

Richard Walter Price

April 6, 2020



Retired Air Force veteran and creator of whimsical birdhouses, Richard Walter Price died of natural causes April 6, 2020 at home in Laguna Beach. He was 90. Middle child of William and Myrtle Price, he grew up in Long Beach, Calif. Richard attended Long Beach City College before joining the Air Force to fight in the Korean War.

In 1952 he settled in Long Beach, married his college sweetheart Beverlee Clark and began raising children. He managed a filling station, was a sales rep for Standard Oil, and later owned two Chevron stations. He met his second wife, Pasadena native Linda Mitchell, in one of his filling stations. She owned an auto paint and supply store while he owned a gas station; it seemed inevitable. They moved to Laguna Beach in 1972 and were married in 1977. In 1984 they bought their home in Woods Cove.

He retired from the oil business in 1986 and joined Linda at The Paint Store in Laguna Niguel. They enjoyed weekends at their house in Joshua Tree, golfing or hunting for antique pocket watches. After looking at outrageously priced birdhouses in an antique store, Richard decided to make one for Linda, and stumbled onto a new hobby. He used old,

weathered wood and tin picked up in the desert as well as junk from around Laguna to build more than 150 unique and fanciful birdhouses, which Linda treasures and will never sell. They have been displayed at Hortense Miller Garden and atop the backbar at the Marine Room, where Richard and Linda reigned as the handsomest couple for many years. The birdhouses look delicate but are sturdily built and waterproof. Each shingle and detail was hand shaped and drilled before being nailed in place. He calculated that some of the larger houses took him up to 700 hours to create! For decades, Richard could be found tinkering in his garage workshop and holding court in a battered Barcalounger. Hardly anyone could pass his open garage door without being curious about his constantly expanding collection of meticulously constructed creations piled high on his Fiat Jolly. Later in life as macular degeneration took his vision, he still enjoyed listening to the radio in the garage and talking to passersby.

Richard is survived by his wife Linda, his brother Robert, his children Richard, Christopher, Robin, and Candace, eight grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. He was pre-deceased by his sister Virginia Cronkite.

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