

CAROLWOOD CHRONICLE



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Issue 33

PERSERVING WALT DISNEY'S RAILROAD HERITAGE

Summer 2008

Remembering Ollie

by Michael Broggie

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Marie and Ollie Johnston share a moment in 1993 aboard their one-twelfth scale model steam engine at their home in La Cañada-Flintridge, California. The backyard layout inspired Walt Disney to build an elaborate one-eighth scale railroad at his Carolwood home.

Photo by Michael Broggie

Moving?
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Soft spoken, self effacing, impishly humorous might describe **Ollie Johnston**, the last departing member of Disney's "Nine Old Men" of classic feature animation, who passed away April 14 at Port Angeles, Washington. Perhaps gentle genius may be the best description of Ollie. His exacting skill at hand-drawn animation earned him the admiration of his colleagues and the respect of Walt Disney, who rarely gave direct praise.

However, it was Ollie's passion for trains that afforded him an unusually close connection with his boss. A visit in 1949 to a miniature train layout located in the backyard of Ollie and Marie Johnston's La Cañada-Flintridge home convinced Walt to build an elaborate scale model railroad at his residence on Carolwood Drive in the Holmby

Hills area of Los Angeles. The following May, Ollie was at Walt's home for the first run of the one-eighth scale *Lilly Belle* live steam engine he named in honor of his understanding wife, Lillian. Built in the Machine Shop at the Studio, the miniature train operated for three years before work on a larger scale train in Anaheim consumed all of Walt's time.

Ollie built a scale model Victorian depot for his layout. The Johnston family recently donated the structure to the Carolwood Foundation, which had it restored with funds provided by donors, then moved to a new location near Walt's Carolwood Barn at the Los Angeles Live Steamers area of Griffith Park. The quaint red Barn was the personal workshop of

See Ollie page two

Welcome New and Renewing Members!

The Carolwood Pacific Historical Society is enriched by its many wonderful members. New and renewing members from April 1, 2008 are:

Alex Breve, Laurel Springs, NJ
 Marsha and Rudy Alfaro, Jr., Riverside, CA
 Mary Jo and Lena Tamimi, Moraga, CA
 Brian and Laura Thompson, Mount Joy, PA
 Aaron Myers, San Diego, CA
 Parker Tinn, Clermont, FL
 Douglas Temple, Fullerton, CA
 Robert DeLucia, Glendale, AZ
 Ken P. Paulson, Manteca, CA
 Tom Allen, Mount Dora, FL
 Jenny Lerew, Pasadena, CA
 Gabriel Perez, Exeter, CA
 D. Brian Valleau, Park Ridge, IL
 Lucile Bosche' Mosier, Simi Valley, CA
 Keith Muldowney, Ringoes, NJ
 Merrie Weiler, Adelanto, CA
 David Hardy, Hollister, CA
 Bob and Carol Simpson, Burbank, CA
 Frank and Geri Campbell, Temecula, CA
 Scott Jurahasz, Montville, OH
 Thomas Uzzalino, West Paterson, NJ
 The Ross Irvine Family, League City, TX
 Kenneth Park, Los Angeles, CA
 Erin Gough, Newport Beach, CA
 Lili Gallinucci, Rowland Hills, CA
 Patricia Foltyn, San Gabriel, CA
 Mike Angelos, Fresno, CA
 Walter Smale, Laguna Beach, CA
 Thomas Wood, Westminster, CA
 Gary and Trudie Kelly, Port Washington, WI
 James Ganem, Tucson, AZ
 David Turner, Bear, DE
 Dennis Ritchey, Fullerton, CA
 Paul Schnebelen, Oxnard, CA
 Hugh Rutherford, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
 Jack Lester, Montville, OH
 James and Marjorie Poor, Scottsdale, AZ
 Michael Allen, Oceanside, CA
 Gerry and Gail Reynolds, Long Beach, CA
 Randolph Riscal, New York, NY
 Randy Schultz, Irvine, CA
 David Sheegog, Anaheim, CA
 Richard and Donna Alexander, Fremont, CA
 Jim Sullivan, Jr., Gibbstown, NJ
 William Lenharth, Durham, NH
 Carol Olson, San Jose, CA
 Janis Simon, Lakewood, CA
 Jacqueline Campbell, Wrightwood, CA
 Joe Skorpen, Malibu, CA
 Trey Sullivan, Gibbstown, NJ

