



Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world

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Goodbye, Mike

By Ben Lee

We knew this day would come but you're never really prepared to accept it, no matter how inevitable it is. My wife's father, Michael Harris, passed away on December 29. To call him just my father-in-law doesn't do justice to the role he played in my life. You've gotten to know him a bit through his monthly columns in this newsletter. He loved history and thought our neighborhood would benefit from learning a bit about the past. Growing up in the area, he was deeply rooted in Cheviot Hills and knew it was rich in worthy stories, if only someone would mine for the nuggets and share them with the community. In fact it was his idea to actually do this newsletter and relished his role in providing a column month after month. A grammar fanatic with an eagle eye, he generously proofread all the other articles and offered editorial comments and other helpful notes if pieces veered off track. Providing this service was his joy and recreation. His 9-5 job was that of an attorney in the longest running law partnership in Los Angeles ("Rogers and Harris") that was never added to or detracted from. He was a real old-fashioned lawyer and handled pretty much anything and everything that came across his desk in a quiet, non-flashy way. He cut his teeth in the business in the early 1960's by being in-house counsel for the Mirisch Corporation, handling contracts for big movies and movie stars of the day. That led him to open his own

firm with his partner Stan Rogers, a friend he met while they both attended UCLA Law School. Though he was never boastful, I know it was a source of pride that he was named editor of the UCLA Law Review when he was a student there. He also enjoyed his time at Stanford University, however, having felt guilty at the hefty price tag, he made it a point to graduate in three years. None of his higher learning could compare to the glory days he felt while attending Hamilton High School. He loved the friends he met, the classes he took, the wholesome/rah-rah blue jeans and bobby socks image that going to school in the early 1950's provided. I think to a British family living in Los Angeles, he was living the ideal American dream.

My father-in-law loved this neighborhood. He moved to a home on Glenbarr Avenue in 1944 when he was nine years old and his parents continued living there until they died in 1986 and 2008, respectively. Every Sunday the extended family would gather on the back patio, sometimes friends or neighbors would join, and they'd have a proper British tea-time. If a relative started to seriously date someone, that new person would be invited to come by and that was always the ultimate test of a potential suitor: could he/she withstand the family scrutiny over a hot cup of tea? Pleased to say, I believe I passed that crucial hurdle many decades ago although who knows what kind of gossip was said about me behind my back afterwards (my wife will never admit to this, still).



My father-in-law was my friend, my lawyer and one of my most trusted advisors in all things business. His way of giving advice wasn't so obvious- he'd never definitively tell me what I should do if faced with a complicated decision or fork in the road. But sometimes just figuring out what HE would do if in the same position was enough to steer me in the right direction. He was not a fan of drama or controversy or prolonged disputes. Early in his career he referred to himself as a "pioneer" because he prided himself on being an "early settler." Ironical for a lawyer not to be a fierce fighter but he always got the job done and in a way that endeared him to friends and foes alike. I recommended him to everyone who asked for an attorney because he literally knew and handled every facet of the law. The sheer outpouring of condolences from so many of you who used him speaks volumes to his character and what a good guy he was.

I think he got into the law because it was expected of him but if he had asserted himself or followed his dreams, he would've been a farmer or a writer. He respected honest and hard work in one of what he deemed were the three essential fields: food, clothing or shelter. A staunch yet non-preachy vegetarian, he took great pleasure in growing a few vegetables and proudly showed off his fledgling backyard crops to his three impressed grandsons. He lived a simple, very unshowy life. The only thing he ever bought for himself that he really, really wanted was a 1961 Morgan convertible. Even though he passed away in December, I think a part of

him died the day he gave that car to the boys and me a few months earlier. He loved driving it and treated it like it was a temperamental child: it needing his attention and his cajoling with it to get it to perform appropriately. He watched our excitement at receiving this prized possession, pleased that he was bringing joy into our house but also sad knowing that his failing health didn't allow him to drive it any longer. I think it gave him peace knowing that we would care for it and love it as much as he did (which we do) and it provided us with plenty of things to talk about the last few months when he was stuck at home in bed.

I guess when it's all said and done, he lived a great and honorable life. He had a proud and loving family- two doting daughters, a devoted son-in-law and three fantastic grandsons who adored him. He achieved a dream that was hatched ever since winning the Bank of America award for English while at Hamilton: he became a published author of two books about the Westside of Los Angeles and was working on the 3rd with his brother when he passed away (it will be published posthumously). He was an ideal role model, and great example of someone who knew the difference between right and wrong and always chose the former (but got a kick out of the latter). There will never be another like him and his passing has created a void in this family that will never be filled. Love ya, Mike. Hope there's a Morgan up there for you to zip around in. We'll be waving from the one you left behind.



My featured listings

BEN LEE PROPERTIES

Beverlywood - NEW LEASE LISTING!



