



AAC Publications

John M. Boyle, 1935–2014

A native of San Francisco, John Boyle was a global adventurer. After serving in the U.S. Army in Germany (1954-1956), he worked on a satellite program that took him to tracking stations in remote regions of the world, inspiring him to explore Africa, the Middle East, and Asia in challenging expeditions.

John was a member of the successful 1983 American expedition to the Kangshung Face on Everest, on which he served as base camp manager and expedition engineer. He designed and implemented a motorized rope system to transport 3,000 pounds of equipment and supplies up a rock headwall, saving significant time and reducing risk to climbers. The expedition completed the first ascent of the last unclimbed face of Everest, getting six climbers of the 14-member team to the summit.

In preparing for the expedition, John began collecting logs and photographic material of past Himalayan expeditions, searching for detailed geographic information. This collection grew over the years to 2,500 books in 28 languages, 400 expedition reports, and 100 videos and films, with about half of the books autographed by expedition participants. In 1997 he donated the collection to the AAC, which is now the home of the John M. Boyle Himalayan Library.

John was a passionate sailboat racer and longtime member of the St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco. He also loved trains. In the 1970s, when Charlie Crocker decided to rejuvenate the Sierra Railroad Company and restore the Jamestown roundhouse and steam operations, John bought shares in the effort to bring back to life this gem of California history. Railtown 1897 is now part of the California State Parks system.

Among other successful business engagements, John served as chief financial officer of Crocker Bank in San Francisco from 1974 until its merger in 1981. He retired from a career in banking and finance to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he was active in the “Car Table” group of car aficionados, and a supporter of the performance arts.

– Melissa Boyle Mahle

Images



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