



Richard Noel Welch

NOV 19, 1924 - FEB 24, 2018



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Richard Noel Welch was born November 19, 1924 in Ellisville, MS, and was raised in Memphis, TN. He passed away peacefully on February 24, 2018. He was the youngest of four, with his three older sisters predeceasing him. His father was a country doctor in Mississippi but had to take a job as a postal worker due to the Depression. Richard had many colorful stories of his upbringing, including one adventure when he was just fourteen years old, riding his bike with a friend to Reelfoot Lake, 125 miles away. On one of his hunting trips, he and a friend figured they would kill what they needed for food. Finding no game, they settled on a meal of blackbird, which he later laughed about and suggested we pack food on such trips. He attended UT Knoxville, majoring in English, was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity and a photographer for the Knoxville Journal. He completed his major at Memphis State University (now University of Memphis) and attended the University of Maryland graduate school, studying Agronomy. This led to a lifelong love of agriculture and growing whatever flower or vegetable he found interesting. He transferred to George Washington University, studied law and became a member of the Capital Police Force. During his time on the force, he won numerous awards as their top marksman. Later in life, he taught his boys the proper way to shoot a pistol and rifle. While at GW, he met Yolande, his wife of 60 years, winning her courtship as a true Southern gentleman and with his keen intellect. One evening on a date, Yolande found a disheveled kitten, which she told Richard to take to her apartment so she could give the kitten a bath and food. Recognizing her gift of care and love for all living things, Richard always emphasized to his children that he knew she would be a good mother and to seek out that quality in a spouse, whenever it became time to get married and raise children. Following his attendance at George Washington University, Richard traveled to Rio De Janeiro to be with Yolande while she was stationed there with the Foreign Service. He became a professor of English at



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The Instituto Brasil-Estados Unidos. They were married in international waters on the SS Argentina and went on their honeymoon to Santiago, Chile, traveling by train through the Pampas. They traversed the Andes near Aconcagua in a car driven by a German national who spoke no familiar language. They could see the narrow mountain road through the floorboards but were so high they could not see ground out the window. They explored a large cave by themselves on the way, and Yolande reported to the embassy in Santiago completely covered with white mountain dust. After three years in Brazil, Richard and Yolande returned to the US and settled in Memphis, TN. He worked as both a salesperson and a photographer and won the contract to be the base photographer at Millington Naval Training Center. He photographed thousands of naval airmen during their training time. He later worked for Nord Photo Engineering, selling photographic processing equipment throughout the Mid-South. He traveled all week and would collect interesting objects and colorful stories for his family, which resulted in many fond memories for his children. Richard was very handy, either fixing or building whatever was needed, and he loved good engineering. He replaced the engine and transmissions in the cars and repaired everything around the house. He had wonderful patience, always taking time to come up with a plan and to explain to his children everything that he was doing. He emphasized the utility of math and the importance of figuring things out for themselves. His sons both went into engineering and his daughter won the Bausch & Lomb science award when she graduated from high school. When Richard left Nord, he revived his photography business as Welch Photo Service and built a photographic processing lab in his detached carport. He raised the existing carport frame, laid a new concrete slab, enclosed the building, and put in the plumbing and wiring necessary for the lab. He purchased processing equipment from a former Nord client in Arkansas and got the lab up and running. He specialized in product pictures for manufacturing companies and team sports photography for Memphis area sports teams. In 2001, Richard and Yolande's daughter convinced them to retire and move to Sanibel, FL, where he enjoyed tackling many ambitious home projects and tending to various flowers, vegetables, and trees he planted, especially those unique to the tropical climate. He was always frustrated by the sandy soil, but loved



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getting free mulch from the town in his station wagon, in his attempt to rehabilitate the soil. He figured out that he could sell Frangipani cuttings and various interesting seeds over the internet and he loved the utility of eBay for such enterprising ventures. One purchase of seeds from India caused a USDA representative to show up at the door, surprising both Richard and Yolande. Richard was a man of integrity, with impeccable manners. He was proud of his southern roots and the accomplishments of his children and grandchildren. He loved talking to his children about their unique heritage, and could show them their genealogy on a large sheet of paper which had the family tree on it, written in pencil and pen. His family traced their roots back to the 17th century, to the early settlers in South Carolina. He is survived by his loving wife, Yolande Welch of Sanibel, FL; three children, Timothy Welch (Cyndi) of Furlong, PA, Kathleen Campbell (John) of Sanibel, FL, and Daniel Welch (Nancy) of New Canaan, CT; as well as eight grandchildren, Gabrielle, Allison, Joshua, David, Rachel, Sophia, Thomas and Carolina. A Memorial Service will be held 10:00 AM, Saturday, March 3, 2018 at the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ, 2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, FL 33957. The interment will be held at 2:00 PM, Saturday, March 3, 2018 at Ft. Myers Memorial Gardens Cemetery, 1589 Colonial Blvd., Ft. Myers, FL. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation or the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW) on Sanibel.



Tribute Wall

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Maria Dispenza posted:

Dear Yolande and all of Richard's family, We are so sorry for your loss. What a great and interesting life Richard had! We know you will miss him very much. Sincerely, Tom and Maria Dispenza, Sanibel Lake Estates neighbors.

February 28 at 11:22 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Richard by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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