

Half Staff – Hilary H. Smart

January 8, 2000

Gloucester Times

Hilary H. Smart, 74, a 1948 Olympic gold medalist, died Saturday, Jan. 8, at his home.

Mr. Smart, a summer resident of Rockport, was born in New York City and raised in Darien, Conn. He entered the Army Aviation Cadet program in 1943, where he trained as a navigator and served until 1945.

He attended the Choate School and graduated from Harvard University with the class of 1947, where he was a member of the Varsity Club, the Delphic Club, the Crimsoh Key Society (a founder), and the Hasty Pudding Club. He was later elected to the Harvard Varsity Club Hall of Fame, becoming the first sailor to win that honor.

Mr. Smart competed at the 1948 Olympics, where he won a gold medal in sailing as skipper of Hilarius, in the Star class. His father, Paul, was his crew. This team is the only father and son to win a gold medal in the same event in the same Olympic games.

His interest in the Olympics continued as he served as national president of the Olympians in 1967 and as the New England Olympic Alumni chapter president for any years.

He continued to race Stars for 50 years, qualifying for the World's Championship in 1981 for the last time. He continued to compete in sailing, racing a Beneteau 42 from Marion to Bermuda with his son in 1985.

Mr. Smart lived in Weston for 45 years, where he was active at the First Parish Church teaching Sunday school, served on several church committees, and acted with the Friendly Society, the church drama group.

He worked for Libby Owens Ford Glass Co. as vice president of National Merchandising, then became president of Airwick Professional Products for 20 Years.

He spent his summers on the water in Rockport, and winters, in Naples, Fla., where he developed a passion-for golf.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy; his four children, Sally. S. Curtis of Weston, Linda S. Garry of Easton, Conn., Christine S. Watkins of Weston and Hilary Samuel Smart of Sudbury; and nine grandchildren.

Boston Globe

Hilary H. Smart, who won a gold medal in sailing at the 1948 Olympics, died Saturday in his home

in Weston. He was 74.

Mr. Smart won his gold medal as skipper of Hilarius, racing in the star class in the waters off Torquay, England. His father, Paul, was his partner in the two-man boat.

“We had to compete in seven races in 10 days, and the pressure was intense,” Mr. Smart told a schoolroom audience, according to a Globe report of May 31, 1992. “We won two races and had two seconds. Going into the last race, we had to finish at least ninth to clinch the gold – and we finished sixth.

“It was kind of like playing a golf tournament knowing you can win by getting par instead of shooting for birdies. It was, in a way, a difficult position to be in because, if we were too careful, there’s a chance it can slip away.”

Mr. Smart was an active member of the New England chapter of Olympic Alumni and often spoke to school groups about “the unbelievable feeling of watching the torch come in at the Olympic Stadium. It made me feel proud and responsible to think that my dad and I were the only Americans in our specialty since each country was allowed just a single two-man boat.”

Later, Mr. Smart sailed out of Rockport. He competed in the star class for about 50 years and was a qualifier for the 1981 world championships in Marblehead. He also raced to Bermuda in 1985 and finished fourth in Class A.

“They’re still racing star boats in the Olympics, and it doesn’t get a lot of television exposure,” Mr. Smart said in 1992. “But, back in 1948, instead of being publicized on TV, my dad and I were written up in the Harvard-Yale football game program of 1948. And Harvard won the game, 20-7.”

Mr. Smart was born in Darien, Conn. He graduated from Harvard College in 1947.

He was a former vice president of national merchandising for Libby Owens Ford Sales Co. and president of Airwick Professional Products for 20 years until his retirement.

He leaves his wife, Nancy (Childs); three daughters, Sally S. Curtis of Weston, Linda S. Garry of Easton, Conn., and Christine S. Watkins of Weston; a son, Hilary S. of Sudbury; and nine grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow in First Parrish in Weston.