9601 Cattaraugus Ave \$7,950 per month
3 Beds/2 Bath

This warm and inviting home in the Castle Heights neighborhood of Beverlywood has much to offer. Immaculate, remodeled and tastefully designed, there is a dramatic fireplace in the formal living room and hardwood floors throughout provide an effortless flow from each vast and generously sized room. The bedrooms have large closets with convenient built-ins for additional storage and one bathroom in particular has been totally remodeled with the added bonus of a European style super shower. The kitchen, a vision in black and white, provides an ideal entertaining space with oversized central-island, stainless high-end appliances and large pantry. With mature foliage surrounding the drought resistant backyard, enjoy dinner outdoors while enjoying absolute privacy. There's a beautiful deck and new trellis. Located mere moments from the award winning Castle Heights Elementary School, this home is a must-see.

Santa Monica - GREAT NEW PRICE!



141 Hollister Ave for lease at \$30,000/month
5 Beds/6 Baths 5,000 Sq. Ft.

Steps from Prime Santa Monica Beach! Gorgeous new 2020 construction, state-of-the-art masterpiece mere moments from the beach. Approx. 5,000 sq. ft. open floor plan allows an easy flow from Great Room to formal dining to magnificent entertainer's kitchen that includes top tier Wolf and Subzero appliances and over-sized island. The kitchen opens to the sophisticated and drought-resistant landscaped backyard. There are sliding pocket doors that completely open to an outdoor side deck dining area, ideal for parties al fresco. This ground level of the home also has a guest room and powder room. Downstairs features guest room, laundry room, gym/media room, kitchenette, an enormous storage room and access to the 3-car subterranean garage. Second floor with 3 en suite bedrooms + laundry rm. Luxe master has treetop views, walk-in closet and 5-star bath. 900 sq. ft. rooftop deck with firepit and hot tub.

Cheviot Hills - FOR SALE!



- LORENZO -
Best Location in the Neighborhood!
6 Beds/8 Bath 7,500 Sq. Ft., 8,500 Sq. Ft. Lot

You may be curious about the new construction home being built on Lorenzo. Call Ben tel:3107046580 or send him an email <mailto:ben@benleeproperties.com> to learn more about this stunning property.

Cheviot Hills - FOR SALE!



- GLENBARR -
Best Location in the Neighborhood!
6 Beds/8 Bath 7,500 Sq. Ft., 8,500 Sq. Ft. Lot

You may be curious about the new construction home being built on Glenbarr. Call Ben tel:3107046580 or send him an email <mailto:ben@benleeproperties.com> to learn more about this spectacular property.

Cheviot Hills - SOLD! (over the list price in multiple offers)



3029 Motor Ave \$2,999,000
5 Beds/5 Bath 3,010 Sq. Ft., 6,985 Sq. Ft. Lot

Seize the unique opportunity to be the second owners of this luxurious home that is less than a decade old. State-of-the-art craftsmanship and fine attention to detail created this stately 5 bedroom/5 bath exquisite estate in Cheviot Hills. Surrounded by lush foliage and totally private, this immaculate home in the highly coveted Overland Avenue School District must be seen to be believed!

Beverly Hills - SOLD! (over the list price in multiple offers)



514 N Camden Dr \$6,995,000
3 Beds/3 Baths 2,639 Sq. Ft., 12,859 Sq. Ft. Lot

Seize this rare opportunity to create your dream home on one of the most enviable streets in Beverly Hills. The jewel of the crown is the land: a vast 12,859 square foot flat lot with a world of limitless potential. With creativity, vision and the power of artistic architectural imagination, your fantasy of designing and building a state-of-the-art home in the most luxury zip code in America can soon become a reality

BUYERS' NEEDS!

Have you ever received those form letters from real estate agents that start out by saying: "I have a client looking to buy and YOUR HOME would be perfect! If you're interested in selling, give me a call..." How do you know these letters are fake? Because everyone in the neighborhood gets one and they're just a ploy to get you to call the agent. This is not a "one size fits all," business and most buyers have specific criteria that not every home on every street meets. In this space, we are going to focus on ACTUAL buyers who have reached out to me to help them find the perfect home- maybe that home happens to be yours and this could be an ideal scenario for everyone! Think of it as a personals ad or dating site for real estate transactions!

I have a lovely couple who is looking for a 4 bedroom/3 bathroom home that is about 3,000-4,000 square feet in either Rancho Park or Cheviot Hills. Single story or two-story is fine and doesn't need a pool (but if it has one, that's OK, too). They'd like the house to have some personality/character and, no offense to developers, not be a "modern box." Doesn't have to be brand new and could even need some work but would like the home to be on a quiet street with a lot that's about 6,000 square feet or larger. Price point: 3-4 million.

IF WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR SOUNDS LIKE IT COULD MATCH WITH YOUR HOME AND YOU'D BE OPEN TO TALKING MORE ABOUT IT, PLEASE GIVE ME A CALL: 310-704-6580 OR BEN@BENLEEPROPERTIES.COM

Cheviot Hills happenings

Mike's Words of Wisdom

Instead of printing one of my father-in-law's articles, this month I'd like to share with you a note he sent to our eldest son Mason many years ago. He found out that Mason received an email account, and this was the first thing he sent to him to commemorate the momentous occasion. I think his own words best sum up what a unique and special person he was. Hope you enjoy.