Rick and Susan Weaver, Springfield, OR
 Dwight S. Morgan, Pasadena, CA
 Mark Walters, Glendale, AZ
 Martha and Steve O'Brien, Redwood City, CA
 Greg Ottinger, Scottsdale, AZ
 Brad Bishop, Los Angeles, CA
 Dave Parks, Anaheim, CA
 Claude McGuire, Addison, IL
 Rogelio Rodriguea, La Puente, CA
 Francisco Castro, Glendale, CA
 Paul Wilcox, Elizabethtown, PA
 Thomas McCarthy, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
 Paul Porto, Orlando, FL
 Eric Elin, Vista, CA
 George Hulcher, Orlando, FL
 Keith Carr, Clermont, FL
 Jeff Bray, Columbus, IN
 Mike Chase, East Dubuque, IL
 Kenneth Rockey, Culver City, CA
 Glen Landin, Orange, CA
 Kenneth Davidson, Halifax, PA
 Mike G. Lower, Bellingham, WA
 David Gondorf, Fremont, CA
 Grant Black, West Warwick, RI
 Gene and Linda Ruecker, Anaheim, CA
 Harold Wilson, Nashville, TN
 Jerry Opsahl, Shingle Springs, CA
 Andrew LeBlanc, Salem, MA
 Keith Purpura, New Paltz, NY
 Scott Smith, Pasadena, CA
 John Murasky, Agoura Hills, CA
 Miller and Chrissy Smyth, Brielle, NJ
 Gloria and Michael Hasler, Palmdale, CA
 Renard Fuentes, Arcadia, CA
 Herb and Pat Scrivener, Lancaster, PA
 Nelson E. Meacham, Studio City, CA
 Thomas Gallaway, Middletown, NY
 John Lake, San Diego, CA
 William Allen, Palm Bay, FL
 Daniel Davis, Rockford, TN
 Karen Pizzarello, The Villages, FL
 David Walkup, College Station, TX

Welcome Aboard!

OLLIE continued from page one

Walt Disney and now functions as a mini museum celebrating the hobby of railroading.

These two structures serve as a permanent reminder of the special railroader's bond that drew these talented men together. Staffed by volunteer members of the Carolwood Pacific Historical Society, Walt's Carolwood Barn and Ollie's Depot are open free to the public every third Sunday year around. A public dedication ceremony for Ollie's Depot was held on Sunday, May 18th. Ollie was a founding member of the Board of Governors of the Society. Additional information is available at www.carolwood.org.



A Heartfelt Gift . . .

~ By Greg Ottinger

The Winter 2007 edition of the Carolwood Chronicle had a wonderful and heartwarming story by **Christy Myers** about her son Austin's wish to visit Walt's Barn for his 11th birthday and the events that conspired against him to do so. That day of heartache and sorrow would set into motion events that would see **Austin** not only visiting Walt's Barn, but meeting **Michael Broggie** and some legendary Imagineers. Other members of the CPHS would also take an interest in Austin's dream of becoming an Imagineer, including myself.

