

SCI Turns 50 And What A History It Has Had

How SCI Began And How It Has Gotten To Where it Is Now.

BY STEVE COMUS

Fifty years ago, the then almost five-year-old Southern California Safari Club was headed for two relatively quick changes that resulted in the formation of Safari Club International.

First, in 1971, SCSC evolved into Safari Club of Los Angeles, and then almost immediately SCLA evolved into SCI —when SCI Los Angeles and SCI Chicago merged. By January 1972, SCI Los Angeles and SCI Chicago were both chapters of SCI.

By 1960, Mac went on his first African safari, an adventure in Kenya with Professional Hunter Glen Cottar. At that time, there were local safari clubs in major metropolitan areas around the U.S., but no truly national or international cohesive organization, save perhaps Shikar-Safari.

The safari industry as we now know it didn't exist as such at that time, but there was enough interest in international hunting and enough participants to



Leading professional hunters of the 1960s attended SCSC as it became SCI



C.J. McElroy with leopard he took on his first safari with a Remington 760 in .30-06.



The man behind it all was Casper Johnny McElroy. Mac, or Mr. Mac as some folks referred to him, was a character without whom SCI would not exist.

Mac's own journey (safari if you will) was both colorful and epic in all senses of the terms. At 13, he hopped on a freight train and rode the rails from Texas to California where he worked on Parker Dam, was a night club bouncer and a carpet layer. During WWII, he served in the Merchant Marine. After the war, he and wife Alvie owned a bar, built cabins in the Big Bear Lake area of California and owned the largest floor covering business in Los Angeles.

make the formation of such an industry viable. All of the ingredients existed for a singular, major international organization. It took someone to put the pieces together. Mac was the one who did it, first through SCSC, then SCLA and finally SCI.

It is important to know the "who," the "why" and the "when" to better understand the "what" when it comes to all of the glorious reasons to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of SCI.

continued on page 2

SCI is unique in the world. It always has been and likely always will be. SCI is a very complex organization. The more one learns about SCI, the more there is to like and admire. SCI has done an amazing number of things in its five short decades.

There were eight founding purposes stated back in 1971: “The purpose of this association shall be:

1. To promote good fellowship among those who love the sport of big-game hunting.
2. To preserve the wild game species of the world through selective trophy hunting of the past-prime animals, leaving the young to mature, and the prime animals to reproduce.
3. To aid conservation by initiating projects, and by supporting worthwhile projects of other organizations, both at home and abroad.

The founders of SCI viewed honor as an important attribute. They stressed the importance of four key words that summarized their views of themselves and their new organization: Courage, Honor, Loyalty, Integrity.”

“COURAGE: Courage is the quality that keeps one going in the face of adversity, opposition and danger. Courage stands for perseverance and determination of purpose. To fight for what is right and true.

HONOR: Honor is an allegiance to one’s country, to one’s calling, profession and to one’s sport. Honor is to obey and respect the laws of the land in which we live and the laws of the countries which we visit. Especially those laws which govern the sport in which we as hunters participate.

“Classes of Members: There shall be one class, namely: Regular, all of whom shall be over the age of 18 years.

“Membership Qualification. The number of regular Members shall be unlimited. To be eligible for Membership, a person must be of good moral character and have demonstrated an active interest and had actual experience in the hunting of big-game both within and outside the continental limits of the United States.”

Hence, SCI has been about international hunting, right from the start. The very name of the organization enhances that truth — it is the Swahili word for journey.

Much of the early efforts were to establish chapters around the United States (eventually around the world, but first in the U.S.). Mac and Hyland Erikson, SCI’s

Rather (the network had hired Cleveland Armory, founder of the anti-hunting group Fund for Animals as its sole consultant).

- 1975. The American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS) concept was launched by Mac with the help of three outfitters, each of whom hosted 20 to 25 students the first year.
- 1976. AWLS held a single session at the Box Y Ranch in Wyoming.
- 1976. SCI President Andy Oldfield represented the United States at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
- 1976. SCICF and SCI Chapters presented the Mexican government two Toyota 4x4 vehicles for use by wardens and biologists in desert bighorn sheep work in Sonora.



Left: Actor Chuck Connors, star of “The Rifleman,” and Wyoming Gov. Ed Herschler inspect a Harry Lawson rifle presented to Connors at a 1970s SCI Convention.



C.J. McElroy discusses hunting advocacy with Sen. Barry Goldwater during the 1970s.



Upper right: Then-California Gov. Ronald Reagan joins Alvie and C.J. McElroy at SCI's third convention in 1975.
Center spread: Dale Robertson, left, with C.J. McElroy.



A 1977 wildlife symposium in Kenya attracted SCI officers and officials from four East Africa countries and three Nairobi wildlife organizations. C.J. McElroy called the meetings “the beginning of the club's legislative efforts in defense of sport hunting.” That concept lives today in the African Wildlife Consultative Forums hosted annually by SCIF.



Covers of the first issue of Safari Magazine (1971) and the SCI Record Book from 1978. Presentation of Major Awards for the best trophies taken all over the globe the previous year were popular and important ceremonies at SCI's early conventions, as shown here at the 1975 Convention.

4. To educate our youth in the safe and sportsmanlike use of firearms and to interest them in the conservation and preservation of the forests and animals, which are their natural heritage.
5. To share our hunting skills and information with the younger, serious but less experienced men and to encourage them to develop into full-fledged big-game trophy hunters.
6. To provide a channel for organized efforts to promote a public understanding and acceptance of proper hunting as the ancient, honorable and valuable sport that we know it to be.
7. To provide recognition for the individuals who have succeeded in this sport and those who have accomplished some significant advance in any of our purposes.
8. To participate and associate with other clubs throughout the world who share common goals, beliefs, and purposes.”

LOYALTY: Loyalty implies a strict adherence to keeping one’s word with friend or foe alike. It is an unwavering belief in one’s religion, and the observance of respect for one’s parents and friends. Loyalty is an inherent imperviousness to all influences that tend to weaken one in the face of temptation.

INTEGRITY: Integrity is the reflection of dignity and excellence of character in one. It is a quality of being complete and undivided; of moral soundness, honesty and uprightness. Integrity is a characteristic in one whose worth demands the respect of his fellow men.”

The founders, as is evident in the statements above, wanted more than just a club, more than just an organization. They viewed hunters in heroic terms and expected more from hunter-members than dues or lip service. They believed in true commitment.

Although the qualification requirements for membership in SCI have changed over the years, the initial standards further reflected the founders’ beliefs that to belong to SCI was something special:

second president, held meetings in Houston, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh, establishing chapters in those cities — going from zero to 10 chapters in the first year. Others followed quickly and there were 50 chapters established in the first eight years.

Hence, by the 1980s, SCI was well on its way to becoming what it is today. The basic goals of advocacy and conservation were well established by then.

