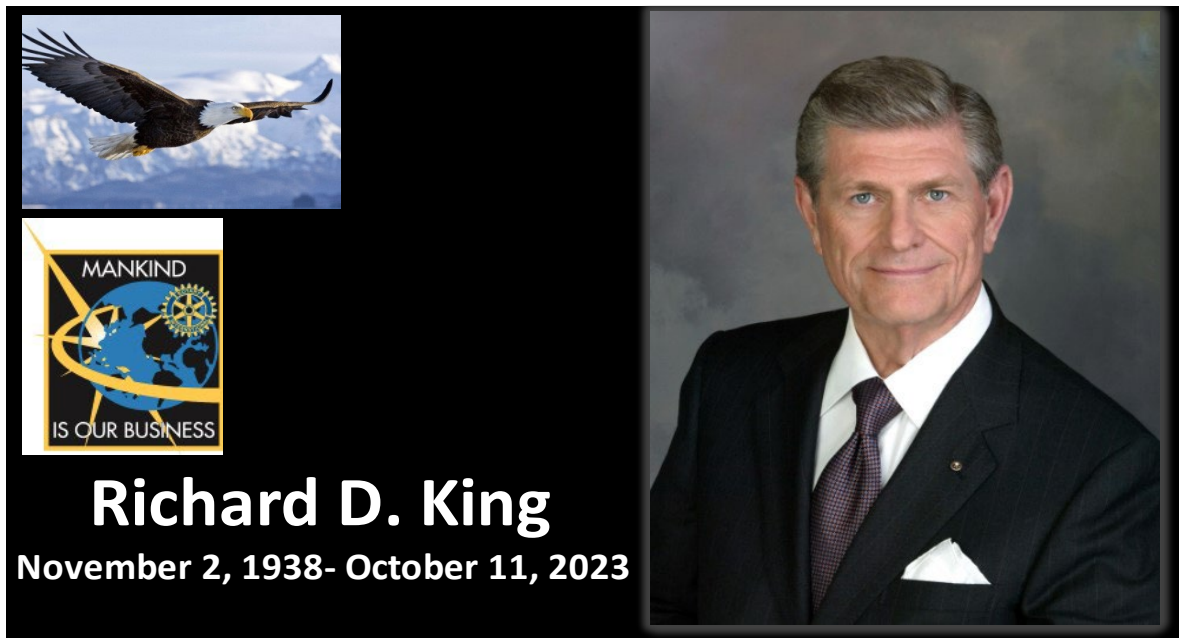


TRIBUTE TO AN UNCOMMON MAN

**By: Past District Governor Richard Flanders
Rotary District 5170**

Rotary has lost a treasure with the passing of a friend, Past Rotary International President Richard “Rick” King who died this past October 11, 2023. I am honored to be called one of his three sons. A Rotarian since 1968, Rick was a member of the Rotary Club of Niles-Fremont, California USA. He served as Rotary International President in 2001-2002, Rotary Foundation Trustee in 1996-2000, Rotary International Director in 1989-1991, and District 5170 Governor in 1982-1983. He also served Rotary as chairman of the executive committee of Rotary International’s board of directors, an international assembly instructor, and an official representative of the president of Rotary International. He chaired and served on many Rotary International committees, task forces, and special assignments.



Richard D. King

November 2, 1938- October 11, 2023

One of Rotary's most popular speakers, Rick addressed Rotary International Conventions, Assemblies, Institutes, Seminars, Conferences, and Rotary Clubs in every state in the USA and more than 130 countries. He had a remarkable ability to make us laugh, move us to tears, and touch many with his speeches. Many of us have been motivated by his speeches for more than fifty years when he inspired us toward a common goal or objective for the good of the Rotary organization.

