Dick’s biography submission – Sgt. Friday version

*“Just the facts, ma’am …”*

Born in 1947, in San Mateo, California, Dick began his education in Chicago elementary schools to eventually land for a longer stint at Roosevelt Elementary, in west suburb, Maywood. With an inherent love of learning, Dick’s work-ethic landed him in the top **1%** of his **1965** Proviso East graduating class.

Dick’s college career began at Bradley University in Peoria, with his schoolwork was at that time focused on Psychology. In another direction, Dick eventually became the president of his social fraternity. Not all was fun-and-games, however, with Dick washing dishes, five days a week, for all four years of his college career. And, the second day of each summer vacation began with his 7-days-a-week employment at a National Can tin sheet printing factory. Dick’s Bradley graduation and the subsequent marriage to his wonderful wife, Ohio girl Mary Ann Cochran, took place in **1970**.

The next phase of Dick’s academic pursuits took him to his M.A. graduate program in School Psychology – at Western Illinois U. in Macomb. This degree prepared Dick for his initial employment as a Certified School Psychologist in the public school system of Calumet City, Illinois. However, after five years in this role, Dick felt considerably constrained as a *“Test Administrator”* – and decided to return to school, i.e. University of Illinois (Chicago), in an electrical engineering discipline. With the wonderful arrival of their son, Ryan, in **1975**, the situation was decidedly more exciting -- and also more challenging -- requiring Dick’s participation in a Work-Study program. Most thankfully, there was the incredible patience and support of his wife, Mary Ann. Dick graduated in **1980** and was offered employment at Bell Laboratories, in Naperville, Illinois.

Dick began work there in hardware design, with his first assignment being to develop a replacement for AT&T’s current (electro-mechanical) Operator Console. Dick’s VDT-based design incorporated an electronically-controlled means of varying precise screen location of image, *(to minimize CRT phosphor “burn-in”)* – for which he was granted a U.S. patent.

So much for such “design fun”, as Dick was selected to lead the national deployment of Operator Office software releases, including the project planning of final lab testing and then as “front-man” for negotiating software-hardware testing in “live” AT&T telephony offices. {At about this time, Dick was promoted to **Distinguished** Member of Technical Staff, acquiring for him his own office and *“a few dollars more”*.}

Eventually, this nation-wide methodology gave way to in-house testing programs, supported within a multi-lab environment at now-divested Lucent-Technologies, *(still in Naperville)*, with the primary planning for which being Dick’s responsibility. The writing was on the wall, however, when one of his last assignments was to train visiting engineers to assume remote Customer Support. So, after **26 years** of highly-challenging technical work – and 5 of 6 corporate down-sizes -- Dick succumbed to the inevitable layoff in **2007** – just in time for his Social Security!

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As you have herein read, from an early age Dick has been highly motivated to achieve in whatever opportunities lay before him – and so his *work-ethic* was always accompanied by many *work-hours*.

None the less, he has found the time throughout his career to contribute hundreds of hours to humanitarian causes, particularly in his church-parish: e.g., 16 years as Vacation Bible School teacher and band-leader, 7 years on the Worship Commission, 14 years as Junior High catechist, etc. So, doesn’t that make Dick “kinda special”? No – not al all; with love for his family and community, he considers these activities to be the minimum he should do to “*Pay Forward*” God’s blessings.

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Dick’s biography submission – Achievements version

Born in 1947, in San Mateo, California, our lad Ricky, later to be known as *“Dick”*, followed his older brothers in the Chicago elementary schools to eventually land for a longer stint at Roosevelt Elementary, in near west suburb, Maywood, Illinois. Proceeding on to high school, Dick added an extra course-slot to his class schedule, {to accommodate 4 years of **Latin** study – possibly in pursuit of his mother’s dream for his eventual career as a doctor or priest.} That remained to be seen, but his work-ethic landed him in the top **1%** of his **1965** Proviso East graduating class.