Among the important matters for SCI during the '70s were (in addition to forming SCI in the first place):

- 1973. Safari Club International Conservation Fund (SCICF) was formed.
- SCI presented its first medallions for major awards at the Convention.
- 1975. SCI became involved in its first big advocacy campaign — an effort to halt the production and airing of the anti-hunting program “The Guns of Autumn” on CBS, narrated by Dan

- 1977. SCICF and SCI Chapters again presented the Mexican government two 4x4s, this time for use in Baja California.
- 1977. The club’s first overseas chapter, SCI Spain, was formed.
- 1977. SCI’s first environmental resolution was presented at an international wildlife symposium in Nairobi, Kenya, protesting the countrywide ban on hunting.
- 1977. SCI incoming President Carroll Mann met with U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus to discuss SCI’s objections to certain provisions of the Endangered Species Act.
- 1977. SCI printed its first Record Book.

Although SCI has grown in numbers and importance in the hunting world since then, it was the decade of the '70s that set the stage.

continued on page 4

1980s

The '80s saw SCI expand in some ways and experience growing pains in other areas. It was the decade when SCI really came of age.

Membership in SCI nearly doubled in the 1980s, from 8,261 in November 1980 to 15,608 in November 1990.

Early in the '80s, much of the focus was on Safari Club International Conservation Fund, which acquired the Granite Ranch property in Wyoming.

Granite Ranch has been the location for the American Wilderness Leadership School since. The Sables were formed in 1984 and in 1987, SCICF became involved with Becoming an Outdoors Woman.

The passage of the 30 percent rule, however, led to nearly 20 chapters quitting the club in protest, including three of SCI's largest — Dallas, Houston, and Sacramento. Within a year, all the other chapters returned to the fold. Sacramento stayed away until 1991. Dallas and Houston still are not affiliated with SCI but are freestanding organizations: Dallas Safari Club and Houston Safari Club.

Mac indicated in 1983 that he was thinking of retiring, and in June 1985, he agreed to meet a group of supporters and dissenters in the Minneapolis, Minnesota airport to work out a retirement settlement that would become known as the "Minneapolis Accord."

Mac signed the agreement that he would stay on until the end of the World Hunting Congress, but when the

Each rifle would feature the finest engraving, gold relief and gold line work based on original oil paintings by well-known artists who supported SCI.

Each would be fitted in a one-of-a-kind exotic wood and leather case, complete with appropriate accouterments, and each gunmaker would sign a certificate of authenticity guaranteeing the purchaser that the rifle would never be duplicated.

Since David Miller Co. was instrumental in creating the project, it would build the first and last rifle. The David Miller cased rifle set the standard for the other three gunmakers.

The first rifle in the series, called "The Elephant Rifle," was based on a square-bridge Mauser action and

action that Miller helped design with U.S. Repeating Arms Co. — a redesign that now is known as the Winchester Model 70 Classic action. It was chambered in .338 Winchester Magnum. That rifle brought \$201,000 at the 1986 SCI Convention.

Also in the 1980s, SCI formed its first official Government Affairs Committee, and 27 of the 39 candidates supported by SCI-PAC in the 1980 elections won their races.

June 1986 was the first annual Awards issue of *SAFARI* Magazine, which since has promoted SCI's World Hunting Awards programs.

The International Wildlife Museum opened in Tucson in February of 1988 and served as SCI headquarters until they were moved to Washington, D.C. in 2018.



From left: Dwayne Smelser, C.J. McElroy and Myron Baker with an improbable 19-layer cake presented at SCI's 10th birthday. Gail and Ernie Saners, husband and wife hunting partners, are seen after receiving their second Inner Circle sashes and pins at the 1986 SCI Convention. Outfitter Ricardo Medem of Spain (left) receives an award from Marion Van Slooten, SCI's sixth president in the early 1980s. Cotton Gordon, recipient of the 1980 Professional Hunter Award.

From left: Trophy Records chairman Jack Schwabland (center) presents the 1985 First Africa award to Nassos Roussos. Trophy sponsor Eric Wagner, of Eric Wagner Safaris, at left. From left: Audrey Murtland (left) and C.J. McElroy present Judy Keller with an achievement award as chair of the Lionesses. The American Wilderness Leadership School.

Since then, the Sables have been the education arm of SCI AND SCIF and the leaders in promoting education as a means of helping assure a bright future for hunting.

On the SCI front, the early 1980s were tumultuous. In 1982, a move by the Board of Directors called the "Dearborn Resolution" caused a shakeup that saw numerous chapters pull out of the organization.

The Dearborn Resolution required chapters to send 30 percent of the profits from their annual fund-raisers to SCI Headquarters. This then-controversial resolution happened during the SCI Spring Board of Directors meeting held in conjunction with the International Wildlife Foundation's Film Festival in Dearborn, Michigan.

SCI was unique among major hunting organizations. Local chapters of other hunting organizations, for example, sent 100 percent of the net proceeds of their fundraisers to their parent organizations. SCI was seeking only 30 percent.

Congress ended in January 1988, Mac changed his mind.

There followed a number of negotiations, and by the end of the decade, that chapter of SCI's history was closed. Bottom line: Mac was 75 years old when he walked away from SCI and was 83 when his contract ran out in 1995.

By its 10th Convention in 1982, SCI had outgrown the Las Vegas Sahara Hotel and moved to the Tropicana. From 1983 to 1986, it was held in the MGM Grand Hotel.

During the 1980s, SCI singlehandedly elevated the value of custom firearms around the world when it kicked off the SCI Big Five Classic Masterpiece Collection of rifles at the 1982 Convention. Each year for five years, the amount paid for a Big Five rifle went up, from \$41,000 the first year to \$201,000 the fifth year.

David Miller of the David Miller Co. in Tucson, Arizona, came up with the idea of commissioning other master gunmakers to create five one-of-a-kind rifles, each to commemorate a separate dangerous African big-game animal.

chambered in .458 Winchester Magnum. It sold at the 1982 SCI Convention for \$41,000. That was the highest price ever paid for a modern bolt-action rifle at the time.

Rifle Number Two, called "The Rhino Rifle," was built by Champlin Firearms, Inc. of Enid, Oklahoma. The receiver was built entirely by Champlin and the octagon barrel was chambered for .375 H&H. That rifle brought \$43,500 at the 1983 SCI Convention.

Rifle Number Three, called "The Buffalo Rifle," was built by the Friedrich Wilhelm Heym Company of Germany. It was a side-by-side double rifle based on a Heym Model 88BSS action. That rifle brought \$65,000 at the 1984 SCI Convention.

Rifle Number Four, called "The Lion Rifle," was built by Paul Jaeger, Inc., of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. It was built on a pre-1964 Winchester Model 70 action and was chambered for the .375 H&H cartridge. That rifle brought \$140,000 at the 1985 SCI Convention.

