

RICHARD J. O'NEILL FUNDRAISER

Last November, *The Conservancy* hosted a fund-raiser luncheon to honor the environmental contributions of *Conservancy* founder and lifetime member, Richard J. O'Neill. The event—held at The Beachfire Bar & Grill in Ladera Ranch—was personally hosted by Frank Barbaro and Dan Jacobson. Senator Lou Correa and Wylie Aitken also served as event co-sponsors. Numerous *Conservancy* supporters, members, and trustees made an appearance.

Although morning rain threatened, by the time guests began arriving, clouds had lifted, permitting relaxed socializing on the Beachfire's sunny patio. Guests could view *Conservancy* maps, photo cutouts of Mr. O'Neill in his youth, and pictures of *Conservancy* namesake, Donna Newman O'Neill, Mr. O'Neill's late wife.



Dan Jacobson Honoring Mr. O'Neill

At the conclusion of lunch, host and *Conservancy* trustee Dan Jacobson gave a speech, highlighting the importance of Mrs. O'Neill's influence on her husband's environmentalism. Mr. Jacobson also detailed Mr. O'Neill's longtime role as mover and shaker in the Orange County Democratic Party. And of course, he played a central role in the establishment of *The Conservancy* itself: "1,200 acres of land that is to remain pristine forever" because of his hard work and dedication. Mr. Jacobson pointed out that "the earth is a better place" because of such efforts: "We and our children breathe better, live longer, are healthier, can view, appreciate, and enjoy the beauty of nature, and swim in cleaner waters."

Mr. Jacobson's speech was followed by an impromptu tribute by Pete Bloom, a well-known raptor and birding expert, whose lifelong interests were stimulated by youthful encounters with natural wonders like those found on *Conservancy* lands—wonders which used to be much more widespread throughout the County.

Former business partner Howard Adler also related the story of how, in the mid 1980's, the O'Neills rescued a 50 million year old whale skeleton which was unearthed during construction of the Plaza de la Paz Shopping Center. The O'Neills not only raised the money required to have the fossil removed to the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History, they personally participated in the digging! (You can still see a replica of the recovered whale skull at the Plaza de la Paz Shopping Center.)

Thanks to contributions by attendees and many others who donated but did not attend, the event raised just over \$10,000. *The Conservancy* would like to give special thanks to Dave Donaldson, owner of the Beachfire, and Chef Cathy McKnight, for their help in making this fundraiser possible. Proceeds will benefit *The Conservancy's* educational and conservation programs.



Pete Bloom Recalls Wild Orange County



O'Neill Fundraiser on Beachfire Patio