Maybe it was the title or the picture of the "three amigos," but regardless of the reason, once I started I couldn't stop reading the article. Once finished, I couldn't help but think that the article reminded me of a Disney story in the grandest tradition. A wish is made and almost granted, but the forces of "evil" conspire to make the wish not come true. Then "fairy godmother" comes to the rescue, marshals the forces of good, a wish IS granted, and everyone lives happily ever after. The one thing that stood out in the story about Austin was the **GENEROSITY** of all the people that helped Austin's wish come true. Not only did Michael and **Sharon Broggie** "put the dreams back into Austin's heart," but there was also **Bob Gurr** who Austin met at the Santa Margarita event in November. Bob not only spent time with Austin, but shared **ONLY** with him the secrets to becoming an Imagineer. Upon thinking about it I wondered why I never had the opportunity to do something wonderful like the people of the CPHS. In an instant, that would all change.

Next to the story about Austin was a small article by **Bob Lemberger**. Donor bricks were being sold that would have the donor's name engraved on them and then be placed around Ollie Johnston's depot. The idea struck me instantly that I should buy a brick for Austin! Immediately I went to the CPHS website, found Bob's email address, and quickly sent him an email. I explained how I had read Christy Myers' article and was so taken by it that if any bricks were still available I wanted to purchase one in Austin's name. Bob then asked if I wanted to be anonymous. When I had the idea of buying a brick for Austin there was never a thought about recognition, just a desire to do something nice for a boy whose birthday was not what it should have been. Besides, the anonymous "benefactor" added a little mystery and intrigue that might be fun for Austin and his family. I sent my response to Bob telling him that being anonymous would be fine. Bob soon informed me that permission had been asked of Austin's parents, who granted my request. This meant that not only had my anonymous gift been "officially" approved, but also that the Myers were gracious and kind enough to accept a gift from a complete stranger. A few days later I received another message from Bob. It included Christy Myers' response to Sharon Broggie regarding permission about the brick. When I read what Christy had written, it was like I had been given a belated Christmas present. Her words were and are a gift that I will always treasure. I had no way of knowing that the brick for Austin came at a time when it was most needed by him. My anonymous act was the right thing, at the right time, for the right per-

son, *and* it reinforced my belief that the more you give the more you receive.

A few weeks later, I anonymously emailed Christy Myers thanking her for her kind words in the email she'd sent to the Broggies. In the emails that followed (and still do), Christy told me more about Austin, the trying times he had in the last part of 2007, and his hopes and dreams to not only be like Walt, but also to become an Imagineer. During the time that Christy and I were corresponding, I was also in the process of trying to rid myself of some of the bric-a-brac that I had accumulated over the years. During this endeavor, I came across numerous Disney items that I thought Austin would enjoy. Christy graciously granted a person they only knew through emails permission to send these things to Austin. In time, I would send him not only my collection of *The E Ticket* magazine, but also a few things from Walt Disney Imagineering. In return, I received emails from Christy expressing not only Austin's delight in what I had sent, but also his sincere appreciation. Like several other people of the CPHS, I had become interested in seeing Austin pursue his Imagineering dreams. And, if what I had given him reminded him to pursue those dreams, then that would be more than payment in kind.

When it was announced that there would be a public dedication of Ollie's Barn, I decided it was time to be not so anonymous to Austin and his parents. Although I had been a member of the CPHS for a few years, I had yet to visit Walt's Barn. I could think of no better time to visit than when Austin and his parents would also be there. I emailed Christy, told her my plans, and they were greeted with great enthusiasm. Finally May 18th arrived, and I was at Walt's Barn. Once I did a quick tour of the barn, I then set about finding Christy and Austin. Over the months we had corresponded, Christy was kind enough to send me numerous pictures of Austin, and one even had her in it. It took a few minutes, but I finally spotted them, and as I walked up to Christy I wasn't quite sure how to introduce myself, but, it really didn't matter since as I had no more than said "Hello Mrs. Myers" than Christy instantly knew that I was "Mr. Anonymous." I introduced myself to Austin as well. What had started several months before with my email to Bob Lemberger, finally culminated in meeting Austin and his parents. But they weren't the only ones waiting to meet me since Christy had told not only Michael Broggie, but Bob Lemberger, **Blaine Gibson**, and **Harriet Burns** that I would be at the dedication. Evidently I had become a not-so-anonymous anonymous person.

