Mr. McKee hopes to emulate Commodore Courcy de Fales, doyen of American ocean racing, who, in 1966, won the Bermuda Race; the Gold Cup of American yachting, in his famous 46-year-old schooner, Nina, at the age of 80.

A banker for many years and now a senior vice-president of the second biggest firm of stockbrokers in the world, Mr. McKee has been sailing for as long as he can remember and began ocean racing in 1968, since when he has competed in six Bermuda races.

In 1969, his 14.6 m (48 ft.) yawl finished fourth in her class in the big North Atlantic Ocean Race from Newport, USA to Ireland held to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Royal Cork Yacht Club, of which Mr. McKee is also a member.

WHY THE NAME?

Asked why he had named his yawl Xanadu, slow-speaking Mr. McKee replied:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree
"I guess I'm fond of Coleridge as a poet. In fact, I'm a kind of Ancient Mariner myself."

Xanadu II was built in Germany at De Doods from a design by William Tripp, though carrying out a basic plan of Mr. McKee. The first Xanadu was a 12.2 m (40 ft.) masthead sloop which Mr. McKee presented to Yale University.

Mr. McKee is here with his wife who will fly back to New York at the weekend, and then down to Rio to meet him there.

THREE SONS

His three sons, a stockbroker, a banker and a professor of geology, are all keen sailors. "Why yachting is such a popular pastime," remarked Mr. McKee, "is because it is the ideal: family pastime. All can enjoy it together and it also demands a certain amount of discipline from the youngsters."

Xanadu II has a crew of seven, mainly university students, with one permanent professional crewman. "We are not particularly worried about the commissariat department. We'll each take turns in the galley."

Asked for his views on the race, Mr. McKee said: "I hope it will be an annosmaker race. I think that it will be, with some very fast times."