

General Information

OBITUARY

FOR REAR ADMIRAL KENNETH BARBOR, USN

by Vice Admiral Alexandros Maratos,
President of the IHB Directing Committee (2002 – 2012)



In 2002 during the XVIth International Hydrographic Conference, I was elected as the President of the IHB Directing Committee together with Ken Barbor and Hugo Gorziglia for a five year period. I remember the three of us met for the first time at the Bureau on the 21st August 2002, in order to be briefed and take on board our duties.

Ken explained to us that he had arrived in Monaco after sailing the Atlantic Ocean from the east coast of the United States in his small boat.

I was a bit curious about that trip and one afternoon the two of us were drinking coffee in his office and we discussed some aspects of this trip. I was surprised by his enthusiasm and I asked him whether he had had any fear of making the trip. He responded by saying that if you have fear to achieve a goal then you will not succeed. You have to prepare yourself in order to face all challenges of such a trip. You have to respect the sea and find ways to compromise with the difficulties that may arise. I asked him what somebody needed to know and do in order to achieve such a trip. He said three things were very important. Firstly the need to study carefully the area that you sail and decide on the optimum route that you will follow, based on a variety of information that you need to collect and evaluate. Secondly to choose the appropriate equipment to sail safely and be able to communicate with other mariners or coastal stations whenever is needed. Thirdly and most importantly choose experienced crew to assist you on the trip. When I asked him if he had anybody onboard to help him, he looked at me and smiled, took a sip of his coffee and said: of course, my wife Leslie, the best mariner and lover of the sea. I could not have succeeded without her.

This was Ken. A true mariner, a true navigator but above all a true hydrographer. This is the way that we will always remember him.

Ken, as he was so fond of the sea, it was not a surprise that he had managed to study, practice and teach the three “marine academic sisters” as they are called. Hydrography, oceanography and marine meteorology. Not forgetting that Ken, before coming to the IHB, was the Commander of the US Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command and inaugural Director of the Southern Mississippi Hydrographic Science Research Center. With his vast experience he came to the Bureau to help the organization achieve and further its tasks and goals. I believe that all of us who met and worked with Ken will agree that he succeeded. He was always ready to provide good ideas on various hydrographic aspects and not only co-operate and support Member and non-Member States, listen and provide solutions to problems that arose, represent the organization on various international and local activities to raise awareness of its role and importance. But as a true mariner he was caring on issues concerning safety at sea, protection of the marine environment and security.



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Ken was a very pleasant, quiet, generous and cooperative person at the Bureau. He used to say that if the Bureau is effective and efficient to conclude its task, then the Organization will also be effective and efficient. For this reason we have to work towards achieving this goal. He loved hydrography, he loved sailing, he loved to be challenged on maritime issues.

He worked very hard for five years at the IHB and speaking on behalf of all of us who worked with and who met Ken, I can safely say that he will be greatly missed and we will always remember him with love, fondness and respect.

To his wife Leslie and relatives, our deepest condolences.