Rifle Number Five, called "The Leopard Rifle," was made by The David Miller Co. of Tucson, Arizona. It was based on a redesigned Model 70

1990s

By the beginning of the 1990s, SCI was hitting its stride on many fronts. Just a teenager when that decade began, SCI was fully adult in its late 20s by the time the '90s ended and the new millennium rolled around.

Both the "SCI Record Book" and World Hunting Awards program blossomed during this decade and other new programs were continually being created by imaginative members.

In the '90s, Thompson Temple introduced the Sportsmen Against Hunger campaign and Sensory Safari was the brainchild of Bob Easterbrook.

The Sables launched Books for Africa, led by Chrissie Jackson, and Dr. Jim Schubert provided the impetus for Safari Care.

SCI embraced the Sacramento Chapter when it returned to the fold, and more than 150 chapters were under the SCI banner in the '90s.

Also, during the 1990s, SCI provided the seed money to start the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus.

continued on page 6

By the mid-1990s under the guidance of Doug Yajko, Skip Donau and Mike Rogers, the Convention began to attract the endorsement of statesmen like President George H.W. Bush and Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf. Celebrities who were once reluctant to identify with SCI were then eager to acknowledge the traditions and values of SCI.

In 1992, to draw participants from the large number of hunters residing east of the Mississippi River, SCI scheduled its first East Coast Convention soon after its Convention in Nevada that year.

It was held in the Disneyworld Contemporary Resort in Orlando, Florida, and it was far from the success the club expected in terms of attendees and auction sales even though its 225 exhibit booths were sold out by the previous November.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that the law would have to undergo a “rule-making process” before the agency would issue import permits.

Fifteen months later, its first proposed rule appeared in the Federal Register, stating that only bears from certain areas could be imported.

When Clinton signed the amendments into law, SCI members began booking expensive polar bear hunts across a wide area of Canada, expecting to be able to import their trophies with no problems.

Under the rule-making process, however, they had no idea whether or not they could import their trophies. Some mistakenly believed the Service would grandfather all bears taken before the final ruling in 1997.

That ruling, however, authorized bears from only five

In 1991, the first issue of *Safari Times* newspaper was mailed to members. *Safari Times*’ first issue was 12 pages, and it carried no advertising.

Before the 1995 SCI Convention, President Pat Bollman approved the *Convention News*, a daily newspaper, published at SCI Conventions.

In 1995, Audrey Murtland received the first Diana Award and Mike Simpson received the first C.J. McElroy Award.

Richard Parsons was named director of SCI’s Wildlife and Conservation Department in 1997. For many years before that, he was SCI’s Governmental Affairs Counsel.

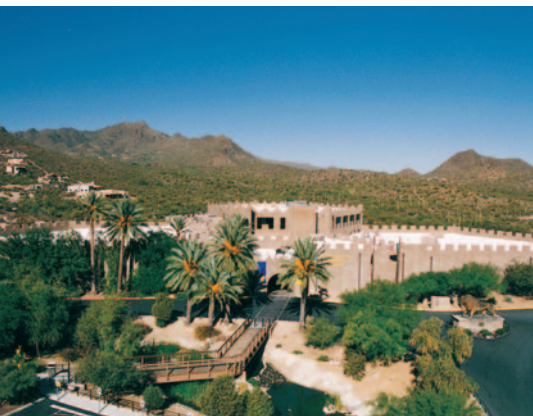
As the decade of the ’90s ended, SCI began efforts to expand in some areas, “go public” and actively recruit more members from the general hunter population.

number of ways,” Katz said. “The purpose of SCIF was to better utilize tax-exempt dollars. There were great limitations in fundraising and direct marketing.

“There was a total tax and corporate restructuring of the organization so that it would become, in the new millennium, the premier international advocate for hunters’ rights.”

This was done by dividing the corporate and operating structures between the Foundation as a 501 (c)(3) charitable, educational and conservation organization and SCI as a (c)(4) advocacy organization, according to Katz.

The old SCI, being a tax-exempt organization, became the new Foundation and a new SCI was formed and incorporated in Arizona.



From left: The International Wildlife Museum opened in Tucson in February of 1988. Dignitaries have frequented SCI Conventions from the beginning. Here at the SCI Convention are, from left, U.S. 41st President George H.W. Bush, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, former U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle, Gen. Chuck Yeager and astronaut Gen. Joe Engle. Opening of the 1997 SCI Convention.

From left: Big things happen at SCI Conventions, as is seen here with the huge lion that graced the 1997 Silver Anniversary. Below, SCI leaders enjoy the 1990 Convention. Shown, from left, are Skip Donau; Mike Rogers, Sr.; Keith West; Al Cheramie; Warren Parker; Wayne Pocius; Pat Bollman; Doug Yajko; Lance Norris and then-Executive Director Phil DeLone. Outfitter/PH Henri Van Aswegen, left, joins Safari Magazine Editor Bill Quimby, right, and SCI Founder C.J. McElroy in Zambia on a 1994 safari where Mac shot his last of more than 300 trophies – a Crawshaw defassa waterbuck.

Admission was \$25 daily. Field (\$30) and National (\$65) memberships were sold at the door.

The following year, SCI held three Conventions. The first was its regular Convention in Las Vegas, followed in March by the second East Coast Convention at the Westin-Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta (there were fewer than 200 exhibitors). Then SCI sublet space at the April Jagen und Fischen Show in Erden, Germany.

This was the last year SCI hosted conventions outside of Nevada. The East Coast Conventions failed to draw attendees, and there were many problems staging the Jagen und Fischen Show so far from SCI’s headquarters in Arizona.

In 1994, perhaps SCI’s greatest legislative victory occurred when U.S. President Bill Clinton signed into law amendments to the Marine Mammal Protection Act, allowing U.S. hunters to import legally taken Canadian polar bear trophies for the first time in 20 years.

It took some opponents by surprise that SCI was such a major force in Congress, and they rallied by working to keep the Act from being fully implemented.

of Canada’s bear hunting areas to be imported — there was no grandfathering and the best hunting areas were not included.

Hunters who had waited 25 years still could not import their legally taken bears.

SCI was ready when Congress held a hearing on the final regulation exactly three years after the Marine Mammal Protection Act’s amendments were signed into law.

Congress grandfathered all bears taken before April 30, 1994 and ordered the Service to issue import permits for them.

Because another 70 bears taken between that date and the final ruling were excluded, SCI sought another change, and it came through language included in a Senate Appropriations Bill.

There were approximately another 100 legally taken Canadian polar bears that could not be imported and those were not released until 2004 when President George W. Bush signed the Interior Appropriations Bill.

Today’s Editor-In-Chief Steve Comus was hired as part of those efforts to enhance the publications of SCI.

It was during the first decade of the 21st Century that the groundwork was laid to take SCI from a club of international hunters to the advocacy powerhouse that it has become.

