

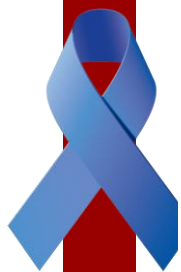


NATIONAL NAVAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA CHAPTER

Award Winning Chapter



Hadwick and Lily Thompson Biography



The lives of Hadwick and Lily Thompson are easily chronicled by the over 70 plaques and awards honoring their continuous years of public and community service. Both were native Californians whose roots were established in California by maternal great grandparents who had been former slaves. California offered the promise of a better life and more opportunities. It also meant that both would deal with the barriers of being the first Afro-Americans in a racially changing environment.

Hadwick was born and raised in Willows, Ca where he worked on his father's farm. At Willows H.S. he lettered in "5" sports and was an outstanding musician and student. After graduation he enlisted in the Navy on Jan. 11, 1939 and was stationed in the Pacific. He saw his first action manning a machine gun aboard the destroyer, U.S.S. Ramsay during the Japanese Attack on Dec. 7, 1941. On July 31, 1942 he became one of the first black submariners when he reported to U.S.S. Pollack for duty. He would complete 5 war patrols aboard Pollack sinking 4 ships before the war ended. After the war, on May 24, 1947, along with his friend, Clarence Williams, Hadwick became one of the first black Oakland Policemen hired through the competitive Civil Service Registry. Prior black officers had been temporary appointments made during the war. During this

period his duties included several years of community relations assignments which brought him in close contact with various minority groups. Of particular concern were the underprivileged black teenage boys. He was active in the P.A.L. and over several summers took groups of boys to the YMCA Camp Loma Mar where he served as director. He also served as past chairman for both the Men of Tomorrow and Black Chamber of Commerce. These Groups were formed to foster and develop black businesses and leadership and promote a positive image. After earning a degree from San Francisco State University Hadwick taught at the Institute of Police Science at Merritt College. As a volunteer he would serve in many roles and groups, including two terms with the Alameda Grand Jury. He would also serve as president for the Oakland Navy League, Pearl Harbor Survivors Assoc. (P.H.S.A) and Chinatown Lions Club. Up until the time of his death Hadwick was fully active as a volunteer docent for the Oakland Museum and Pompano Submarine. He worked through the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club to maintain Children's Fairyland and the Lions Blind Center and activities of the Lions Club. As a frequent P.H.S.A. guest speaker he shared his experiences during the attack on Pearl Harbor with both adults and children. As a member of both the National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) and Navy League he encouraged and supported service members and their families.

Lily worked for the Dept. of Defense for over 42 years most of which were spent at the Oakland Naval Hospital. While working at the hospital she saw the return of both her injured husband from WWII and her injured son from the Vietnam War. After retirement she stayed on as a Red Cross Volunteer for over 5 years until the hospital was closed. Lily shared her husband's volunteer involvement serving actively beside him as a member of the NNOA, Navy League and Chinatown Lions Club. She also served previously as Cacao Branch chairman for over 15 yrs. The Thompsons were particularly proud to be associated with NNOA whose members became extended family and always welcomed in their home. They frequently crossed the states to support "their kids" change of commands and promotions. Although age and health have limited her current involvement she remains active with the Cacao Branch supporting Children's Hospital in Oakland.

The plaques and honors from the various groups line the walls and shelves and represent service acknowledgements from the President of the United States to local mayors, congressmen and businessmen but the one held in highest esteem is the Dorie Miller Award presented to Hadwick and Lily Thompson by the NNOA in 1992. They were the first civilians and first couple to receive it. "Doris" Miller became a close friend of Hadwick after they met while stationed in Hawaii. The two young men formed their own support group each determined to "stand tall" and that legacy remains in place for the thousands of lives that have been touched.



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