Dick’s college career, then, began in the cornfields of west central Illinois, that taking place at Bradley University in Peoria. Though not particularly illustrious there, his achievements were sufficient for his being recognized by Psi Chi, the national academic honor society for students of Psychology. In another direction, Dick eventually became the president of his Greek social fraternity. Not all was fun-and-games, however, with Dick washing dishes, five days a week, for all four years of his college career. And, the second day of each summer vacation began with his 7-days-a-week employment at a National Can tin sheet printing factory; {one summer, in fact, involved his attendance at 2 math courses, downtown (at U of I-Chi), before scurrying back west to get to his night-shift job. *Kowabunga!* Dick’s Bradley graduation and the subsequent marriage to his wonderful wife, Ohio girl Mary Ann Cochran, took place in **1970**.

The next phase of Dick’s academic pursuits took him through even taller corn – to his M.A. graduate program in School Psychology – at Western Illinois U. in Macomb. This time also ushered in a new arrival to the Falkman family – Alfie Falkman, a wonderful companion for the next **46** years -- typical lifespan for an African Gray Parrot. This degree prepared Dick for his initial employment as a Certified School Psychologist in the public school system of Calumet City, Illinois. However, after five years in this role, Dick felt considerably constrained as a *“Test Administrator”* – and decided to return to school, i.e. University of Illinois (Chicago), in an electrical engineering discipline. With the wonderful arrival of their son, Ryan, in **1975**, the situation was decidedly more exciting and also more challenging -- requiring Dick’s participation in a Work-Study program, supplemented by a Motorola scholarship. Most thankfully, there was the incredible patience and support of his wife, Mary Ann. Following an intense interval of all-technical coursework, Dick graduated in **1980** and was soon offered an exciting opportunity for employment at Bell Laboratories, in Naperville, Illinois.

Per his training, Dick began in hardware design, with his first assignment being to develop a replacement for the AT&T Operator Console, (the previous 30 years’ version being a large, electromechanical console.) Dick’s design was one of the first applications of a new-fangled device known as a *“microprocessor”* in a custom version of a multiprotocol Video Display Terminal. The display incorporated an electronically-controlled means of varying precise screen location of image, *(to minimize CRT phosphor “burn-in”)* – for which he was granted a U.S. patent. Unlike “traditional VDTs” at the time, the controlling circuitry deployed a state-of-the-art communications standard for voice-data trunking directly to a 5ESS telephony office. So much for such “design fun”, as Dick was selected to lead the national deployment of Operator Office software releases, including the project planning of final lab testing and then as “front-man” for negotiating software-hardware testing in “live” AT&T telephony offices. {And somewhere along the way here, Dick was promoted to Distinguished Member of Technical Staff, acquiring for him his own office and “a few dollars more”.}

Eventually, this methodology gave way to in-house testing programs, supported within a multi-lab environment at now-divested Lucent-Technologies, *(still in Naperville)*, with the primary planning for which being Dick’s responsibility. Final software evaluation then took place at a nearby facility, being a collection of switching offices that had live connections to other commercial telephone offices throughout northern Illinois. The writing was on the wall, however, when one of his last assignments was to train visiting engineers, from “overseas”, to assume remote Customer Support. So, after 26 years of highly-challenging technical work – and 5 of 6 corporate down-sizes -- Dick succumbed to the inevitable layoff in **2007** – just in time for his Social Security!

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As you have herein read, from an early age Dick has been highly motivated to achieve in whatever opportunities lay before him – and so his *work-ethic* was always accompanied by many *work-hours*.

None the less, he has found the time to contribute hundreds of hours to humanitarian causes, particularly in his church-parish: e.g., 16 years as Vacation Bible School teacher and band-leader, 7 years on the Worship Commission, 14 years as Junior High catechist, … and much more … so, doesn’t that make Dick “kinda special”? No – not al all; with love for his family and community, he considers these activities to be the minimum he should do to “*Pay Forward*” God’s blessings.

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