Although the ’90s saw some of this change begin, it wasn’t until the 2000–2010 period that much of it was to come to pass.

At the dawning of the new millennium, SCI bifurcated, creating sister organizations of SCI and SCI Foundation.

What is now known as Safari Club International Foundation became a reality in 2001 under the presidency of George Banks, but the effort began with Florida attorney Larry Katz, even before he served as SCI President in 1999–2000.

“When I was chairman of the Audit Committee under Don Kirn (SCI President 1992–1993), I realized that the organization needed to be restructured in a

“The functions of the original organization were then divided between the two entities to avoid the tax limitations that limited our advocacy role and gave us greater opportunities to raise tax deductible contributions,” Katz said.

The SCI Foundation was preceded by the Safari Club International Conservation Foundation (SCICF), a similar organization that operated from 1973 to 1988.

2000s

The African Wildlife Consultative Forum has been SCI Foundation’s signature program in Africa since 2001. AWCf is an annual capacity-building venue for communications on common approaches to conservation challenges to create a continentwide strategy for wildlife management.

The AWCf brings together senior government officials, professional hunting association leadership,

continued on page 8

the USFWS, international policy experts and wildlife biologists to tackle the most pressing sustainable-use issues in Africa.

On March 1, 2002, SCI Founder C.J. McElroy died at 89 after having suffered a stroke the previous December. His estate reportedly consisted of a townhouse in an exclusive development in the foothills overlooking Tucson — and little else.

C.J. McElroy, a self-made millionaire by the 1960s, worked hard, lived well and did everything he ever dreamed of doing. He educated himself, hobnobbed with important people and traveled the world, but he had outlived most of his resources and most of his friends, and his two wives had given him no children.

His larger-than-life personality and even larger ego, his dictatorial management style and his zealous commitment to make “his” club and its projects prosper — no matter who or what — were exactly what was needed at the time.

In May 2002, SCI/F opened the Chancellor Washington Headquarters on Capitol Hill. It marked a new era for the club’s conservation and governmental affairs efforts. The 7,000-square-foot former townhouse at 501 Second Street NE was purchased for \$2.1 million with the assistance of benefactor Steve Chancellor. Another \$700,000 was spent in renovating the 120-year-old building to preserve its character outside while transforming its interior into offices.

From 1999 to late 2002, there was *Safari Cub*, a 16-page colorful magazine to SCI youth members. The magazine carried photos and stories submitted by young hunters, along with games and puzzles as well as articles about wildlife. *Safari Cub* began as a project of the SCI Membership Department but was dropped after being transferred to the Education Department.

Hunt Forever, a full-color slick magazine, was launched in 2003 to promote SCI’s hunter advocacy efforts to North America’s 14 million hunters.

“*Hunt Forever* is the voice of every hunter; it is our battle cry and our communication tool to keep you informed. Hunting will not be lost! ... *Hunt Forever* offers practical ways for you to make a difference...*Hunt*

the newsstand sales sell through at Dick’s Sporting Goods was 75 percent — a significant sell rate in the hunting world.

At the dawning of the 21st Century, *Safari Times* underwent major alterations. First, advertising-driven special sections were added and then *Safari Times* went truly international. First was the printing of *Safari Times* Africa in South Africa and later, the regular *Safari Times* was printed in several languages in addition to English, including Spanish, German, Italian and Portuguese. Also, for a couple of years, *Safari Times Canada* was printed and distributed in that country.

In 2005, SCI launched the first global hunting effort to honor veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.



From left: Sables have been responsible for the donations of literally thousands of books to schools in Africa, including a project named Books For Africa, shown here. Steve Chancellor cuts the ribbon, opening SCIF/SCI Chancellor Headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. as SCI President George Banks, right, looks on. SCI Executive Director Tom Riley, right, presents U.S. Interior Secretary Gale Norton with a plaque during the 2004 SCI May Board of Directors meeting, recognizing her contributions as a lifelong conservationist.

From left: In 2005 anti-hunters targeted SCI’s World Headquarters in Tucson, protesting hunting. SCIF’s Sportsmen Against Hunger program grew tremendously from 2000 to 2010. Here Ohio Lionheart Chapter President Werner Schmiesing, second from left, presents packages of processed venison to Agape Ministries in St. Marys, Ohio. Shown with Schmiesing, from left, are Doris Kah of Kah Meat Processing and chapter members Dr. Tim Meyer, Louis Comus, Allen Strunk and Brendon Conrad. The SCIF Sporting Clays Shoot, held in San Antonio, Texas in 2008, launched a chapter challenge for the fundraising event.

Although he said in an interview that he enjoyed meeting people and valued the friendships he had made across six continents, fewer than 50 persons attended a memorial service held in “Mac’s trophy room” at the SCI International Wildlife Museum in Tucson.

Darlene Rogers said no more than a dozen people sent letters of condolence after his death.

After Mac’s death, George Banks, SCI’s 25th President, wrote: “Perhaps it is fitting, and very ironic, that Mr. McElroy died while I was president. I was the first president who wasn’t beholden to his legacy. I felt warm feelings for his earlier hard work but realized that SCI needed to become a truly independent international organization.”

There is no doubt that C.J. McElroy was a controversial figure. But even his most vocal critics agree that without him, the world’s largest, most active and most influential hunting and conservation organization would not exist today.

In October 2002, the Sables governing board adopted an official vision: “SCIF Sables — Leaders in Wildlife Education to Preserve Our Hunting Heritage Worldwide.” Then in 2004, the Sables revised their mission statement to read: “SCIF Sables is an organization of women and men who raise funds to further support wildlife education. We do this through the American Wilderness Leadership School program, which is a conservation wildlife management course that not only encourages a lifelong learning track to preserve our hunting heritage, but also instills in its students a love of the outdoors and respect for nature.”

In 2003, the Sables distributed a cookbook entitled “Wild About Cooking” to Sportsmen Against Hunger relief organizations.

SCI membership increased rather steadily in the first five years of the new millennium, going from 40,000 in December 2000 to 50,000 in December 2005. Since then, the membership numbers have fluctuated from 40,000 to 50,000.

Forever will take on tough issues and identify what you can do in your community to make a difference,” wrote *Hunt Forever* Editor Steve Comus

That magazine was discontinued after its December 2004/January 2005 issue. It evolved out of a pair of bumper stickers SCI used in some of its earliest marketing efforts. One bumper sticker, linked to SCI, said: “CONSERVE NOW!” and the other bumper sticker said: “HUNT FOREVER.”

At that time, it was envisioned that the newly formed SCI Foundation would coopt the anti-hunters by using the exclamation point in promoting conservation now; and it was also envisioned that by conserving now, hunters could hunt forever.

CONSERVE NOW! was used in some marketing collateral but did not evolve into a freestanding publication like *Hunt Forever*.

