

Richard Wadsworth Bennett

October 21, 2021



Richard Wadsworth Bennett slipped away peacefully on the evening of October 6, 2021. He was 93.

Born July 21, 1928—Berkeley, California to his parents Priscilla Wadsworth Johnson and Richard Samuel Bennett, he attended school at Thousand Oaks grammar school, Garfield Junior and Berkely High Schools. He enjoyed writing sports stories for the school paper. He also received a scholarship and attended the College of Arts & Crafts in Oakland. During the summer of his junior year in high school, he was a pipefitters helper at the Kaiser Ship yards, working on “Liberty” ships for the war effort and later “Victory” ships.

Upon graduating from high school in 1946, he joined the Marine Corps and became a radio operator (Morse code) and a corporal. He was discharged from the Marines in 1948 and went on to attend college at the University of California Berkley (Cal) as a journalism major. He found his passion for art was greater than his interest in taking the many English classes required for journalism, so he changed his major to art. He was greatly influenced by Professor Chiura Obata who helped shape his water color technique he used in the

many works for which he is known. He was a teacher's aide for an American Art History class which profoundly influenced his passion for art history.

In 1951, he graduated from Cal, married Janet E. Smith in Bremerton, WA. and started teaching at Del Norte High school on the subjects of art, crafts, mechanical drawing, typing and world history. He later took on being the school paper and yearbook adviser, part time counselor and eventually vice-principal. In 1953, he obtained his masters degree from Cal.

He and Janet had three children, Amandalei (1953), Andreanna (1955), and David (1957). In 1954, they purchased property on Pebble Beach Drive and built a home where they lived for 30 years. He arranged adult education classes at the high school for College of the Redwoods and Del Norte Adult education. In 1973, he left the high school and became College of Redwoods (Del Norte) Administrator. The success of the college led to an arrangement to house the college campus at the fairgrounds, turning the Arts and Craft building, the hot dog stand and the chicken and rabbit building into college classrooms. The campus was affectionately dubbed "College of the Fairgrounds". In 1982, College of the Redwoods moved into a permanent campus across from the high school. In addition to playing a significant role in building the Del Norte campus, Rick was a big promotor of the nursing program offered at the Del Norte Campus.

In 1984, he retired from administration at College of the Redwoods and became County Supervisor and continued to teach art history. Janet passed away in 1987.

In 1988, he married Dianne Kraft and moved to Gasquet, CA.

He became Del Norte's District representative to the College of the Redwoods (CR) Board of Trustees in 1993.

Rick traveled, painted, displayed at local galleries, taught, built two homes, and enjoyed life with a passion for art, art history, learning and helping others. He volunteered for the Del Norte County Historical Society and supervised student teachers. In 2009, he co-edited a book about Ruby and Art Van Deventer, A Rare Botanical Legacy. In 2014 he was the Grand Marshall for the Fourth of July parade in Crescent City. He inaugurated and administered for ten years, a free, educational annual Wildflower Show at the Fairgrounds.

Rick is preceded in death by his parents Richard and Priscilla his wife Janet and many dear friends. He is survived by his wife Dianne Bennett, children Amandalei, Annie, David, John, Heather, Aaron, Samantha and Wendy, their spouses and 18 grandchildren. He leaves many close friends and neighbors for who he cared deeply.

Donations can be made to the College of the Redwoods Memorial Fund for the Del Norte Education Center or to the Del Norte County Historical Society.

A Facebook site has been set up for anyone wishing to view or share stories about Rick can search for Richard W Bennett or go to the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/652654199040820/?ref=share>

