

## **Frank B. Knoop “Old Goat” Obituary**

An ardent offshore racer, Frank Bellows Knoop, passed away peacefully on April 20, 2020, at 99 years young.

Frank sailed on some of the most competitive racing boats of his time. At one point, he had sailed with 3 of the 4 Hall of Fame skippers of the Chicago Yacht Club. Never one to count races, Frank is credited for 44 Chicago Mackinac Races and countless Port Huron to Mackinac’s. Frank did his first Mackinac race at the age of 16 in 1937 on the Winnetka Sea Scout boat “Albatross.”

Frank Knoop proudly served his country with distinction as a United States LTJG Naval Officer during WWII. Frank was the head Gunnery Officer on the Destroyer USS Purdy DD734. While the Purdy was assigned to “picket line” duty (the most dangerous position in the fleet) off Okinawa, on April 12, 1945, 30 Kamikaze’s targeted two destroyers’ the USS Cassin Young and the USS Purdy. Frank was one of a few survivors who were thrown off the bridge and into the ocean after one of the Kamikaze’s finally broke through and hit the ship. The USS Purdy’s crew received a Naval Unit Commendation for her heroic fight during this air attack.

After the war, Frank was invited to sail as foredeck boss on Chicago Yacht Club Commodore George Sollitt’s famed 60’ yawl Onkahya that included having such crew as Hall of Famers Wally Stenhouse and Lynn Williams. In the 1950’s he was on the highly decorated 62’ “Manitou” which included campaigning out east and doing the Newport – Bermuda Race. In the 60’s Frank sailed extensively with Wally Stenhouse on Aura and won their class in the 1969 Bermuda and Trans-Atlantic race. He was also watch captain for Hall of Famer Hill Blackett on board highly successful the “Condor,” which was featured in Sports Illustrated for winning the SORC. When Lynn Williams built the famed Dora IV, he asked Frank to join the crew. The 62’ Dora IV had an impeccable racing record in Chicago that has not been matched since, including winning a number of Macs overall and placed 2<sup>nd</sup> overall in the Bermuda Race. Frank finished his racing career doing several Mackinac’s on his son Steve’s Tartan 10 “American Flyer.”

Frank was known as being very colorful and the life of the party, when sailors were allowed to blow off a little more steam after a races in the 40s and 50s. Before Mackinac Island Harbor had docks, his telling of stories of how sailors returned to their boats after partying was hilarious. Many “Old Salts” told his son, Steve, of Frank often leading scores of sailors from the Pink Pony attempting to take over Fort Mackinac during the early days. Funnelating at dock parties came to an abrupt end when some younger crew members convinced Frank to try his hand at funnelating only to hit a ferry full of “fudgies”. Subsequently, he was lead off by the Mackinac Police, with many esteemed business leaders attempting to plead Frank’s case.

Frank is survived by his eight children and loving wife, and will forever be remembered for his fair play, no non-sense work ethic and his ability to have fun celebrating his love of the sport.

A tribute to the USS Purdy and Frank Knoop produced by fellow Old Goat Craig Warner USAF/USMC veteran can be found on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LStJu2d-bNY>



Frank during the 1969 Trans – Atlantic Race



Frank on Manitou



Meeting some of Mackinac's finest.



Frank enjoying a victory with son Steve in Michigan City



Frank winning Wednesday night Rum!