Hunt Forever’s print runs ranged from 100,000 to 250,000 and the copies were distributed through a number of the major retail store chains. At one point,

Operation Freedom Safari was held the next year in Botswana where SCI members Eric and Oksana Sparks joined Jim Zumbo in hosting wounded veteran Joe Tormala of Michigan.

Going into the midterm elections in 2006, SCI warned all hunters to be aware of deception involving a group that claimed to be mainline hunters and shooters. Such groups have come to be known as decoy organizations since they exist to decoy unassuming voters. That group was The American Hunters and Shooters Association, which operated from 2005 to 2010. Since then, there have been other decoy groups pop up from time to time.

In 2007, the United Nations voted to officially recognize SCIF as a non-governmental organization with consultative status. As such, SCIF had access to meetings and conferences, was able to submit position papers and otherwise have input on matters affecting international hunting.

continued on page 10

Also in 2007, then-President-Elect Dennis Anderson kicked off a series of articles that spotlighted SCI's global achievement to focus on the "I" in SCI.

Those articles included:

- How SCI's Convention provided the marketplace where eager hunters found the guides and outfitters who could take them to even the most remote parts of the world for coveted game.
- How *SAFARI* Magazine continued the tradition of the hunting campfire, though in print, where hunters told their stories of the chase and the kill, just as our ancestors did in caves through pictograms and the oral tradition.
- How SCI and SCIF were working with African nations to develop conservation plans that included hunting as sustainable use and also economic development of hunting and tourism.
- How SCI's relationship with FACE (European Federation for Hunting and Conservation) ensured unity of the hunter's voice in European Union matters regarding hunting and firearms.



From left: In 2006, SCI President Mike Simpson, right, and Vice President Lane Clezie, left, met with U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonin Scalia. History was made at the 2008 SCI Convention as SCI President Dennis Anderson introduced the Hunter Legacy 100 Fund's 100 donors.

- How SCI had become a UN-recognized NGO and what that means for the Small Arms Trade agreements and how SCI is involved in the work so that hunters may continue to carry their firearms for sport into world hunting destinations.

- How SCIF was part of the process of listing and delisting species for the CITES.

- How SCI was taking part in the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and other North American trade matters, including the Governors' Council for the U.S.-Mexico border states.

In 2008, SCI filed a lawsuit challenging the listing of the polar bear as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act, which led the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ban imports of polar bear trophies from Canada.

In 2008, SCIF and several SCI Chapters transferred 56 wood bison from the Elk Island National Park in Alberta, Canada, to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center. This culminated 15 years of efforts to achieve the reintroduction of wood bison to Alaska.

At the 2009 SCI Convention, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia addressed attorneys at SCI's Second Annual Wildlife Law Course and then served as keynote speaker for the Convention's Saturday evening festivities.

In 2009, SCI/SCIF prevented listing lions as endangered after working with range states from southern and eastern Africa to defeat the proposal.

As the time approached for countries to submit their proposal for the 2010 CITES 15th Conference of Parties in Qatar, there were persistent rumors that Kenya would try again to get the lion listed on Appendix 1 (Kenya unsuccessfully had tried to do that in 2004 at the Conference of Parties in Thailand).

SCI/SCIF did a lot of work behind the scenes to prevent this proposal from happening, and they were successful. When the Oct. 14, 2009, deadline passed for submission of proposals for the Qatar meeting, there was no proposal on lions.

How did SCI know that SCI/F prevented any lion proposal? First, SCI knew that there was a draft proposal. During the summer of 2009, SCI obtained a copy of it



2010 to present

SCI has been politically involved since its inception. Formed as an organization of international hunters, it was obvious shortly after the beginning that the hunting culture was under attack from those who opposed the consumptive use of wildlife resources.

As was pointed out earlier, the TV series "Guns of Autumn" triggered the awareness that absent some organization to advocate for hunting, the future for hunting and its culture were in peril. That's when SCI seriously entered the hunting advocacy world.

"Guns of Autumn" was broadcast Sept. 5, 1975. It was the first significant and fallacious attack on hunting by a major network and the backlash was significant. It and a follow-up ended up with almost no advertiser. It was also a wake-up call for all hunters.

SCI helped lead the charge in opposition to that steaming pile of anti-hunting pap and has never looked back. SCI continues to expand its presence in the fight against antis and their lies.

Ties to governments and those in power were forged early on and enhanced over the years. That focus continued in 2011 when former Alaska Governor and U.S. Vice Presidential Candidate Sarah Palin addressed the SCI Convention.

As much as SCI understood its role in hunter advocacy, it also understood that it needed to create as many different revenue streams as possible because the costs of advocating continued to rise as the organization gained in size and influence around the world.

Satellite "conventions" were held, but none delivered the amounts of money and additional membership envisioned when they were organized.

To that end, also in 2011, SCI produced the Epic Outdoor Game Fair near Atlanta, Georgia, as an effort to create an added source of revenue for the organization and to evangelize the message of SCI to others, both hunters and non-hunters. That event was well received by many who attended, but it also did not deliver the payoff originally envisioned. Although there were discussions of putting it on for several years in hopes that it would grow and mature, it was dropped after the inaugural edition.

Advocacy, however, continued to be important, especially in other countries. Early in 2012, SCI Canada celebrated the end of the gun registry in that country.

Then at the 2013 Convention, under the watchful eye of a live African lion, SCI raised more than \$1.2 million in a single evening to help fund efforts to save both the African lion and the hunting of that species.

Pledges made during that landmark evening event at the Convention outpaced the levels imagined, even those of the organizers.

Truly, it was an SCI kind of an evening where members enthusiastically put their money where their mouths were and broke the million-dollar mark by a considerable amount.

Also, in 2013, SCI and SCIF celebrated the 25th anniversary of the International Wildlife Museum in Tucson, Arizona. A gala held at the museum as part of the August Board of Directors meeting raised \$62,000 for the museum.

The International Wildlife Museum continues to see thousands of visitors each year, including busloads of students from local and regional schools.

Evidence of SCI's advocacy efforts became even clearer in 2014 when SCI triggered a new definition of a hunting trophy. It takes a lot of behind-the-scenes work to realize positive changes in government, and that's what happened when it came to redefining hunting trophies.

The June 2014 issue of *Safari Times* reported: "On May 27, the United States Fish & Wildlife Service published a 'final rule' that has major implications for U.S. hunters." The rule affirmed revisions made to existing USFWS regulations that control international trade in wildlife and plants protected by CITES.

One of the many revisions included a new definition of the term "hunting trophy," which characterized what is and what is not considered a hunting trophy by the United States.

The old definition of hunting trophy limited what a hunter could import into the United States. Only for personal use, a hunting trophy could be imported if it included raw or tanned parts of the hunted animal. The import of hide, horns, teeth and other raw parts were also allowed.