As Club President, Rick grew the Rotary Club of San Lorenzo from 8 members to 38 at the end of his year. As District Governor, Rick set the standard in Rotary District 5170 in membership growth where the district grew by more than 400 net. More than 2,000 Rotarians and guests attended the District Conference at the end of his year as District Governor. He also set the bar in the District in Rotary Foundation giving in 1982-1983 by raising more than one-half million dollars, a number not heard of forty years ago, putting the District Number 1 in the Rotary World in Rotary Foundation fundraising. The District has never gone below the one-half million-dollar bar he set forty years ago. For his support of humanitarian and educational programs of the Rotary Foundation, he was awarded the Rotary Foundation Distinguished Service Award - which was only given after a Rotarian received the Rotary Citation for Meritorious Service - before he received the Rotary Citation for Meritorious Service. He was also a recipient of the PolioPlus Pioneer Award as one of the early leaders in raising funds to eradicate polio globally.



As Rotary World President in 2001-2002, through his "Global Quest" membership program, he led Rotary International to the greatest one-year growth record in its 118-year history, with 75,000 New Members net, a global membership of 1,243,431 and 1,158 New Rotary Clubs in 2001-2002, more than one new club every 8 hours. In the same year, Rotarians contributed the highest amount of money ever raised for the Annual Fund of the Rotary Foundation at that time. He lived up to his theme of "Mankind is Our Business" during his year as Rotary World President when he often reflected that Rotarians are doing God's work on earth.



Rick was admitted to practice law in 1963 in California and Utah. He was the senior partner in the California law firm King, King & King. He started the law firm and was joined by his two brothers, the late Roy King and Morgan King.

Rick earned undergraduate and law degrees from the University of California at Berkeley (Cal) where he is a member of the California Club and the Order of the Golden Bear. While at Cal, he served as the Vice President of the Associated Students of the University. He taught law at Brigham Young University. He received an Honorary Doctorate in Law from Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea. A trial lawyer, Rick belonged to several legal associations including the American Association of Trial Lawyers. He was admitted to practice in both Utah and California and before the Supreme Court of the United States.



I first met Rick when interviewed me to work at the law firm. His brother Roy screened all the job applicants. Those who made the cut got to be “deposed” by Rick, who grilled their background, education, and experience. He knew that I had worked for a Latter-Day Saints law firm in Arizona when I was in law school. After he interviewed me, he called and spoke to all the law partners at the Arizona law firm. When he called me to offer me the job, he said, “This is Richard King. How would you like to work for a Latter-Day Saints law firm again?” I accepted the job offer. The first day I reported to work, the office staff told me, “You are on your own because Mr. King had left for Africa for five weeks for Rotary!” It was then I realized that Rotary was a major part of his life. I joined his law firm in 1992 and practiced with him and his brother Roy until Rick retired. When I was at the firm, I was often referred to as the fourth King. He was the attorney who taught me how to practice law. He was also the Rotarian who asked me to join Rotary.



As a lawyer, Rick was loved by the judges and the jury he appeared in front of. He was tough but fair and was respected by attorneys on the other side of the case and by his peers. Although he could retire from law practice earlier, it was important to him that he reached the 50-year milestone of law practice and membership in the State Bar of California as he did with his more than 50-year membership in Rotary. He was proud of his long career in providing legal services to his clients just as much as his long-term association with Rotary.

In addition to being a husband, father, lawyer, and Rotarian, Rick found time to serve his local and global community. As a community leader, he served on the board of directors of the Eden Hospital Foundation, the Woodminster Performing Arts in Oakland, California, and Oakland Ballet. He was a trustee of the City of Hope and received the City of Hope “Spirit of Life” Award. He was knighted by the Republic of Italy held the Great Official Order of Merit and was a recipient of the State of Rio de Janeiro’s highest award, the “Medalha Tiradentes.” He belonged to the Commonwealth Club and Actor’s Equity. He was an elder and officer of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and an active fund-raiser for the Boy Scouts of America. He held the Chevalier Degree and Legion of Honor from the Order of DeMolay. He was a recipient of the Distinguished Citizen Award from the United Portuguese of California.

