornelius and Quentin's wife Frances—were ready to develop the central part of Pine Knoll Shores, they hired Henry Von Oesen & Associates, an engineering firm from Wilmington, to develop a master plan based on a design A.C. Hall was creating. Don Brock was a surveyor on that project, and he stayed to see Hall's design take shape and beyond, representing the Roosevelts on site for over 20 years. It would be a relationship of mutual respect, and he loved his work.

The Roosevelts moved a section of Alice Hoffman's house, her kitchen, to Yaupon and Salter Path Road to serve as a development and real estate sales office. It would be Don Brock's place of business until 1974, when it was moved to Pine Knoll Boulevard and became the first town hall. From this office, he would work with local contractors, developers, bankers, attorneys, investors and sales people—as well as with the Roosevelts themselves and with their consultants from the New York City management firm of Stone & Webster.

His first major challenge was to manage the digging of a canal that was to be a main waterway. The goal was not only to drain low-lying areas and provide waterfront lots for future residents, but also to maintain as much of the maritime forest as possible because, as he said, "... the Roosevelts were great stewards of the land."



Don Brock played a key role in the development of Pine Knoll Shores.—Photo courtesy of Cindy Brock

Don assembled a local team, A.C. Davis and Charles King among others, to dredge the first canal, which would come to be named McNeill Inlet, for the Roosevelts' local attorney George McNeill. They completed this project in 1968, digging to seven feet below sea level. They used huge pumps, to direct water out to the sound, and large dredging equipment, bulldozers and draglines that damaged more of the surrounding environment than any of them liked.

They also built roads and put in waterlines. When the time came to start on the remaining section of the canal, the team knew they needed a new strategy. A.C. Davis came up with a plan to control backwash so saltwater would not destroy too much vegetation. The Roosevelts and Don Brock were pleased with the results. Brock Basin, Davis Landing and King's Corner are all tributes to the work of this team.

In 1973, Don established his own company, Don Brock, Inc., to do development work, sales and property management, and would later form Seacoast Developers, all while still serving as a representative of the Roosevelts.

David Waller, who worked with Don, first as a banker at Wachovia and then in partnership selling real estate, tells a story that reveals how Don would go about getting things done. They had investors coming to look at property, and Don was having a hard time getting a road paved before investors arrived. So, to motivate workers, he went to the ABC store, bought several bottles of liquor and put them at the end of the road, telling the workers the bottles were theirs if they completed the job. They got it done.

In 1978, the Roosevelts were ready to start on what would be their final project, Beacon's Reach, and, once again, chose Don Brock to represent them. This was to be a fully planned community containing oceanfront and sound-side complexes with internal roads, its own water treatment system, pools, tennis courts, walkways, lagoons and a marina—all under a master association with constituent homeowner associations. A.C. Hall had retired as Raleigh City Planner and did not want to take on another big project, so Don worked with two other landscape architects, Larry Zucchini and Barrett L. Kays.

As real estate demands changed, so, too, did the Beacon's Reach plan, and single-family lots emerged where condos were initially envisioned. When Don left in 1989, Beacon's Reach was a reality—and he was proud of the results. (Continued on page 27)

Don Brock was a man with the skill to work all sides of the enormous project of building a town. He liked to wear khaki pants and light blue button-down shirts, but he could roll up his sleeves when he had to, and he did. He strived for perfection. I've heard from some who worked with him—Carolyn Moran in the early days, and Grady Fulcher in the later days—that Don probably fired everyone who ever worked with him at least once, and Carolyn fired him one day, but they always recovered because they respected Don and were

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