Why did I donate a brick in Austin's name? I don't really have an answer except that it just seemed like the thing to do, and I'll leave it at that. I **DO** know that I have made new friends, met some amazing people, and would like to think that I've made a positive impact on Austin. Young people like Austin will not only be future Imagineers, but stewards of the Carolwood Pacific Historical Society as well.



Thanks to David Sheegog for sending pictures of his backyard railroad layout. In Anaheim, California.



See America By Rail

It is said that the best Branson tour is combined with two of the most spectacularly scenic train rides in the U.S.
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These are new Carolwood Foundation pins designed by Bob Lemberger. The first pin celebrates the *Grand Canyon* car that became the *Lilly Belle* VIP Coach that has been restored and is in service at Disneyland. The second pin is Ollie Johnston's Depot that now resides near Walt's Barn in Griffith Park. Both pins are limited to 300. They are \$10 each plus \$2.95 shipping. To order, please email orders@carolwood.org for more information.

Barn Report

By Fred Lack III

We had, to my knowledge, the largest turnout for a Barn day on June 15th, with 539 visitors! We were honored with five distinguished guests that day making it the busiest day ever. In attendance were **Blaine Gibson, Bob Gurr, Alice Davis, X Antencio and George McGinnis**. Visitors and many Disney cast members, who came by for the first time, lined up to collect autographs from the Disney Legend Imagineers. The increased cast member participation is thanks to Carolwood Foundation Director Nathan Eick who has been spreading the word about our guests at Disneyland in their Park media.

We also set a record that day for volunteers at the Barn. We had eight new volunteers and 15 current volunteers for a grand total of 23. We can always use volunteers, so if you're interested please mention that to one of us the next time you attend. We'll be happy to give you the particulars!

The Barn is looking shipshape with a new coat of stain and new paint for the windows and dove cote. It looks great — just like a brand new Barn! Combine that with the newly painted Ollie's Depot, and we've never looked better! We offered a brand new color photo of the Barn for sale that visitors could purchase and have our guests sign. We also are now offering t-shirts in blue and green.

Blaine Gibson received a brick that will join the others around the Depot, donated in his name by the **Jeff Myers family**. A couple more new bricks have also been ordered for placement around the Depot.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Our first Barn Movie Night was hosted by volunteer **Steve Waller** on Saturday, June 28th with "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea." The movie and shorts started around 8:30p.m. We plan more free movies so please come out and enjoy a beautiful summer evening at the Barn!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



The Mail Car

I'm a cast member at WDW here in Orlando...conductor on the WDW Railroad and a tour guide for the Magic Behind the Steam Trains tour. We've been in contact before. When you were here for the Un-Meeting last October, we had a long discussion about the Tour, the Carolwood Pacific Room, etc.

The "seminar" that I have been doing at the Carolwood Pacific Room at the Villas at Wilderness Lodge for the past two years is going very well. The Wilderness people put some flyers around the Lodge helping the attendance. We have had anywhere from two or three people up to my record attendance of 26! I am picked up by a launch at the Magic Kingdom by a recreation manager and dropped off at the dock at the Lodge. The event is scheduled for only a half an hour but I never get out of there in under an hour and a half, talking about Walt, the early days of railroading in the U S and the trains at the Magic Kingdom. I am quick to suggest your book because those who show up for this seminar are usually enthusiastic Walt Disney and railroad fans.

Also, the picture of "Mile-A-Minute Murphy" is still in the Carolwood Pacific Room! It makes a good story but has nothing to do with Walt.

~ George Hulcher
~ Orlando, FL

We just got back from spending 10 days at the Fort Wilderness Lodge Villas. The Carolwood Pacific Room was great! We enjoyed the presentation and just soaking up the atmosphere. By the way, "Mile-A-Minute Murphy" is still chasing that train! We would like to see it replaced with more pictures of the Carolwood Pacific.