Not allowed were any worked or manufactured items, jewelry or other utilitarian items made from the animal. So, if a hunter wanted to make something out of the hide or hair, such as clothing or a bracelet, the item could not be imported as a hunting trophy.

The new definition was less restrictive, and it included manufactured items. Also, the new definition reflected continued successful cooperation between SCI and The European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation (FACE).

Also, in 2014, vicious attacks against hunters in the social media hit new highs, with attacks against SCI member Kendall Jones, who received death threats, among the many other kinds of threats by anti-hunters. Anti-hunters by then had learned how to misuse the social media in efforts to terrorize legitimate hunters.

Such attacks have continued since and were heightened to new levels in 2018 when Brittany Longoria was attacked in the social media over a leopard that she had harvested legally in Africa.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic shut down hunting in much of the world, it isn't the first time in this decade when a virus has caused concern among hunters.

In November 2014, SCI Past President R. Douglas Yajko, M.D., advised SCI members: "The Ebola virus has been big news around the world recently, which has piqued the interest of SCI members as they consider booking safaris in Africa or attending the SCI Convention."

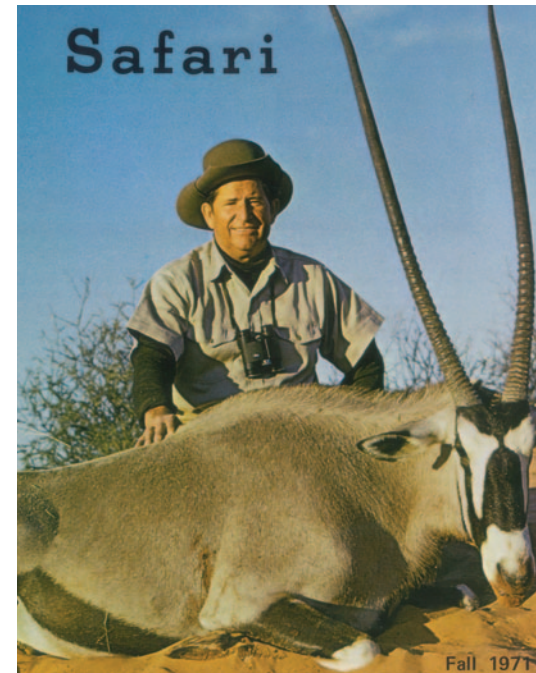
Dr. Yajko pointed out that the Ebola virus had not caused him to change his plans about attending the SCI Convention that year. This year, members face similar decisions, albeit from a different virus.

continued on page 12

In the Beginning

The Genesis Of SCI And Who Was There

BY DR. LEROY C. TRNAVSKY



He pulled a small packet of 3 1/2x5-inch colored photos out of his pocket and showed them to Chet, who called me over to see them. He introduced me to C.J. "Mac" McElroy, who had just returned from his first African safari.

It had been a 30-day safari in Kenya with White Hunters (Africa) Ltd, during which Mac was able to collect the Big Five, and as far as I ever knew, that handful of small color photos was all he had to document that hunt. He had hunted on a 2x1 safari with his old hunting partner, a Mr. Lee Williams.

He told me what it would be like and how to do it. "When you make that trip," Mac said, "go 1x1 so that everything you see will be your shot if you want it. You go too far, pay too much money and work too hard not

to have the shot when you find your game." That was Mac.

Mac later wrote and published a small 5 1/2 x 8 1/4-inch, 77-page book about that hunt titled "African Safari of an Amateur Hunter," that sold for \$1.98 in Chet's sporting goods store. I purchased two copies that I had Mac sign. In retrospect, I should have purchased a dozen.

continued on page 14



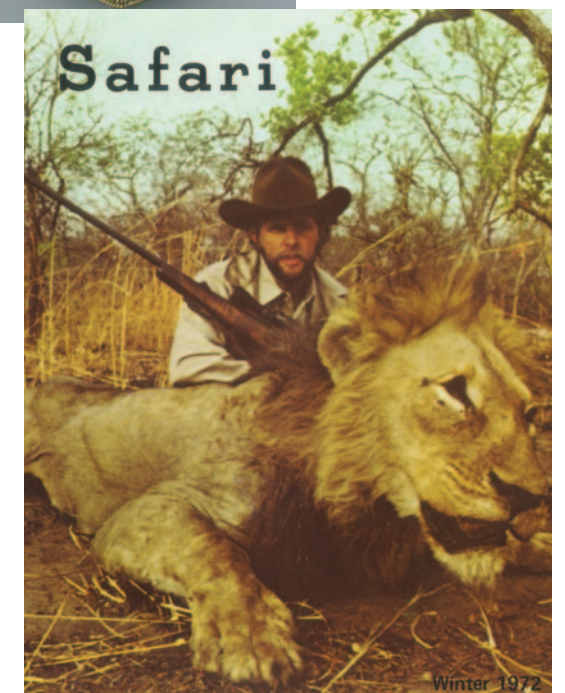
Editor's note: This year we are gearing up for SCI's 50th Anniversary, which will be celebrated at the Convention in Las Vegas January 19-22, 2022 with a party, the likes of which we've never seen before.. In an actually not-so-odd turn of events, SCI has a chapter that is older than the mother organization itself. That's because SCI evolved out of what we now know as the Los Angeles Chapter. Chronologically, Safari Club of Los Angeles (which became the Los Angeles Chapter) was formed in 1971, SCI itself was formed in 1972 and the first convention was held in 1973.

With that in mind, we present here some of the recollections of two of the founders, who along with a couple of others of the originals, plan to be at the Convention this year. They have provided a wealth of memorabilia to share here, including some of the founding documents and other items that show we are who we are at SCI because of what we were in the beginning. The passion for hunting remains alive and well.

It was July of 1960. I was still a starving student working in Chet and Chris Wiegles mama/papa type sporting goods store in South Central Los Angeles, on the corner of 89th and Western Avenue.

I had just finished all of my clinical rotations at the University of Southern California School of Dentistry, and was awaiting the results of my state board examination.

I was back in the gun department when a short, muscular gentleman with black wavy hair walked up to the counter where Chet was standing. I had seen him in the store on several occasions.



In 2018, the SCI Board of Directors greeted with enthusiastic applause a new plan for Advocacy Communications that had been approved by the Executive Committee. The detailed plan declared 14 specific principles to help enhance the effectiveness of SCI's primary mission — protecting the freedom to hunt.

At the 2019 Convention, the SCI World Heritage Rifle Series rifle honoring the Americas by John Bolliger's Mountain Riflery brought \$260,000 at auction. John Bolliger's Mountain Riflery has agreed to make the finest rifle they've ever made to be auctioned at the 2022 SCI Convention in Las Vegas.

Given the singular awesomeness of the 2019 rifle, it will be fascinating to see what John Bolliger Jr. has in store for the 2022 rifle.

