

Remembering Richard “Rick” Reid – Resting in Peace or Revving His Engine in Corvette Heaven?

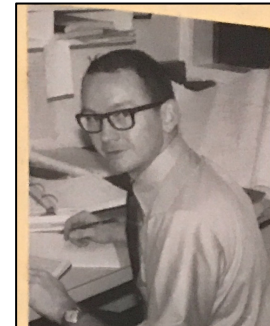
By Deanne Faucheux with Mary Reid



Many of us will remember CH2M HILL alum, Rick Reid who was a fixture in the firm’s Oregon offices for the better part of two decades, working in both Corvallis and Portland. Though he lost his 24-year battle with Parkinson’s Disease in January of 2015, Rick’s legacy of excellence in engineering and his passion for America’s Sports Car, the Corvette, will not soon be forgotten.

Early Life and Career

Rick always teased that he “grew up on a curb in Corvallis.” He graduated from Corvallis High School in 1958, and received a Bachelor's Degree (1962) and a Master's Degree (1965) in mechanical engineering from Oregon State University. After college, he fulfilled his ROTC obligation with the U.S. Army (1962 to 1964), serving in Alaska during the big Alaska earthquake. After his discharge, he worked for Standard Oil in California from 1965 to 1966, when he was hired by CH2M HILL in Corvallis, where he worked until he was transferred to Portland in 1982. He served as a project manager, department manager, and mechanical discipline group director.



Rick’s Adventures with IDC

In 1984, Industrial Design Corp. was started by a core group from CH2M HILL, including Rick. Rick was a vice president, chief engineer, and director of operations. He was also a project manager for large industrial projects such as Intel, IBM, Digital Equipment, ST Microelectronics, and several others. Highly regarded by leadership and his peers, Rick consulted on projects across the Pacific Northwest and in Europe and Asia (Singapore), forming life-long friendships with colleagues and clients alike. In 2004, Rick was inducted into the Oregon State University Hall of Fame. As a colleague noted, "He was a mentor, guardian, friend, and was kindhearted to a fault, was gentle, understanding, but firm." Rick retired early from CH2M HILL in December 2002.

Corvettes – Coupes and Convertibles

Rick’s first Corvette was a 1956 Corvette Roadster. His love of the car and of working with his hands led him to restore several additional Corvettes: a 1960 Roadster, a 1965 Coupe, a 1991 ZR1, and a 1962 Roadster. And while his life-long love of Corvettes began early in his life, according to his wife Mary, his first car was not a Chevy but a Ford! In her own words, Mary reports:

“Rick's first car was not a Corvette - actually it was a Ford, which he customized. His first Corvette was a 1956 that he had while in the Army and sold it when he married and children came along - **he did keep tabs on where it ended up!** His next Corvette was a 1960 red roadster, which he "over" restored.

“Another Corvette he restored was a 1965 Split Window in British racing green. After he finished, this one was sold; and he bought a 1962 “project” car. He and our neighbor, Gary DeBoer (who was at that time a National Corvette Restorers Society (NCRS) member), restored it. He and Gary then built a 1965 Ford (that bad word again) Cobra (Factory Five kit). When they started the engine in the downstairs shop, our dog would run and get in my lap - it was that loud! The Cobra was subsequently sold. Unfortunately, Rick never got to drive it because of the Parkinson's but did ride in it with Gary driving.

“The favorite Corvette was the 1967 red roadster with a white top and red interior. Rick ordered this one. It was a one-owner car, but it was sold in 2015. And his youngest son, Scott, who had grown up with the car, received the proceeds.”



1965 Ford Cobra

Rick's passion for automotive restoration led him to serve as the Northwest chair of the National Corvettes Restorers Society, president of the national organization for 5 years, and a board member of the Corvette Museum, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year (2023). Rick contributed his extensive knowledge of Corvette restoration to members and friends of the NCRS over the years, responding to questions, providing advice on where to find parts and documentation for restoration, and participating in the judging of Corvettes as part of his duties as a Society officer. He expanded his circle of friends who shared his Corvette passion.

As General Motors' longest-running passenger car, Corvette has celebrated some major milestones. Friday, June 30, 2023, marked Corvette's 70th anniversary. No doubt Rick would have been among the Corvette Caravan marking not only the milestone but the incredible place America's Sports Car has in our automotive history. We miss you, Rick, and send our very best wishes to Mary Hess and your extended family.



1960 Roadster with Rick.



1991 ZRI after restoration