

Professor Richard E Goodman (Dick) off to a new adventure



Richard (Dick) Goodman lived a vibrant and very active life, inspiring and mentoring a huge number of people from all over the world. Ironically, he didn't have a conventional education -- his parents Pauline and Herbert Goodman figured out early on that he was a musical genius, and sent him at a young age to Spielter's School where he studied piano for most hours of the day. Then at the age of 15 he was awarded a Ford Foundation Scholarship and got a full ride to the University of Wisconsin and thus never graduated highschool.

He went on to receive a BA in Geology and an MS in Civil Engineering and Economic Geology from Cornell, and a PhD in Geological Engineering from the University of California at Berkeley in 1964. He wrote and published five books, and over 200 articles in journals and conference proceedings. He also received numerous national and international awards, including a Guggenheim Fellow, the Rankine Lecture from the British Geotechnical Society of Civil Engineering (ASCE); and the American Rock Mechanics Association 2005 Award for Outstanding Contributions in Rock Mechanics.

Dick's exciting life included spending six months in 1957 in Baffin Island based out of Cape Dorsett, where he worked for Belcher conducting mineral prospecting. He camped amongst the Polar bears in sub-zero temperatures, learned to communicate with the local Inuit people in their language, traveled around the area by dog sled, and survived many harrowing adventures. His many other adventures included consulting projects in every state of the union and throughout South America, Asia, South Africa and Europe. He traveled to South America countless times for consulting projects.

Closer to the homefront, Richard Goodman was a passionate and brilliant musician. He traveled throughout the Bay Area to sing in opera productions, and in 1979 founded the Berkeley Opera Company with the support of his cellist wife Lillian (Sue) and directed it for 13 years. He put on over 30 full stage productions. He performed over 70 major roles in operas for several companies, including roles such as Figaro, Leporello, Falstaff and Rigoletto.

He was a beloved mentor to 39 PhD students, most of whom were welcomed as family during their doctoral studies and maintained enduring relationships for decades. As well he had very close musical mentees and companions.

Dick was an ardent lover of nature and passionate defender of wildlife and natural resources. He also was an extremely quick wit and always had a pun ready for every conversation. He never concerned himself with what other people thought, and was never afraid to stand up for what he believed. Family, friends and colleagues remember him as “a force” and celebrate his eternal “boyish joy”.

Professor Goodman moved to Alaska along with his wife in 2022 to be near his family.

He is survived by his beloved wife of over 67 years Sue, his daughter Lilly Goodman-Allwright sons-in laws Michael Allwright, and Eric Cohn, and four grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his two daughters Holly Cohn and Paula Goodman and several beloved dogs.

His enduring advice is to 1. Make and say beautiful things, 2. It never hurts to try or to ask; and 3. never eat the cake on the airplane.