Whatever it is, it is destined to continue the legacy of SCI being the venue where the best of the best is introduced and available.

In April 2019, W. Laird Hamberlin was named SCI CEO. Since then, he also has been named CEO of SCIF.

SCI continued to move forward in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic. That scourge necessitated changes in Board of Directors meetings and a Transition meeting from in-person to virtual.

So, on the eve of SCI's 50th Birthday celebration, it is certain that the world is a better place for SCI having been a part of it and that, through SCI's advocacy efforts and SCIF's conservation efforts, there will be abundant and huntable wildlife in the future and there will be hunters to hunt them. 🐾

SCI Leaders Through the Years

SCI Presidents

1972-1974: C.J. McElroy
1974-1976: Hyland B. Erickson
1976-1977: Andy Oldfield
1977-1978: Carroll Mann, III
1978-1979: Norden Van Horn
1979-1980: Marion Van Slooten
1980-1981: Richard E. Ursem
1981-1982: Duane Smelser
1982-1983: Ray Cappelli
1983-1984: Sam A. Borsellino
1984-1986: Don McMillan
1986-1988: Albert A. Cheramie
1988-1990: Vern Edewaard
1990-1991: Warren Parker
1991-1992: Wayne Pocius
1992-1993: Don Kirn
1993-1994: R. Douglas Yajko, MD
1994-1995: D. Patrick Bollman
1995-1996: John J. Jackson III
1996-1997: Robert L. Easterbrook
1997-1998: Lance Norris
1998-1999: Alfred "Skip" Donau III
1999-2000: Lawrence S. Katz
2000-2001: Mike Rogers, SR.
2001-2002: George Banks
2002-2004: Gary Bogner
2004-2005: John R. Monson
2005-2006: Mike Simpson
2006-2007: Ralph S. Cunningham
2007-2008: Dennis Anderson
2008-2009: Merle A. Shepard

2009-2011: Dr. Larry Rudolph
2011-2012: Kevin K. Anderson
2012-2013: John S. Whipple
2013-2015: Craig L. Kauffman
2015-2017: Larry B. Higgins
2017-2019: Paul D. Babaz
2019-2020: Steve Skold
2020-2021: Scott Chapman
2021 (Present) Sven K. Lindquist

SCI Executive Directors and CEOs

Early 1980s: Holt Bodinson
1988-1999: Don Brown (Interim)
1990: Jim Moorhouse
1991: Don Brown (Interim)
1991-1996: Phil DeLone
1996: Gray Thornton (Interim)
1996-2001: Rudy Rosen
2001: Pat Johnson (Interim)
2001: Bill Scoble (Volunteer)
2001-2003: Peter J. Dart
2003-2004: Rick Parsons (Interim)
2004-2006: Tom Riley
2006-2007: Ed Beardsley (Interim)
2007-2009: John Eichinger
2009-2010: Rich White (Interim)
2010-2012: Bill Moritz
2012: Don Mills (Interim)
2012-2017: Phil DeLone
2017-2019: Rick Parsons
2019-Present: W. Laird Hamberlin



During the remainder of the 1960s, I occasionally ran into Mac at Weigle's. At one of these meetings in 1968, Mac mentioned that the Southern California Safari Club was having its awards banquet and asked if I wanted to go. I said yes.

A few days later, I received a phone call from Hal Meeker, a good friend and hunting partner of Mac's. Shortly thereafter, my business partner and lifelong friend, Dr. Ben Robson, received an invitation to attend the function, which was being held in Beverly Hills.

During the evening, Hal and Mac asked Ben and me to become members of the Southern California Safari Club. At that time, to be eligible, you either had to have hunted Africa or Alaska, or have an actual hunt booked in either place.

Ben and I had decided we were going to book a hunt in Alaska, and both Mac and Hal Meeker recommended Denny Thompson.

We later booked a 28-day hunt with Denny for the fall of 1968, but we were too busy at that time to join the Southern California Safari Club. The club held meetings at lunch in the Hollywood area, which would have meant an entire day out of the office for both of us.

After the 1968 awards banquet, both Ben and I began hunting regularly.



Early in 1971, we received a call from Tom Radoumis, our taxidermist and owner of De Jon's Taxidermy in Rosemead, California. Mac had become disenchanted with the Southern California Safari Club and decided to start his own club. He asked Tom, also his taxidermist, if he would survey clients to see if any were interested in becoming members of a new safari club. My business partner and I decided to become even more active in hunting, about which we felt so strongly.

Tom relayed our positive feelings to Mac, and he invited us and others to meet at his business on Locust Street in Inglewood, California.

This meeting turned out to be a fundraiser to start Safari Club. Shortly after that, letters and applications were mailed to hunters all over Southern California, inviting them to join the new Los Angeles Safari Club.

Over the next few weeks, Tom Radoumis was responsible for 55 new members joining. There were no requirements as to what or where you had hunted.

The first meeting of the new Los Angeles Safari Club was a luncheon on Wednesday, April 7, 1971 at McHenry's Tail Of The Cock restaurant on La Cienega Boulevard in Los Angeles, with 47 members present. Meetings were held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m.

In September of 1971, the first issue of SAFARI Magazine was printed with a run of only 200 copies. It featured Mac on the cover with a fine oryx. Cover-to-cover, it contained only 24 pages.

These quickly disappeared and Mac had an additional 800 copies run, which were sold for 50 cents a copy. Again, I should have purchased a dozen copies.

This first issue was followed by one in the spring of 1972, winter of 1972 (a very rare copy if you can find one), spring of 1973 and winter of 1973, by which time it had grown to 40 pages.

In September of 1971 our lion logo was registered as the trademark for the Los Angeles Safari Club's exclusive use. The designer of the logo was a chapter member, artist, hunter and personal friend of Mac's by the name of William "Bill" Yates, who lived in Van Nuys, California.

The emblem/badge was manufactured for the club by Gold Crest Ltd., located on Ventura Boulevard in Studio City, California, using

actual gold and silver threads. Mac only wanted the best for our new club. It cost about \$75.

Bill Yates later painted a portrait of Mac that was presented to the club at our first annual awards banquet on June 9, 1972 at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. This affair marked our first successful year as a big game hunting club.

A little later that same year, after a short legal skirmish with the Shikar Safari Club International that claimed infringement on their name, Safari Club International prevailed and was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization.

At the same time all of the above was occurring, William Phifer developed a club roster. The roster included a picture of each member, listing his personal statistics and a history of his past hunts and accomplishments in the hunting world.

These individual pages were housed in a small 6 x 8-inch, six-ringed notebook that was gold embossed with the club logo and the owner's name on the front cover. It finally ended up costing \$65. It also listed those individuals who were considered "Charter Members" and that was also embossed on the front cover, but it did not delineate those who could and should be considered "founding members."

