

# **Richard Arnell (Dick) Boucher**

February 9, 1930 - March 15, 2023

Richard A. (Dick) Boucher passed away peacefully with children and grandchildren by his side. He was neither sick nor a victim of disease. His 93 years of a life well lived ended on March 15, 2023, when the Lord called him home.

Dick was born in Bozeman, Montana, to Thomas Richard (TR) Boucher and Edna Vira Sharp. The family moved to Ventura, California, when he was 4 years old. His parents both worked in a local department store. Along with wonderful parents, and two teenage sisters, Dick described his growing up as a perfect childhood. His father designed amazing costumes for both Dick and his dog Monty. The little boy and dog were showcased in many local parades. However, he was soon "banned" from competition as he always won. Still, he was allowed to be in the parades. He also entered a Hollywood screen test competition to be the next Little Rascal movie character. Even with his adorable smile, cowboy hat, string tie, homemade chaps and a brief tap dance lesson from his father, he didn't make the cut. The new member was an older boy, Jackie Cooper.

Later, at his 8th grade graduation, he was honored as the only student with perfect attendance for eight years. At age 12 he worked in a hardware store, where the owner left him in charge while he went to the Elks Club down the street. Dick decided to clean out some empty paint cans in the back alley. He lit the paint cans on fire and unfortunately set the store on fire. He knew how to use the fire extinguisher, and with extra help, saved the store from serious damage.

Later as an adult, Dick owned the hardware store for a short time. At 14 he worked for Kingston Floral and helped make corsages for Easter and Mother's Day. Since he knew how to drive, he was trusted to deliver the flowers, wreaths and corsages all over town. Later as an ag instructor, he included "corsage making" as a one-day class so students could honor their mothers with a handmade corsage.

Dick graduated from Ventura High School in 1948. He was a member of the FFA and by then was already in the cattle business. In Ventura, he was "country when country wasn't cool."

He played high school football and was a California all-conference guard. He received a bachelor's degree from California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo in 1952 and was drafted into the army one week later. He served two years in the Army's veterinary corps. He returned to Cal Poly and earned his master's degree in ag education in 1962. He taught ag education in Visalia, California, for eight years prior to accepting the ag position at Enterprise High School, where he taught for 22 years.

In 1957 he married Helen Vanoni. In 1969, they moved to Wallowa County with their children Harold and Suzette. Dick managed two ranches owned by Earle Rothrock. When the ranches sold, he was able to purchase the ranch where they lived on West Dorrance Lane. He commuted to

Susanville, California, as the Kern County Extension Agent while waiting for an ag teacher position in Wallowa County. He came home every two weeks to be with his family until he was offered the position at Enterprise High School.



Dick returned to California every year with his senior ag students to tour the state's wide range of agriculture operations, including cotton, rice, citrus, avocados, poultry processing plants, dairies, beef cattle and fish farms and occasionally, Disneyland. It is estimated that he has driven at least 41,000 miles with his students staying

overnight with his friends and relatives and school gymnasiums along the way. To his students he stressed leadership and personal responsibility and since they could not be winners all the time, he taught them to be gracious losers. He was proud to teach the first young women who enrolled in FFA in 1971.

Dick has been active in the beef cattle business, along with his teaching career, until 2018 when he sold his Angus cattle and leased his pasture to a friend and neighbor. He received the Honorary Cattleman of The Year in 2016 and the OVATA Ag Teacher of the Year in 1979. He was a member and past president of the Wallowa County Stockgrowers. He also belonged to St. Katherine's Catholic Church and the Elks Club.

In 1979 Helen passed away and Dick became a very busy single parent. A Helen Boucher Memorial Scholarship has been awarded every year to local ag students ever since her death. In 1982 he met Jan Stonebrink at a Stockgrowers annual dinner and dance. Their first date was to Alder Slope to check his cows for pink eye. The second date was to pick up and deliver a load of baby pigs for the FFA. The third was a drive to Lost Prairie on a student project visit. She married him anyway. The marriage created a blended family of five children: Harold, Suzette, and Jan's children, Shari, Tim and Brett.

Much of this obituary has been gleaned from a Chieftain article written by editor Rick Swart who was an FFA member, honoring Dick's retirement in 1991. He was described then as a "Champion of Agriculture," and Dick's personal quote, "Agriculture is the only essential industry."

Dick was a beloved father to Harold Boucher (Elizabeth) and Suzette Boucher, and an incredible stepfather to Shari Stonebrink Miller (Page), Tim Stonebrink (Elena), and Brett Stonebrink (Stefanie).

He was the proud grandfather to Connor and Alicia Boucher, Sarah Colee (Tom), Samantha Mitchell (Brian), Kitrick Miller, Riley and Sofie Stonebrink, and great-grandchildren: Carter, Arlo and Payton.

A Rosary will be said at 9 a.m. on April 1 at St. Katherine's Church, 301 E. Garfield St., Enterprise, Oregon, followed by a mass at 10 a.m. Graveside service will follow the mass and a dinner reception at the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise will begin at noon.

Bollman Funeral Home is entrusted with arrangements.