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N. Loyall McLaren Remembered: A Tribute to a former partner

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N. Loyall McLaren

The death of N. Loyall McLaren at his home in Greenbrae, California last October 23 at age eighty-five brought to a close an unusual career in the public accounting profession and in the history of Haskins & Sells. To his host of friends and acquaintances, Loyall was a personality who stood out from the crowd, a man to remember. As Michael N. Chetkovich, the Firm's managing partner, told *H&S Reports* at the time of Loyall's death:

"We have lost a really great and unique personality. People like Loyall McLaren come along once in a lifetime, ~~not just a~~ generation. He had such an unusual combination of talents."

An account of his life and work, in outline form, begins to delineate the man. Loyall was born in San Francisco in 1892, the son of Norman and Linie Loyall Ashe McLaren. Never caring for his given name, Norman, he preferred to be called Loyall, a family name on his mother's side. He attended the Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut and then the University of California, Berkeley, from which he received a bachelor of arts degree in 1914.

After college Loyall started out in investment banking as a clerk. After three years he joined the public accounting firm of McLaren, Goode & Co., founded by his father, and became a partner in 1920. By 1928 he was president of the California Society of Certified Public Accountants. The next year he was coauthor of a book, *California Tax Laws of 1929*, with Vincent K. Butler, Jr. In 1936 he wrote *Income Tax Management for Individuals* with B. J. Feigenbaum, and in the same year he served as vice president of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. In 1941 the AICPA elected him president and in 1962 awarded him an honorary life membership for his many years of service in the profession.

In 1942, after the United States entered World War II, Loyall McLaren went on active duty as a commander in the United States Naval Reserve. The following year he became a captain and served as chairman of the New York division of the Navy Price Adjustment Board. He retired from active duty as a commodore at the end of the war and was promoted to rear admiral in the inactive reserve in 1956.

In 1945, while still with the Navy, Loyall McLaren was called upon to return to San Francisco from New York to serve as treasurer of the United Nations Conference Committee, which laid the basis for the permanent establishment of the UN. In that same busy year, he was also chosen by the government to go to Moscow as accounting adviser to the United States delegation with the Allied Commission on Reparations. Shortly afterward, he was a member of a group of four authorities appointed by Congress to survey the oper-

ations of the Internal Revenue Bureau (now the Internal Revenue Service). He also wrote another book, *Annual Reports to Stockholders*, which won the 1948 AICPA award for the best book in the accounting field.

In 1952 Loyall was senior partner of McLaren, Goode, West & Co. when it merged with Haskins & Sells, bringing sixteen partners into our Firm. Of that number, only managing partner Mike Chetkovich and Lorin H. Wilson, now partner in charge of the Los Angeles office, remain active in H&S. Other present H&S partners who joined our Firm with the merger are Charles G. Steele, Robert L. Steele and Richard B. Keigley, Executive Office; Terence F. Healy, Portland; Sig O. Joraanstad, Seattle; John C. McCarthy, PIC of our Boston office; and DeWitt C. Warren, San Francisco. From every point of view, the McLaren, Goode, West & Co. merger was one of the most significant in the history of H&S.

Loyall McLaren continued in active practice until 1958, but in the years since that date he was retired in a formal sense only. He came to the San Francisco office almost daily, and kept busy at his desk surrounded by photographs of people and mementos of associations that had kept him busily involved through many decades. Right until the end, he was enthusiastically active in many social and charitable organizations. Through this involvement with hundreds of people in the San Francisco Bay area and elsewhere who knew him, he was a goodwill ambassador for Haskins & Sells.

An account of Loyall McLaren's significant activities and awards would require pages, but a few highlights will indicate the breadth of his interests. Until his retirement in 1973, he served as board chairman of the Irvine Company, a land, commercial and development corporation which owns more than 80,000 acres in Orange County, California. During the same period he was president of the James Irvine Foundation, which owned 54 percent of the stock of the Irvine Company and distributed all of its multimillion-dollar annual income to California charities. He served at various times as a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco; the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway; the Pacific Telephone Company; the Rheem Manufacturing Company; and Air California.

To name only some of his community-service activities, he was a member of the executive committee of the San Francisco Community Chest (1934-1942) and in 1939 he was a committee chairman for the Golden Gate Exposition. In the late 1940s he served as chairman of the California State Harbor Commission. In education, he served on the advisory council of the School of Business Administration of the University of California, as a regent of the University of San



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Francisco and as a member of the Board of Overseers of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He was awarded honorary doctor of laws degrees by the University of California (1961), the University of San Francisco (1963) and Whittier College (1972).

An active clubman, Loyall was president of the Bohemian Club of San Francisco (1951-1953) and of the Pacific-Union Club (1948-1949). In reference to this part of his social life, Mike Chetkovich saw it all as a logical part of a warm, outgoing personality:

"Loyall McLaren was a tremendously entertaining person and the greatest storyteller I ever knew. He would get as much of a kick out of his stories as his listeners did, and they were always good stories. In addition, he was an excellent writer, and not only in accounting, by any means. He wrote plays and skits for the Bohemian Club, a unique organization that brings together a wonderfully interesting mix of business people, professionals, artists, writers and all kinds of personalities. One of my earliest memories having to do with Loyall was proofreading a play, a parody of Shakespeare, that he had written for a Bohemian Club entertainment.

"His wit, his literary talent, the number and prominence of his friends and acquaintances are among the really remarkable features of the man. People sought him out. His friendships went far above and beyond his own status as a CPA. He was a genuinely important person, a friend of Herbert

Hoover, of Dwight Eisenhower, of countless people. And it was obvious that he was a friend, and not just a casual acquaintance.

"Loyall was deeply involved in a wide range of extracurricular activities because he enjoyed being with people and giving of himself; but he also did it because it was good for his firm. He was always involved in practice development, even in his retirement years. He did a great deal to build up our Firm, and he worked at it to the end of his days. He wasn't bashful about seeking work, but he did it with flair and style, and he was enormously effective.

"Another unique aspect of Loyall McLaren, as I saw him, is that he was a man who would have succeeded in almost any line of work he might have chosen. He stands out in my mind as one who could fill almost any position of responsibility and do it well. In fact, the bigger the job the better he would fill it. He could have been a top corporate executive — as a problem solver and decision maker, he was one of the best. He didn't agonize over a decision, and once he had made up his mind, that was it, and he went on to something else. He was strong-willed and highly motivated. He would have made an outstanding attorney — or a journalist, or an almost anything. He was razor sharp, had a tremendous personality, great motivation and drive. He had it all. I shall miss him greatly, for he was one of a kind."

From the late 1960s Tom Graves, partner in charge of the San Francisco office, saw Loyall McLaren almost daily. In remembrance of his colleague, Tom told *H&S Reports*: "Loyall's daily routine, until just a few years ago, was to come into the office just about every day, except when he was traveling in connection with his business affairs, such as the Irvine Foundation. I remember that just a few years ago, when his health was a little less robust than it had been, he came to me one day and told me that he had worked things out so that he thought he could stay home on Fridays!

"Loyall was an unusually gifted man. He was quick-witted, good-humored, and he had a very positive outlook on life in general. These qualities did not seem to diminish as he grew older. He was known, loved and respected by all the people in our organization, and by the entire business community of San Francisco, where he had an unusually broad acquaintance. He was comfortable with everyone, regardless of their status.

"During his years of retirement he was sincerely and actively interested in helping the Firm, and was especially alert to practice-development opportunities. He was more sensitive to opportunities and had better natural instincts for practice development than almost anyone I have known. I had a very high regard and great affection for him." ○