

In Memoriam: Howard C. Rile, Jr.

A. Frank Hicks

One of the long-time stalwarts of this profession, Howard C. Rile, Jr., passed away on November 6, 2019. After having surgery about 1 ½ years ago, he was recovering nicely when he passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in a Long Beach, CA, hospital.

Howard Rile, born in Pasadena, CA, will long be remembered by his colleagues for his tireless efforts to promote his beloved profession.

After graduating from California State University at Los Angeles in 1968, he received his training as a Document Examiner from Jack Harris of Harris and Harris. Following stints with the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, he returned to Harris and Harris in Los Angeles. He was associated with that firm until 1996, when he opened his own office after Jack Harris retired. After moving the office to Long Beach and then to Huntington Beach, he retired in 2013.

Howard was very active in the professional organizations for Document Examiners. He was the President of the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners from 1997 – 1999 as well as being a long-time Diplomat of that Board. He was also a Life Member and past President of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners (2006 – 2008), as well as holding memberships in the Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners, the Canadian Society of Forensic Science and the Document Section of the American Academy of Forensic Science. Howard received the ASQDE's prestigious honor, the A.S. Osborn Award for Excellence, in 2014.

Of his many contributions to the profession, one for which many people will remember him will be his many "Signature Workshops" which were always interesting, challenging and instructional.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Howard will long be remembered for his sense of humor and his generosity. Many people aren't aware that he carried cash specifically to give to the homeless and disadvantaged who he might encounter on any given day.



Howard was constantly pursuing more knowledge. At the time of his passing, Howard was taking five different classes offered for seniors at CSULB. He had a deep interest in the Civil War, which led to the purchase of "too many to count" books on the subject and numerous organized tours as well as self-tours of battlefields across various states. He also enjoyed chess, not only playing on a weekly basis, but teaching others to play.

As much as he loved Questioned Document Examination and the pursuit of knowledge in general, his greatest love was reserved for his wife of 33 years, Andrea J. Huebner. Howard loved travelling with Andrea, especially on cruise ships. They took cruises to Europe, Iceland, Greenland, Panama Canal and Mexico. They also traveled to New York City, London and Dublin, where they would attend numerous plays with Musical Theatre West. Their last cruise was to and around the Hawaiian Islands this March.

Those who wish to make contributions in his name can do so through the Boys and Girls Club of Long Beach and the 49er Foundation/OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) that is part of CSULB.

A Celebration of Life is planned in the spring of 2020. To learn more, contact Andrea at ajhuebner1@aol.com.

Howard C. Rile, Jr., was a man who loved life, his wife, their families, his profession and those around him. His kindness and generosity will be missed.