~ Linda Olson
~ Jenks, OK

On page six of the Spring Carolwood Chronicle there is a caption that reads, "Special guest Jacques Valin, retired background artist for Disney, displays his oil painting of Walt's Barn to Michael Broggie." Unfortunately, this is incorrect. Jacques (a dear friend of mine) was a Set Decorator for Disney in the Art Department under John Mansbridge. Not a background artist in

Animation. He also ran the WED artists workshop for many years and is a phenomenal plein aire painter and very loyal retired employee of the Studio.

~ Lucile Bosche Mosier
~ Simi Valley, CA

(Thank you, Lucile, for this correction. Jacques is a much appreciated occasional visitor at Walt's Barn. — ED.)

We are new members of the Society and wanted to share a little about the place we live. Fremont, CA is located in the San Francisco East Bay Area, between Hayward and San Jose. Fremont is also the home of the Niles Canyon Railway which operates between the District of Niles in Fremont and the community of Sunol. We have about eight miles of track that we operate on Sundays for the public that is run entirely by volunteers which Donna and I are a part of.

We also operate a special train between Thanksgiving and Christmas called the Train of Lights during the evening at 4:30p.m. and 7p.m.

~ Richard Alexander
~ Fremont, CA

It was so wonderful to meet you and listen to your presentation when you came to the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania for the East Un-Meeting! Chris and I really enjoyed your company at dinner at the Strasburg Railroad as well. You have such wonderful memories to share and we really appreciate that you are so willing to share them. It surely keeps the memory of Walt alive. He was a real person, though that seems hard to believe sometimes. One thing you said stuck with me after the weekend was over. You said that you wonder what Walt would have accomplished had he lived as long as Lillian. Well, in a heretofore empty lot next to where I work, they are building a community based on Walt's vision for Epcot. There will be housing, shopping and entertainment—all in the same complex. When I first heard about the plans, I mentioned to someone that it reminded me of the vision that Walt had for Epcot. The person told me that's how the developer sold the idea to the local government—he mentioned Walt. Imagine that!

~ Judy Lohr
~ Modina, PA

I wanted to express my thanks for

your donation of the wonderful Disney DVD that I won at the 2008 National Garden Railway Convention.

I believe the first time I met you was at a presentation you gave at that convention held in Florida some years ago. The participants at that convention were, I believe, the first group to be allowed into the bakeshop at the *Disney Railroad*. It was a memory I still cherish.

We also were given access to the LGB layout before EPCOT opened for the day. The only way to describe that experience is to equate it to the Wizard of Oz when the movie changes from black and white to color. Here we are, behind the scenes at EPCOT. The ground was sand, there was a slight smell of garbage in the air and things were generally unkempt. Then they opened the access gate near the layout and we stepped into a completely different world. The magical world of Disney!

As a child I watched the Mickey Mouse Club religiously. I always dreamed of visiting Disneyland and next year, instead of attending the Garden Railway Convention, I hope to finally make that dream come true!

~ David Smith
~ Hicksville, NY

I received my First Edition of Walt Disney's Railroad Story that I won on eBay today. I opened the box to make sure that the book arrived in good condition and then spent the next hour paging through it. I noticed immediately that it's not just about Walt's fascination for trains and model railroading. I believe this is just the book I have been looking for. I have always wanted to know more about Walt Disney and the creation of Walt Disney World in Central Florida. I would love to have Michael sign the book for me but my problem is, I don't know whether to read it first, or send it and have it signed first!

You see, I too have railroading in my blood. My father collected Lionel when I was born and we had a basement full of trains to play with.

Please let me know of any other informative books about Disney and especially WDW in Orlando.

~ Michael Smith
~ Dania Beach, FL



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In Memoriam

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- Ward Kimball
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Opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Society, the Carolwood Foundation or the Walt Disney Family Foundation.

