

*In memoriam . . .***Richard S. Kimball****1943 - 2010**

On March 24, 2010, the Conference of California Historical Societies lost its leader. President Richard Kimball unexpectedly passed away, after conducting a very successful CCHS spring symposium at Trona/Ridgecrest the first week of March. He was just 67 years old.

Richard S. Kimball was born in Petaluma, California, the area to which his great-great-grandparents had come in the 1850s. He grew up in Sacramento where he received his education. After graduation from LaSierra High School, he went on to earn an associate of arts degree at American River College; a bachelor of arts degree (majoring in government, minoring in philosophy); and a master of arts degree (in government) from California State University, Sacramento.

At CSUS he served as vice chair of the student senate, as summer session editor of the campus newspaper for two years, as a teaching assistant in philosophy and on the board of directors of the Hornet Foundation, which operates the campus bookstore and food services. He received the university's distinguished service award. Also, during that time he worked as a reporter at area weekly newspapers.

Richard was drafted into the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He was an honor graduate of the Defense Information School at Fort Benjamin Harrison. He went on to serve as senior information specialist for the 52nd Artillery Group, I Field Force, Vietnam (stationed in Pleiku Province).

After leaving the service, he was employed for nearly 34 years by *The San Bernardino Sun-Telegram* (later renamed *The San Bernardino County Sun*), where as a reporter he covered city government, education and politics. For 25 years, he was the editorial page editor, organizing its first Sunday opinion section. Under his direction, the newspaper won the prestigious California Newspaper Publishers Association award for best series of editorials.

He served the education community as chair of the school site committees at Cole Avenue School in Highland and Martin Luther King Jr. School in San Bernardino and was a member of the San Bernardino City Unified School District's advisory board on compensatory education. Undoubtedly, here is where he developed his deep interest in working for student achievement, which he applied to CCHS's work with HISTORY DAY. HD is a year-round program that teaches the innate value of history in our daily life. HD also teaches

*Richard S. Kimball*

students research and analytical skills, starting with grade four and going through grade 12, by partaking in annual competitions on local, state and national levels. Richard ardently supported HD goals and worked hard to broaden CCHS participation in them.

Richard was a lay minister in his church. He served 12 years on the Diocesan Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles and presided over the Eastern Deanery Council.

For many decades he served as chair of the advisory board of the San Bernardino Corps of the Salvation Army. He was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Veterans of America and the Elks Lodge.

Among Richard's historical activities were memberships in San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society, the Novato Historical Guild, the Colusi County Historical Society, the Sons of the American Revolution, Friends of the Society of California Pioneers, Friends of the Huntington Library, the California Association of Museums and the California Historical Society.

The organization that Richard was probably most devoted to was the Native Sons of the Golden West. He was president of numerous parlors, a past governor of the NSGW Past Presidents Association and, at the time of his passing, the secretary general of the NSGW Past Presidents Association and a past grand president of NSGW. He was co-author of the book *Native Sons of the Golden West*. NSGW saved the most historic landmarks that are the foundation of California history, restored them, then turned them over to the state.

At the time of his death, Richard was president of the Conference of California Historical Societies, an umbrella group of some 700 local historical societies, museums, educational institutions and libraries throughout the state that banded together to promote historical scholarship and preservation.

Richard was proud of his association with CCHS and enjoyed his time with it. The symposia were the highlight of his life. He always came away from a symposium knowing more about California than he had known before, and considered the symposia one of the best things that CCHS did.

Richard was also proud of CCHS's involvement in History Day. He enjoyed being a judge and came away from each year's competition with the feeling that these young people were so bright and the potential these students showed was so important for the state of California's future.

Richard felt that the reorganization of CCHS, accomplished last year, was a step in the right direction for preserving this wonderful organization and strengthening it so it would continue to be a force in not only preserving California's history, but promoting California's history to its residents.

In passing, Richard leaves us with a smile amid our tears as we remember him not only for all he accomplished but for a personal endearing trait. He was a sneaker fanatic — red, plaid, polka-dot, glitter, whatever — Richard footed every outfit with the latest fashion in those canvas beauties.