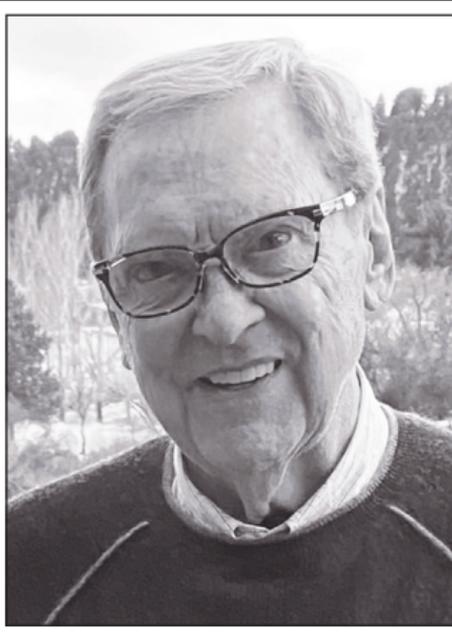


Remembrance

RICHARD C. NELSON



On February 18, 2021, one week before his 85th birthday, Richard "Dick" Clede Nelson died of natural causes at his home in Carbondale, Colorado. Dick and Barbara, his wife of 65 years, traveled the world together, living and working in San Diego, Boston, New York, Australia, Singapore, Kuwait, England, and Houston, before retiring to the Aspen, Colorado area in 1998. Dick was loved

for his lively intelligence, generosity, adventurous spirit, and a quick sense of humor, never afraid to defend the contrary opinion.

Dick was born and raised in the small Iowa town of Harlan by his parents Mabel and Moody Nelson. All four grandparents were born in Denmark and immigrated to Iowa in last quarter of the 20th century. His grandfather owned and operated the Nelson Gasoline Engine & Automobile Company and produced some of the earliest gasoline engines in the U.S. as well as the "Nelson" automobile. His father owned and operated an automobile garage and dealership and later, other small businesses in Harlan.

Dick attended Iowa State University, receiving a B.S. in Industrial Engineering in 1958, and was a member of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. After completing Naval ROTC during college, he served three years of active duty onboard the destroyer USS Hollister, attaining the rank of Lieutenant (junior grade) at age 25. Dick sailed throughout the Pacific and along the coast of China. This experience ignited a love of travel, which influenced his choice of overseas postings when he entered the business world.

He married Barbara (Lucas) Nelson on June 25, 1960, his date for her senior prom at Harlan High School. Barbara received her B.A. from the University of Northern Iowa and partially completed her graduate work in education from the University of Wisconsin. The couple moved to San Diego where Dick worked as a systems analyst for Convair Aircraft.

The Nelsons then moved to Boston where Barbara taught high school and Dick completed his M.B.A. at Harvard University in 1964. Upon graduation, Exxon hired Dick in the corporate planning department in New York City. These were the early days of mainframe computer modeling and financial forecasting. This was also the time Americans were assigned overseas opportunities, which the Nelsons were excited to accept. So, Dick, Barb and their three young children headed to Sydney, Australia in 1967, where Exxon was drilling offshore. On one assignment, he worked directly with the Economic Ministry of Australia to craft oil and gas development laws.

The family moved next to Singapore in 1969. The island nation became independent from the UK after WWII and was building its economy into a cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic state. The children went to the Singapore American School where Barbara served as PTO president. Dick also picked up a 1948 MG TC antique car which had been continuously handed down through the British servicemen who first brought the new car to the island. Dick lovingly restored the car twice during the thirty years he owned it.

In 1975, Dick was offered a senior planning position with the Kuwait National Petroleum Company, one that Barb encouraged him to take. So, Dick left Exxon and the family moved to Kuwait for the next five years. These were exciting times in the oil business in the Middle East, and Dick and his department developed several major oil and gas projects for the Kuwaiti government. At that period, because of its oil wealth, Kuwait had the highest per-capita income in the world. However, the Nelson family left Kuwait in 1980 during the Iranian Hostage Crisis, which had made the entire region less comfortable for Americans.

The family's next adventure took them to London, England in 1980, where Dick became President of United Energy Resources (UER) International. Over five years working in Europe, Dick focused on liquid gas trading and the terminal business, helping to design and build a new terminal complex in Antwerp, Brussels and improve one in Italy.

In 1986, Dick and three UER executives partnered to form PetroUnited Terminals, in Houston. For 12 years, Dick and Barb lived in Houston, bought a second home in Galveston, and became busy in their community. Dick served on the board of the Houston Symphony, Blaffer Art Gallery, Downtown Houston, Independent Liquid Terminals Association, and the Glendower Court Homeowners Association. After operating and expanding PetroUnited Terminals, Dick and his partners sold the company to a French group and retired in 1998.

Dick and Barb spent four years planning and building their retirement home in the Roaring Fork Valley of Colorado. The home overlooking the Roaring Fork River, next to the 15th green of the Aspen Glen golf course, is known as "River Song." It was a place for their collections of old-style bamboo fly rods and reels, their art collection, displays of Middle Eastern coffee pots, Malaysian kris and Arabian daggers, Persian carpets, and a wine cellar. Their home and collections were affectionately built, with the passionate study and accumulating expertise that Dick was known to devote to all his interests, flavored by friendships and first-hand encounters traveling the world. In 2020, Dick and Barbara downsized to a residence in Carbondale off the Crystal River.

Dick and Barb stayed connected with many friends from all over the world. They've taken bike rides through Burgundy, France and went back to visit friends in Kuwait after its liberation in the First Gulf War. They traveled with grandchildren in Europe and returned regularly to high school class reunions in Harlan throughout 60 years. Dick loved fly-fishing nearby on the Roaring Fork and Frying Pan rivers, as well as further afield in Northern California, Canada, Christmas Island, Cuba, Bahamas, Belize and other beautiful fishing spots with friends. He is survived by Barbara; his three children, Lauri of San Francisco, CA, Melisa and husband, Ed, of Sacramento, CA, and Brad and wife, Lisa, of San Diego, CA; six grandchildren; and his sister, Bonnie Larsen of Harlan. Pauley Jones Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Pauley Jones
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