

Bartolo “Bart” James Bruno

1939

CIVIL ENGINEER, CONTRACTOR, DEVELOPER

WRITTEN BY BART BRUNO

Bartolo James Bruno was born in Carmel, California, to James and Johanna Maria Bruno on October 7, 1939. He came from hard-working parents who instilled a strong work ethic in him. His father fished with Bart’s uncles on the *Saint Anthony*. Both his godfathers as well as many others in his family fished here and in Alaska. He spent his early years on Monroe Street in Monterey with many fond memories of the fishing era. Bart’s strong ties to the fishing community were broken when his father moved the family to Pittsburg near the end of the sardine era and took over Bart’s grandfather’s business. Bart’s grandfather had fished as a young man in Sicily, but when he came to the U. S. he decided to go into business providing services to those who fished for a living as well as those who fished for sport. That business included owning and operating a marina, a general store, a water taxi service and a boat rental business on the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers.

Starting at age 12, Bart worked building and renting rowboats and pumping gas to fishing boats at the family business. His father worked swing shift at a local factory; and in the fall during duck season, Bart filled in for him by piloting water taxis across the river, taking duck hunters to their blinds in the islands. In his early teens he could navigate through the heavy delta fog where visibility was in



The water taxi business his grandfather started in Pittsburg, CA, at the turn of the century, where Bart worked as a young man.



Bart as a teenager helping his dad build and maintain skiffs in Pittsburg, CA.

terms of feet, not yards or miles. Unlike today with all the electronic devices available, he did so then with only his compass, the RPMs of the engine and his wristwatch to guide him to a small opening in the island one mile away. During one of those early foggy mornings, from the dock he heard faint cries for help from somewhere out in the fog. He and his father jumped on their boat and raced out to find three men in full hunting gear in

the water desperately trying to stay afloat. By the time they got them aboard their boat, the Delta fog had engulfed the area. Having been located so quickly resulted in saving the lives of those three men.

Bart also worked on the apricot farms, picking fruit and working in the sulfur sheds; summers at the C&H sugar refinery in Crockett, operating processing machinery and loading sugar into trains for shipment; in fish canneries during salmon season, and building duck blinds for hunters. Those were just a few of the tasks he took on while he was still in his teens. Even though he still retained some ties to fishing, it was not about catching fish.

Early in his life Bart had a strong bond with his nana. In their conversations she often expressed her admiration for the engineers who built this nation. Bart's nana passed away when he was only 13, but it wasn't until much later in his career that he realized her words and encouragement had planted the seed that led to his becoming an engineer. The decision fit well with his abilities: He scored at the highest level in high-school national mathematics tests and college-entrance exams. Not one to waste time, while he was earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering at the University of California in Berkeley, Bart continued to work with his father in

the fall and during summers at the C&H refinery. He also joined and served in the U. S. Coast Guard Reserves; married Dianne, the love of his life, and had a son, Jim.

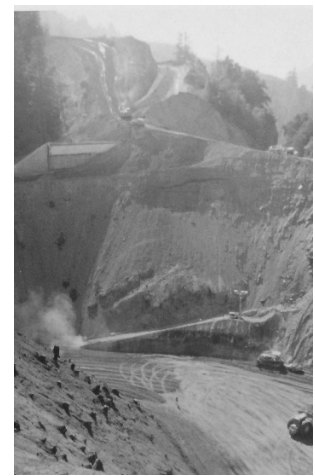
With his degree in hand, Bart found that designing and planning projects (the usual functions for an engineer) were not what he wanted to do. His real desire was to build. Upon graduation his career began with Guy F. Atkinson Co., a worldwide construction company. He and his family traveled throughout California building freeways, including Interstate 10 in Los Angeles, Interstate 5 in Stockton, Interstate 80 in Sacramento and Highways 280 in South San Francisco and 101 in the California redwoods south of Eureka.



An arch culvert at Cedar Creek in the redwoods where Bart was project engineer.



Highway 101 through the redwoods where Bart was project engineer.



Earth moving equipment on the Highway 101 job.

During that time, his projects involved moving 19 million cubic yards of dirt as well as tens of thousands of yards of concrete for bridges. Even though his work was creative and challenging, after moving eight times in seven years, Bart realized it was time to settle down. With encouragement from his wife, he went to work for Piombo Corporation, a company with projects concentrated in northern California. Bart and Dianne then settled and bought a home in Sunnyvale, before the area became known as Silicon Valley.

Bart began as a project manager on Piombo's larger jobs and eventually became the chief estimator bidding large projects. In 1975 he went to the United Arab Emirates and bid a \$45 million project in Dubai. Then, quite by chance, in 1977 he bid, and the company was awarded, a large and challenging project on the Monterey Peninsula which included installing a large sewer main 18 feet below sea level on



Bart was the project manager on the pipeline job (18 ft. below sea level) on Del Monte Beach which brought our family back to the Monterey Peninsula.

Del Monte Beach. That project received recognition in *California Builder and Engineer*, a magazine that covered work in the western United States. The article covered the difficulties involving issues of the environment, disruptions to major businesses, extremely deep excavations, dewatering along an ocean beach, extremely stringent grade control (only 4 feet of fall along 1000 linear feet of pipe) and protection of construction activities from crashing waves along that beach.