Rick’s deep faith and devotion in his Latter-Day Saints religion provided his conviction and commitment to serve humanity through Rotary. He believed that when he served mankind, he was also in the service of God. He worked with the Church to raise millions

of dollars to eradicate polio, Rotary's single largest cause to date. His gift of a great ability to communicate his vision and messages, he worked tirelessly to motivate Rotarians all over the world to do more because he believed that "Mankind was and is our Business." A memorable quote from one of his many inspiring speeches was:

"No success can compensate for failure in the business of mankind, the business of humanity. No matter how much money we make; no matter how many college degrees are on our walls; no matter how many accolades we have received from others; no matter the size of our home, the cars we drive, the clothes we wear – no success can compensate if we fail in the business of mankind. It is the only business we will take with us when we leave this life. Rotary asks us to engage the only business that really matters in the long run – the most important business any of us will ever know – the business of humanity."

Many Rotarians did more because of hearing his passionate request to serve humanity. As a result, thousands of lives have been changed, and thousands of people have benefitted and still benefit from the humanitarian work of the Rotarians he inspired across the globe. He lived to serve others and was truly a man of God.



Rick was honored by some 50 associations, by the President of the United States, and by heads of State in many countries across the globe for his community and charitable service and for spreading peace, goodwill, and world understanding. He served as the Executive Director of The Wheelchair Foundation and led it to provide mobility to those who were not able to purchase wheelchairs.

Rick's greatest accomplishment was marrying his lovely spouse Cherie and raising their sons Rob and Ty. Cherie was with Rick every step of the way and was always an important part of his Rotary journey as they served mankind and inspired Rotarians to do good in the world. She gave him wise counsel and encouragement and brought much grace to Rick's long Rotary leadership. She traveled with him to every corner of the world and met with world leaders for more than forty years. They were married for more than forty years, and she was his equal partner in everything that Rick accomplished. Their son Rob provided much support, often driving them to and from the airport as Rick and Cherie traveled for Rotary and provided them with much assistance in the latter part of Rick's life. They enjoyed spending time with their son Ty's children. We are grateful to Cherie and their sons Rob and Ty for unselfishly sharing Rick with Rotary for more than forty years.



Rick was a distinguished military graduate of the University of California and served as a captain in the U.S. Military Intelligence. He served his country with distinction as a Captain in the United States Army during the Vietnam era. During my many conversations with him, he was always proud to be an American. He was very patriotic and always wanted America to be a great country.

In the late 1960s, Rick had his own show in Las Vegas at the Deseret Inn. He would perform 6 weeks at a time, flying to Las Vegas at the end of the workday and returning home each day in the wee hours of the morning to be at his law office. This is when he got the title "The Baritone Barrister!" In the 1970s, he performed many leading roles at Woodminster Outdoor Amphitheatre. He received rave reviews for his portrayal of Harold Hill in the "Music Man." For ten years in the 1970s, "The Richard King in Las Vegas Show" was produced and performed at Chabot College in Hayward, California, where all the proceeds were donated to the Rotary Foundation.



Rick had a distinguished career as a lawyer, community leader, and entertainer, and was known as one of the legends in the Rotary world. He was an extraordinary communicator, motivator, educator, counselor, and genuine friend to all who knew him. A great storyteller, he was one of only a few Rotarians who have addressed more Rotarians at more times, in more places than any other person who has ever lived.

Rick once told me a story about when his younger brother Roy was asked, “What is it like to live in the shadow of your older brother Rick?” Roy responded, “I’ve never lived in his shadow; I’ve always lived in his sunlight.” I am one of the many of his lucky friends who have always lived in his sunlight.

One of his best speeches was when he talked about the “Uncommon Man.” To many of us, he was an “Uncommon Man.” He was one of the best! Rotary World lost a legendary leader. I miss him very much.

