

Necrology: Richard Rainier Randall

ROGER L. PAYNE

Executive Secretary, US Board on Geographic Names (emeritus), USA
Chief, Geographic Names US Geological Survey (emeritus), USA.

Dick Randall, a well-known figure in the world of toponymy, passed on March 14, 2015. Dick demonstrated continuously that he was multifaceted excelling in numerous and diverse activities. He was always eager to help and assist and was well respected by all who knew him and through his work those who did not know him.

Dick was born in Toledo, Ohio on July 21, 1925. He moved to Washington, D.C in 1936 when his father was appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as advisor to the National Resources Board. Dick earned an A.B. in 1948 and an M.A. in 1949 each from George Washington University. In 1955, Dick received his Ph.D. from Clark University (Worcester, Massachusetts). He also studied in 1953 and 1954 as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Graz in Austria. Dick served his nation in the 94th Infantry during World War II where he was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge and received the Bronze Star and four Battle Stars.

Dick's career was always in various aspects of geography and cartography specializing in map editing, quality assurance, and applied toponymy. Although Dick began his career formally with the Central Intelligence Agency, he spent much of 1943 with the Alaska Branch of the U.S. Geological Survey interpreting aerial photographs. He began his formal career at the Central Intelligence Agency where he worked from 1955 to 1961 specializing in editing and later as a specialist in matters of Eastern Europe. In 1961 he became the representative in Washington, D.C. for Rand McNally & Company where he was instrumental in overseeing data collection for Rand McNally's extensive line of products. His work was highlighted in 1969 when he designed the series of maps showing the world's oceans and water bodies for inclusion in Rand McNally's *Cosmopolitan Atlas of the World*. In 1973, Dick became *The Geographer* at the Defense Mapping Agency (now National-Geospatial Intelligence Agency) where some of his responsibilities included the foreign geographic names program for the federal government and serving as the Executive Secretary of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. He retired from his professional career at the Defense Mapping Agency in 1993, but remained active in various professional organizations including the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping where he established its press relations program in 1966 and the Association of American Geographers where he was heavily involved with that organization's Careers in Geography Program. He also maintained membership in the American Geographical Society and the American Name Society. Dick was also a long-time active fellow of the Explorers Club and member of the Cosmos Club. At the Washington Chapter of the

Explorers Club, Dick served on the Steering Committee for 10 years (1998-2007) and during that time was Chairman of the Education Committee. In 2008, Dick was inducted into the Hall of Fame at the National-Geospatial Intelligence Agency for his contributions to applied toponymy.

Dick, through his profession, was also very active in the work of the United Nations regarding geographic names and represented the United States at various conferences of the United Nations until his retirement in 1993. Also, Dick was very active in the Cartographic Division of the Pan American Institute of Geography & History (PAIGH), which his father helped to co-found. Dick was instrumental in establishing the geographic names course there, which has evolved over the years since established and has subsequently been taught 24 times.

Dick authored and presented numerous papers on geography and especially toponymy, and he published a definitive volume on geographic names, *Place Names: How They Define the World and More*. Dick was honored (twice) by his peers and colleagues in the world of applied toponymy by having a sizeable mountain in Antarctica named for him and by having his name included in the naming of a seamount (underwater open seas) for him and three relatives. Dick was also connected toponymically to Mount Rainier in the State of Washington, USA because that mountain was named by George Vancouver explorer and officer in the British Royal Navy for his friend Admiral Peter Rainier to whom Dick was related.

Dick's interests were very multifaceted and branched into seemingly unrelated areas. He engaged in a variety of activities and was always interested in learning and education as is evident from his accomplishments. He spent a good deal of energy and time to have a marker established at the highest point in the District of Columbia, and which is visited now by many. He was very much involved in his community of Cleveland Park and in West Virginia where the family maintained a retreat. He was also involved in many activities at his church. Dick loved a good joke, hearing and telling, and engaged in this endeavor to the delight of many. He was an accomplished poet and shared his talent on many occasions. He was exposed to music by his family and loved to sing and he had a delightful voice.

I knew Dick for almost 40 years, more than 25 of those years as a very close friend. I was always impressed with Dick's knowledge on almost any topic, but even so he was always interested in what others had to say and what they had to add to the conversation. He was masterful at balancing a conversation.

Dick was highly respected and very much a notable toponymist among his other many and varied accomplishments. He is survived by three children and five grandchildren. Dick will be greatly missed by me as a close friend and colleague and by so many more both in the field of toponymy and elsewhere in Dick's varied world.