



Alfred I., Catharine J. and Eleanor G. Switzer Scholarship

Alfred Switzer was born on April 19, 1911 in El Paso, Texas to Charles and Annie Switzer. Their family tree had its roots in Germany, England, Ireland and Spain. He shared his boyhood with two brothers, Charles Jr. and Eugene, and one sister, Catherine. When he was 11 years old the family moved to Pasadena, California. After graduating from Pasadena High School and Pasadena Junior College, Al enrolled at the **California Institute of Technology** -Caltech. In 1934 he graduated, Magna Cum Laude with a degree in Mechanical Engineering.

From boyhood, Al had wanted to be an engineer and his dream was realized when he was accepted by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Los Angeles District office. Al did not spend all his time at the drafting table. Through friends in Pasadena, he met a petite young lady named Catharine Barbara Johnson, who had come here from Kansas to study and live with her sister, Marie. Catharine and Al were married in August 1940 in a local church, surrounded by family. When we entered World War II in 1941, the Corps engineers were ordered into uniform as Second Lieutenants, and Al was put to work designing army training camps. After General MacArthur liberated The Philippine Islands in 1944, Al was sent there to help rebuild the heavily damaged capitol city of Manila. For his "meritorious achievement of service," the Corps awarded him the U. S Army Bronze Star medal, an honor he was proud to receive. *With Manila back operating, and Al now a Lieutenant Colonel, he was sent to Bolivia for two years to supervise flood control projects*

In 1954 he resigned from the Corps to establish a civil engineering practice in Van Nuys, California. With his experience designing army camps, he was soon specializing in civilian mobile home parks. But he always added a vision and artistry to his designs that made these communities most livable and attractive to their residents.

In 1970 he designed Morro Shores, then signed up for a home site and retired here in San Luis Obispo County with Catharine. But Catharine would not stay long. She passed away in July 1979, after being Alfred's marriage partner for almost 40 years. Al did not adapt well to being without companionship, and in 1983 he married Eleanor Harper, a longtime family friend. Eleanor had been Catharine's Matron of Honor at the wedding in 1940. Eleanor's children: William, Judith and Catherine, had been around Al since childhood and were very much at home with him as their new "dad."

Meanwhile, Al became fully involved in his new community of Los Osos/Baywood. He served on so many governing boards that in August 2003 the local Chamber of Commerce gave him its Lifetime Achievement Award. Al was overwhelmed by this civic recognition, but very pleased to receive it.

Loss came to him again when Eleanor passed away in August 1997, after 14 years of affection and support. Al spent his remaining years here doing the things he most enjoyed -reading books, solving park engineering problems, corresponding with his many family members, and enjoying visits with them all. He remained active- until he was admitted to the hospital with pneumonia. At the end of his life he shared that he had led a good life and would not mind being reunited with Catharine and Eleanor.

*Mr. Switzer's legacy lives on through his bequest to establish the endowed **Alfred I., Catharine J. and Eleanor G. Switzer Scholarship** to benefit youth who reside in Los Osos, CA. The four-year award valued at \$16,000 is given each year in their memory.*