Hello Mason. This is Poppa Michael saying you are a pleasure to have on my internet connection. This is all new to me as I was not brought up with this means of communication as you were, so please understand I am not too savvy on all the ways of the technology. However, I am amazed at how with the touch of a keyboard I can reach out across the world and even to Cheviot Hills and Mirman school. So I hope the new bridge to the 21st Century as the old politicians use to call it works to better the world and to create

more understanding among peoples everywhere and that you contribute to the betterment of all societies by being aware of all your abilities and to use them for good and not just personal pleasure. Drop the Star Wars fascination and concentrate on Star Trek where the idea was to bring peace and understanding to the galaxy and not conquest as a means to an end. Live with a lighter carbon footprint, learn to eat without the need to kill animals whose souls and spirits share the same planet and whose existence is a continuing necessity in order to balance the order among all living and loving creatures. Enjoy all of your family and realize that they will not always be physically in your life, so treasure the time you have with each and every one. Do not criticize those who may have shortcomings, but accept them with all the faults and mistakes that none of us including you can avoid. Avoid sugars, and sugary drinks, do not use



MICHAEL HARRIS WITH HIS GRANDSON MASON LEE

too much salt, avoid pills, do not think that doctors always have the right answers because medical science is more an art form than we realize with far too many unanswered questions than the profession will admit. Hold on to your memories and think of life as a panorama of events that you want to look back on as something to be savored and not something to avoid. Do not think that fighting and wars

have solved anything and always look behind the motives of those you do not agree with. Because there are always two sides to every issue do not draw a conclusion without hearing the facts on both sides from which you can determine the correct course. Finally, enjoy every moment because happy or sad everything is a learning experience. Love, Poppa Michael

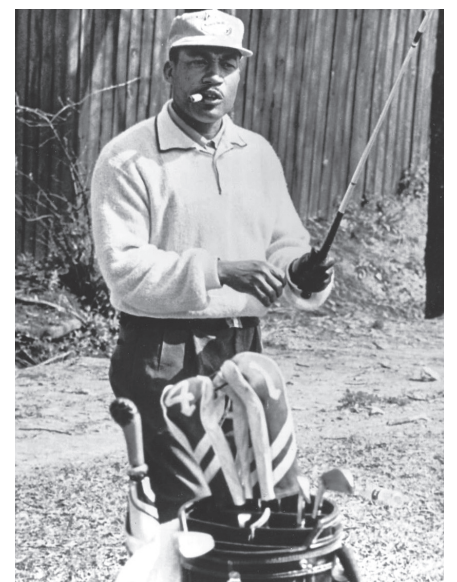
HOMETOWN HERO CELEBRATES CENTENNIAL

By Ben Lee

There is an overdue effort underway to celebrate the accomplishments of Charlie Sifford, often referred to as the "Jackie Robinson of Golf." Sifford was born in 1922 in North Carolina, during the racist Jim Crow era. He was a caddie, but not allowed to play golf on the whites-only course despite his massive talent. After a decorated stint in the military, Sifford made his way into the UGA, the professional circuit for African American golfers. During the Jim Crow era non-white golfers were relegated to playing municipal courses, except in cities that had Jewish Country Clubs, which warmly welcomed them.

He relocated his family to Los Angeles, where he played many rounds at Rancho and Hillcrest. While playing at Hillcrest he became friendly with Stanely Mosk, the soon to be California Attorney General and the longest tenured justice to ever sit on the California Supreme Court. Mosk recognized Charlie's phenomenal talent and the injustice of the PGA's "Caucasian Only" clause in its constitution, which prohibited non-whites from competing on that circuit. In 1958, Mosk joined Sifford in his fight against the PGA to abolish that clause. The duo was successful and in 1961 Charlie Sifford became the first African American to compete on the

PGA TOUR. Sifford went on to win the LA Open at our very own Rancho Park Golf Course in 1969, one of his proudest professional achievements. Charlie was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama in 2014 and was the first Black player admitted to the World Golf Hall of Fame. He is Tiger Woods' honorary "grandpa" and Tiger named his son Charlie after him. It's widely accepted that if Charlie Sifford had not paved the way, there would be no Tiger Woods to follow. It's my belief that Sifford is a prominent athlete with a storied legacy who deserves to be remembered, especially by the neighborhood that witnessed some of his earliest success.



RAFFLE

By Ben Lee

Thank you to all those who entered our raffle to Chocolate Bash on Pico! Congratulations to Bonnie Davis! You are the winner this month and

hope all those delicious chocolate treats help make your Valentine's Day even sweeter. Our next raffle comes at the suggestion of reader Alysia Vanitizian: she thinks Holy Cow, a bar-be-que restaurant on Pico, is delicious and should be featured as a raffle. Done! To enter to win a \$50 gift card

to Holy Cow, simply email me: ben@benleeproperties.com and write 'COW' in the subject line. That's it! We'll draw a winner at the end of the month. Thanks for the tip, Alysia and congrats again to Bonnie for winning January's raffle to Chocolate Bash.

