
Rick earned his Ph.D. in Operations Research from Georgia Institute of Technology in 1975, and started his academic career in the Management Science Department at the University of Tennessee, where he earned promotion to Associate Professor and tenure by 1983. In 1984, Rick spent a National Research Council postdoctoral fellowship year here in the Operations Research Department of the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, and found his calling. Joining our faculty, he was promoted to Full Professor in 1988, served as Operations Research Department Chairman, 1997–2000, and was honored Distinguished Professor in 2007.

Rick was a good listener, a quick study, a keen modeler, and a master wordsmith, all attributes that attracted the best students and colleagues, and produced three advised doctoral dissertations (a Tennessee doctorate, Terry Harrison, has just been elected President of INFORMS), about 40 Masters of Science theses, and 25 scholarly publications.

Though Rick had no prior personal military experience, he ended up coauthoring the text Warfare Modeling with Jerry Bracken and Moshe Kress, and won the 1990 Koopman Prize for best military application of OR, the 1992 Barchi Prize for best presentation of military OR, the 1993 and 1997 Rist Prizes for best publication in military OR, as well as a number of other awards.

Rick was justly proud to have received recognition from the Naval Postgraduate School for excellence in teaching in 1987 and 1989 (these awards derive from evaluations by our military officer students), as well as outstanding research achievements in 1990 (judged by our faculty and outside reviews). He won the 2000 INFORMS Prize for the Teaching of OR/MS Practice.

Rick was a passionate promoter of our profession. He served as Vice President of INFORMS, 2003–2007, member of the Military Operations Research Society (MORS) Board of Directors, 1999–2003, Editor-in-Chief of Naval Research Logistics, 1988–2003, as well as associate editor for Management Science and Operations Research. His profound belief in the importance and utility of OR applications was manifested in the enormous energy he devoted to the INFORMS Edelman Competition.

More than anything, Rick loved our students. When Rick’s thesis student, LCDR Stephen A. Tisdale, a distinguished graduate, polymath and Navy P3 pilot, was killed in a mid-air collision, Rick established a special award in Tisdale’s name to be earned in a student thesis presentation in sharp competition. To this day, a MORS-Tisdale thesis competition is the crowning achievement of our best students, and attended by all our faculty and students.

Rick was also the avuncular promoter of many other young scholars and practitioners world-wide, engaging in extensive correspondence (and copying us, and thus engaging us, too). He arranged conferences focused on student achievement, and featuring student teams competing to solve emergent problems. And, of course, he somehow persuaded his academic side-kicks to serve as mentors and judges. Who could resist Rick’s smile, charm, personal warmth, and endless enthusiasm for good analysis, well-explained?

My personal recollections of Rick include his care and respect for others. Rick contributed to a lot more papers than he authored. Rick brought me a number of manuscripts in submission to this journal, saying “this is a good paper that just needs some preliminary expository polish, could you please help the author revise this to make it more palatable to my reviewers?” Rick’s explosive laughter still echoes in our passageways.

Rick would be delighted with this issue. It includes a wide variety of papers, international contributors, and some very neat ideas. This issue also includes Rick’s last paper, the single publication reporting almost 15 years of work. As Rick would say: “what separates fantasy from reality, and just a paper from a good paper, is a lot of work.” Just so, Rick. Just so.

Gerald G. Brown
Naval Postgraduate School
19 October 2010

DOI 10.1002/nav.20459
Published online 11 March 2011 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).