Bart and Dianne, a former Monterey girl whose father, Paul Billeci, a local fisherman, also left Monterey at the end of the sardine era, had planned to retire in the Monterey area. Seeing an opportunity to spend some time here, Bart convinced the company to have him manage the project. He and Dianne moved to Pacific Grove for what was to be a one-year job. Their two sons and daughter were uprooted and had to leave their schools and friends in Sunnyvale, so once here, the family decided they wanted to stay. After completion of the project, the family remained on the Peninsula and Bart commuted to work in the San Francisco Bay area. That is when he decided that it was time to start his own business on the central coast.

In 1980, by virtue of his engineering education and construction experience, the entrepreneurial spirit passed down from his grandfather, the work ethic example set by his family and the support of his wife, Bart began his primary business, Monterey Peninsula Engineering (MPE), headquartered in Marina.



The office of Monterey Peninsula Engineering, the company Bart founded in 1980.

MPE, managed by Bart, his two sons, Jim and Paul, and his nephew Peter Taormina, has grown into a company of over 100 employees, including grandchildren and other family members, making it a true family business. Over the years MPE has earned a reputation not only for quality and competitively priced work, but for its civic involvement and contributions to the community. They have received recognition for coming forward during multiple emergencies, including the major closure of Highway 1 in Big Sur during

the 1998 storms, repair of a failed water main serving all of Pebble Beach and numerous midnight failures needing immediate attention. When something goes wrong and a contractor is needed, MPE has always been on call.

Groups and organizations supported by MPE, as well as Bart and Dianne personally, include Meals on Wheels, Salvation Army, Rancho Cielo, Kinship Center, YMCA, Marina Rotary Club, Veteran's Transition Center, numerous children's sports programs and many others. MPE was a major sponsor in the building of the City of Marina's new library, as well



Paving crew at The Lodge at Pebble Beach.

as various Marina celebrations. For his philanthropic and community contributions Bart was selected as a 2021 honoree by the Italian Heritage Society.

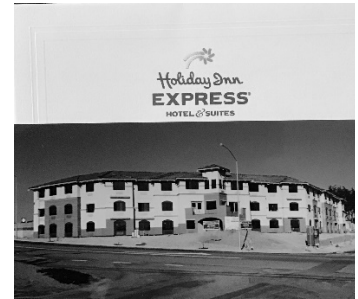
In addition to MPE's primary contracting work, Bart has developed and built multiple residential and business properties around the peninsula. One project involved a subdivision of 60 one-acre minimum lots on Pine Canyon Road in the Salinas Valley. In 2001 he developed, built and operated an 80-room Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites in Marina. In keeping with his fishing-family roots, Bart and his partners, Mike Maiorana and Charles Piccuta, formed Monterey Bay Boatworks Company and built the Monterey Bay Boatworks and Breakwater Cove Marina in the mid-1980s, providing slips for the fishing fleet, whale watching and fishing charter vessels, as well as many recreational boats. The full-service boat yard and fuel dock serve the needs of both commercial and pleasure boating in the Monterey area today.



**The Breakwater Cove
Marina, Monterey, CA.**



**The Monterey Bay Boatworks
that Bart and his partners
developed in 1989.**



**The Holiday Inn
Express Bart built in
Marina, CA, in 2001.**

Bart is a great role model for Italian Americans. Retired from day-to-day operations at MPE, he now volunteers on numerous boards and committees where he puts his civil engineering, construction and development knowledge to work. He has served as a director on the Del Monte Forest Property Owners Association, during which time he acted as chair for both the association's roads and traffic committee and the equestrian and hiking trails committee. As chair of the trails committee he designed and helped fund a bridge across Sawmill Gulch, which re-opened an important

hiking and horse trail that had been unavailable for many years. Bart has also served on various Monterey Peninsula Country Club committees. In addition, he now serves on the Pebble Beach Architectural Review Board, as well as on Monterey County's Del Monte Forest Land Use Advisory Committee and is a director and secretary on the Del Monte Forest Conservancy.

In spite of all the accomplishments in his life, it was not "all work and no play." He enjoyed tournament golf, including four Senior PGA Pro-Ams in Hawaii, of which he won two, and eight PGA Bob Hope Desert Classics in the Palm Springs area. In 2007 Bart and Dianne took their children to visit Italy, Isola delle Femmine and San Vito lo Capo, Sicily, from where all their grandparents originated. They all realized how brave these ancestors were to leave their homes and families to go to a new world so far away and how fortunate their descendants were that they did.



Bart enjoying golf.



The family on vacation in Rome at the Trevi Fountain: Jim Bruno, Dianne and Bart Bruno, Jennifer Lupo, and Paul Bruno.

Bart and Dianne now reside in Pebble Beach and recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. They have three children, Jim and Paul Bruno and Jennifer Lupo; eight grandchildren (two named Bart), and--as of this date--six great grandchildren. In addition to spending time with family, participating in community affairs and playing golf, Bart especially enjoys spending time at the Breakwater Cove Marina keeping abreast with the activities in the Monterey Harbor and with fishing and boating in Monterey Bay.



The family on vacation boating in San Diego: Son Jim and Michelle Bruno, Bart and Dianne, daughter Jennifer and Mark Lupo, and son Paul and Janet Bruno.

Bart feels he has been truly blessed to have come full circle back to his roots in the Italian community and to have ties to the fishing and boating community on the Monterey Peninsula, where all his family now resides. He worked hard, took risks and achieved success.

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