

Our History

The Story of Island Packers





Island Packers was founded by **Bill M. Connally**, whose vision was both simple and enduring: to provide people with a way to experience the extraordinary beauty of the Channel Islands. What began as one man’s passion became a family legacy—one that has connected generations of visitors to California’s most pristine offshore wilderness.

For Bill, the Channel Islands were a place apart. He fell in love with the clear waters, thriving marine life, and expansive kelp forests that surround the islands. He was deeply inspired by the idea that someone could board a boat in a busy harbor like Ventura and, within a few hours, arrive at a place with no hotels, no restaurants, no cars—only nature, largely untouched and dominant.

That sense of discovery is what Bill wanted to share with the public.

The Connally Family Story



From the very beginning, Island Packers was a true family endeavor. Bill's wife, **Lillian Mae Connally**, along with their children **Mark, Kirk, Brad, and Cherryl**, all played active roles in helping bring his dream to life. The Connally family worked side-by-side on the docks, aboard vessels, and behind the scenes to build an operation rooted in care for both people and place.

Their shared belief was that access to the islands should be safe, educational, and inspiring and that stewardship of these fragile environments was just as important as transporting people to them.

Lillian Mae Connally





Lillian Mae Connally was a steady and essential presence in the early years of Island Packers. Her dedication, warmth, and behind-the-scenes leadership helped shape the company's family-oriented culture and welcoming spirit. Lillian's influence extended beyond daily operations, she helped instill the values of integrity, perseverance, and respect that continue to guide Island Packers today.

Growing With the Islands

More than **50 years have passed since the christening of the first Island Packer**. Over the decades, vessels have come and gone, and the fleet has evolved to become larger, faster, and more comfortable than in the company's earliest years. What has never changed is Island Packers' commitment to safety, environmental responsibility, and a high standard of service.

Island Packers has remained a **family-run company with a family feel**, fostering a supportive work environment built on respect, teamwork, and shared purpose. The company firmly believes that knowledgeable, engaged employees create meaningful experiences for every guest.

Cherryl Connally





Cherryl Connally, daughter of founder Bill Connally, has been part of Island Packers her entire life and continues to play a central role in the company's leadership. Having grown up alongside the business, Cherryl possesses a deep understanding of its history, operations, and mission. She worked the galley beginning at 9 years old!

Over the years, she has guided Island Packers through growth and change while preserving the family values on which it was founded. Her leadership reflects a strong commitment to environmental stewardship, responsible tourism, and maintaining Island Packers' trusted relationship with Channel Islands National Park and the surrounding harbor communities.

Alex Brodie



Alex Brodie has been an integral part of Island Packers since **1993**, bringing decades of operational experience, leadership, and dedication to the company. Over the years, Alex has played a key role in the continued growth and evolution of Island Packers, helping guide the company while honoring the values established by founder Bill Connally and the Connally family.

Today, Alex Brodie serves as a **partner alongside Cheryl Connally**. Together, they continue to lead Island Packers as a company rooted in family tradition, environmental stewardship, and a commitment to providing safe, meaningful access to the Channel Islands.

Leadership & Legacy

Island Packers is proud to serve as the **authorized concessionaire for transportation to Channel Islands National Park through 2034**, continuing its role as a vital link between the mainland and the islands. Through transportation services, wildlife tours, and educational partnerships, the company supports exploration, education, recreation, and conservation throughout the Santa Barbara Channel.

Cruising the Channel Islands for Education, Recreation & Research since 1968

Island Packers Today



Now decades into its journey, Island Packers continues to connect people with one of California's most extraordinary natural landscapes. Each trip reflects Bill Connally's original vision, inviting guests to step away from the modern world and experience a place where nature remains at the forefront.

We invite you to join us on the water and become part of a story that continues to unfold.