

LIMESTONE, salt, wine, oysters, family and fun are some of the ingredients of life in South Australia – and of the life of Murray Neuenkirchen. The second of Hermann and Gladys Neuenkirchen's three children, he was educated at Rose Park Primary, St Peter's College and the University of Adelaide, where he studied civil engineering before switching to mining engineering.

World War II intervened and he rose to be a captain with the 12th Australian Field Company and HQ RAE 5th Australian Division in New Guinea and New Britain.

Murray was laconic about his war service: "Being an engineering unit, we were not sniped at, but got bombed a few times, but that was all," he said.

After completing his degree in 1946, Murray worked in goldmines in Western Australia and, in 1949, joined ICI as a construction engineer to start a limestone quarry at Penrice in the Barossa. He became quarry manager for 31 years and in



1970 also became manager of the Dry Creek salt fields. He retired from ICI in 1980..

He was a national president of the Institute of Quarrying and a member of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. Other affiliations, sometimes as president, included the Barossa Valley Bacchus Club, Rotary, Legacy, Angaston RSL and the Angaston Men's Club.

In the 1950s, the men's club staged a "breach of promise" play starring its members. The local community packed the Angaston Institute. Murray's children do not forget seeing dad playing Miss Marilyn Avalot – with tennis balls helping to create a sort of Marilyn Monroe figure.

Murray's interest in the wine industry began when the family moved to Angaston in 1949. Their property included five acres (2.02ha) of 100-year-old shiraz vines and Murray convinced ICI headquarters in Melbourne that the company should have its own wine. The first vintage of Penrice Dry Red was harvested in 1968.

Oyster cultivation in the salt ponds at Dry Creek seemed promising and Murray planted riesling grapes to make an accompanying white wine. But the oyster project proved to be too labour-intensive.

His sport interest began at school, with rowing and football. His life was about building and supporting good teams. No better example of this was his relationship with Naomi, nee Ward, known as Muff. Last year, they celebrated 60 years of marriage.

Murray Neuenkirchen is survived by Muff, children Christopher, Jane, Merridy and Sally and grandchildren Hamish, Angus, Yossi, Alice, Anna, Sam and Kate.

Christopher Neuenkirchen