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Obituary Database Search

Obituary Database Record ✖

Name	Richard C. Wydick 59	Residence	Davis, CA
Age	78	Date of Birth	11/01/1937
		Date of Death	05/11/2016

Obituary / Death Notice

Nov. 1, 1937 - May 11, 2016 Richard Crews Wydick, emeritus professor of law at UC Davis Law School, died at his home in Davis on May 11, 2016, his family at his side. He was 78. Wydick was born Nov. 1, 1937, in Pueblo, Colo., to Alice and Charles Wydick. He graduated in 1955 from Fountain Valley School near Colorado Springs where he was the student-body president and captain of the western horseback team. He earned his undergraduate degree in 1959 from **Williams College** in Massachusetts, where he majored in political economics, headed the student council, and was president of Beta Theta Pi Fraternity and the college's Social Council. He then attended Stanford Law School, where he was a member of the Stanford Law Review and Order of the Coif. In 1961, he married Judith Brandli James. The couple celebrated their 54th wedding anniversary in August 2015. After receiving his LLB in 1962, Dick joined the Army Judge Advocate General's Corps. He and Judy ended up spending their three-year tour in Charlottesville, Va., where Dick taught military law at the JAG school on the University of Virginia campus. Their son Bruce was born in 1964. The young couple left the Army a few weeks before the Vietnam War heated up, returning to California. Dick practiced antitrust law for five years in the San Francisco law firm of Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison. Their son Derrick was born in 1967. Remembering how much he had enjoyed teaching, Dick decided that teaching law suited him better than practicing it. In 1971, he found a faculty position at the then-young UC Davis School of Law. For the next 35 years, he taught evidence law, antitrust, legal ethics, intellectual property and legal writing. Along the way he was associate dean for two years and acting dean for another two. In 1983, he received the School of Law's Distinguished Teaching Award. He co-authored many editions of three books on legal ethics. His best-known work, however, is a slim volume, first published in 1979, called "Plain English for Lawyers," which has sold more than 1 million copies. As Dick wryly stated for his obituary, "It shows lawyers how to write plainly so as to be understood by those who must read their stuff, but so far it hasn't worked." But his friend Joseph Kimble of Scribes, a legal-writing organization, noted that after centuries of bad legal writing, the cycle is starting to break, thanks to Dick's book, which is used all over the country: "We're going on two generations of lawyers and law students who have been guided and changed by 'Plain English for Lawyers.' No other book on legal writing can make a claim like that." For many years, Dick also taught evidence and ethics for BarBri, a review course preparing law students to pass the State Bar exam. And for more than 10 years he served on a Scribes committee to select the best book in the country published the previous year on a legal subject - out of roughly 40 submitted each year for consideration. While teaching, Dick was able to take four sabbatical years abroad where he did his best writing. In 1977-78 the family lived near Auckland, New Zealand, the most special period they had together. Dick and Judy spent three subsequent sabbatical years based in London, with long periods in Great Malvern (England) and Mallorca (off the coast of Spain), experiences that enriched their lives immeasurably. During their 1987-88 sabbatical in London, Dick decided to take over the cooking so that Judy also could have a sabbatical. Upon their return, he decided to continue, and cookbooks became his favorite bedtime reading. He became a gourmet cook, his presentation as important as the content of the meal, and he continued this hobby until they moved to the University Retirement Community in 2013. Dick retired in 2003. He was a longtime member of the American Law Institute. His honors included the Golden Pen Award from the Legal Writing Institute and a Lifetime Achievement Award from Scribes, the American Society of Legal Writers, in recognition of his contributions to legal writing. In 2006 he was diagnosed with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, an incurable progressive disease in which the lungs scar over. He participated in a drug study at UC Davis, however, and survived 10 years, significantly longer than untreated patients. In keeping with his character, Dick prepared an inch-thick loose-leaf notebook filled with detailed instructions concerning everything

his family would need to know about what to do after his death - including complete directions for the memorial service and reception. He is survived by his wife Judy of Davis; son Derrick, his wife Laura and their daughter Katie of Columbia, Calif.; and son Bruce, his wife Leanne, and their daughters Alice and Kayla of Berkeley. His memorial service will begin at 4 p.m. Wednesday, May 25, at the Episcopal Church of St. Martin, 640 Hawthorn Lane in Davis. The Wydick family has endowed a scholarship for UC Davis law students. If you care to contribute, please indicate on your check that it is for the Wydick Family Scholarship, and make it payable to the UC Davis Foundation - School of Law, 400 Mrak Hall Drive, Davis, CA 95616-5201.

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