This has led to some confusion through the years as to who was actually present at the genesis of what has become SCI. Charter members were first designated as those entering membership by May 21, 1971 and later extended to June 21, 1971, but there never was a designation regarding those members who were there before there was an official organization.

With Mac's energy, leadership and his innate ability to pick the right individual for the job, the club grew rapidly during the first year, with new members being admitted at each meeting. Among these new members were some of the biggest names in the hunting world such as Elgin Gates and Roy Weatherby.

On March 4, 1972, just prior to the actual name change from the Los Angeles Safari Club to Safari Club International, Mac invited all interested members to stop by his trophy room for a few cocktails and a social get-together.

The main reason for this get-together was to present a non-profit foundation. He and member Robert "Bob" Elder called it the "Hunters Hall of Fame." Mac felt that if baseball, football and cowboys can have a Hall of Fame, certainly hunters, which represent the oldest sport of all, should also have a Hall of Fame.

Many checks were written to help finance the project, but four of them from members Dr. Ed Chatwell, Don Miller, Bruno Scherrer and George Isaacs were given special recognition because of their generosity.

In early 1972 an out-of-town member from the Chicago area by the name of Roman Hupalowski, a well known booking agent with a great hunting resumé of his own, was at the meeting. That evening, members approved expanding the club to include other chapters. Shortly thereafter Mac made a trip to Chicago to confer with a group of hunters Roman brought together, using his agency's mailing list of clients.

continued on page 16



Pages from SCI History By Bill Sherman

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Safari Club International, formerly called Safari Club of Los Angeles, a look at the beginning of the world's largest non-profit organization of its kind is presented here by two founding members who were involved in its creation.

Here, we document the humorous, factual account of the club's true origin from its initial launch and struggles to attract positive media coverage with never before published documents. These range from legal matters to the club's minutes and first convention promotional invitations – which have been in storage for four decades.

This should be an inspiration for all of those who came later. The mission has been accomplished, thanks to many who never received credit through their perseverance and belief in the cause.

While reviewing the original list of Charter Members and guests to our early functions, many familiar names from the past emerged.

Roy Weatherby, creator of the rifles that carry his name, was always willing to donate to our fundraisers to build a treasury to help offset some of the costs in establishing a national convention – the first one having taken place at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas. It was this strategy that allowed us to establish chapters – the first after Los Angeles was Chicago, and others followed quickly. Other notables included:

- Elgin Gates, who came from an outboard motor family inheritance, was considered to be America's pioneer global trophy hunter.
- General Jimmy Doolittle of World War II fame (his squadron of B25s catapulted off the USS Hornet's deck and bombed Tokyo in 1942).
- General Chuck Yeager, a WWII and Korean War pilot who later was first to break the sound barrier in a Bell X-1 aircraft.
- Basil Bradbury, legendary photojournalist, whose extensive world hunting exploits would be unrivaled even by today's trophy hunters with faster travel.

Some years later, Craig Boddington joined our chapter and became president of it.

Jim Brezina, good friend and hunting partner, was an outdoor writer and newspaperman who was hired by William Randolph Hearst personally. He took great delight in recalling his WWII experiences while assigned to General Douglas MacArthur's "staged" return to the Philippines and of the many photos of the general walking ashore from his landing craft, the corn cob pipe jutting from his mouth, the aviator sunglasses along with his gold braided officer's hat placed squarely upon his head.

Jimmy could have you laughing aloud as he repeated the story, and the more he drank, the funnier the story became. He also would recall his days as a police reporter covering Hollywood celebrities in court, e.g. Clark Gable, Errol Flynn, Marilyn Monroe. He was really a very funny character, always with a straight face and mainly with a drink in his hand.

These are just some of the memorable individuals from our past with our "little club."

Our early history includes former California Governor Ronald Reagan and Senator Barry Goldwater – both of whom were guest speakers at our convention.

I had the good fortune to hunt ducks and geese with California Governor Edmund "Pat" Brown. It was a wonderful time to be at the right place, sharing an occasion or two with them.

ABC-TV's AMERICAN SPORTSMAN series brought out a lot of motion picture, TV and sports personalities in those days.

And, the membership has grown to 55,000 in 106 countries. The rest is history. Good hunting.

As I recall, one or two other members of the chapter, possibly including Dr. Loren Lutz, accompanied Mac. The group Roman invited received Mac enthusiastically and Chicago became the second chapter in what was to be quickly renamed Safari Club International.

Mac returned to let the members know what had happened in Chicago, and two things occurred at the regular meeting on March 9, 1972. The name of “The Los Angeles Safari Club” was changed to “Safari Club International” and Dr. Loren Lutz immediately made a motion that the Safari Club of Los Angeles should become the first and founding chapter of the new Safari Club International. The motion was seconded by Donald Carper and was passed by a unanimous vote of more than 80 members present.

A few months later in September 1972, chapter member and attorney A.L. Hamilton, Chairman of the Legal Committee, filed the necessary documents with the state to reflect the new name, Safari Club International, Los Angeles Chapter.

Chicago became the second chapter and the rest is history. Multiple new chapters were chartered in 1972 as a result of a special membership committee, which made numerous trips throughout the country to enlist new chapters.

While the logo design, trademark registrations, corporation filings, membership roster, club bylaws, committee assignments, guest speakers, entertainment nights, Hunters Hall of Fame Foundation and the morphing of the Los Angeles Safari Club into Safari Club International were being accomplished, there was one other major endeavor in our first year – the first International Hunters Conference, as it was called then. It was held at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, starting on January 24, 1973 and culminating on Saturday, January 27 with

a banquet dinner in the Grand Ballroom that saw the installation of the first of the world’s great hunters into the Hunters Hall of Fame.

The total fee for all four days of the convention was \$125 and four nights at the Riviera Hotel was \$110, including tax. Mac handled all the paperwork at his business in Inglewood, including the hotel reservations. Mac actually underwrote the initial payment to the Riviera Hotel for the convention.

When I look back at what was accomplished in less than one year of Safari Club International’s existence, it becomes obvious how much is owed to the dedication and support of those present at the beginning who labored so diligently under the leadership of C.J. McElroy – most of whom are now hunting where the weather is always pleasant, the campfires warm, and the game plentiful.

At times Mac could become a controversial figure, just as any of us with strong personalities can. However, the legacy that he created, nurtured and promoted with his great energy, foresight and leadership resulted in SCI becoming the largest organization of its kind in the world.

I am reminded of a statement by President Theodore Roosevelt who said that, “In a civilized and cultivated country, wild animals only continue to exist at all when preserved by sportsmen. The excellent people who protest against all hunting and consider sportsmen as enemies of wildlife are ignorant of the fact that in reality the genuine sportsman is, by all odds, the most important factor in keeping the larger and more valuable wild creatures from total extermination.”

SCI certainly embodies that principle and the world of the hunter is a better place today for all of us because of a man named C.J. McElroy, and we should never forget it. 🐾