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Ollie's Depot Dedication at Walt's Barn



Disney Imagineer and Society Governor Tony Baxter tells stories about Ollie and his passion for trains, which he shares.



Disney Legend Blaine Gibson fondly recalls working with Ollie in the 1930s and '40s before becoming Walt's top sculptor.



President of L.A. Live Steamers Ron Bergman congratulates the Society and Foundation for saving Ollie's Depot.



Jeanette Thomas and her son Ted recall their beloved neighbor Ollie, who was the late Frank Thomas' lifelong friend.



Carolwood Event Planner

**MARK
THESE
DATES!**

July 18, 20 — National Model Railroad Association Convention — Anaheim, CA

July 20 — Walt Disney Barn open 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

July 20 — NFFC, Anaheim, CA — Show and Sale (see page 2 for more NFFC events)

August 2, 3 — Disney Daze in Oakhurst, CA (Email Bill Atwood at atwoods@sti.net for more information)

August 17 — Walt Disney Barn open 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Special Guest Tony (Donald Duck) Ansalmo!

September 19 — Walt Disney Barn open 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

October 16, 17, 18 and 19 — Un-Meeting in Florida. Beginning with a kick-off dinner Thursday at Downtown Disney (for more details visit the calendar on www.carolwood.com)

October 19 — Walt Disney Barn open 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Three generations of the Bray family visit Michael Broggie at Walt's Barn. From left, Dick Bray, Caleb Bray, Michael and Jeff Bray. The Bray family lives in Columbus, Indiana.
(Have a picture you want to share? Space permitting, we will print it!)

You never know what will happen or who you will see when you volunteer at Walt's Barn!



Members Blake and Sherolyn Thomas from Kansas City, MO visited the Barn on their recent trip to the L A area. Blake made the mistake of asking how he did as a volunteer that day. Debra Turner (regular Barn Volunteer and Carolwood Foundation secretary) took the opportunity to suggest he trim his beard!

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*"We don't have boring meetings
~ we just do fun events!"*

VIEW FROM THE CUPOLA BY MICHAEL BROGGIE

We are pleased to introduce Society Member Dick Cook as the newest Governor of the Carolwood Pacific Historical Society. Dick has been an active supporter of our mission to preserve and enhance the history and railroad legacy of Walt Disney.

When entering Dick's sixth floor office at Walt Disney Studios, the first thing you notice on the wall behind his desk is a huge (we're talking 4 feet by 5 feet) photograph of Disneyland Railroad Engine No. 2, *E. P. Ripley*, receiving its final trim about a month before the opening of Disneyland in 1955. On the opposite wall of his office are two glass and wood cases filled with every G-scale locomotive and car produced by the Carolwood Society. No doubt, Dick loves Disney trains, and he comes by his passion honestly.

His nearly four-decade career with The Walt Disney Company began in 1970 as a cast member for a year on the Santa Fe & Disneyland Railroad and Monorail crews before landing a position in the Disneyland sales department. Three years later he was promoted to department manager. In 1977, Dick moved to The Walt Disney Studios in Burbank to serve as manager of pay television and non-theatrical releases. In this capacity, he was responsible for Disney's first entry into the burgeoning world of cable television, developing what would become The Disney Channel.

As chairman of The Walt Disney Studios since 2002, Dick oversees all aspects of the development, production, distribution and marketing for all live-

action and animated films released under the Walt Disney Pictures, Touchstone Pictures, Hollywood Pictures and Miramax banners worldwide. He is also responsible for Disney's worldwide home entertainment operations under Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, as well as Walt Disney Music Group, Walt Disney Theatrical Productions, Disney-ABC Domestic Television, Disney-ABC International Television, the Studio's legal and business affairs and all areas of new technology.

Under Dick's leadership, the Studio has been one of the leading domestic distributors for 11 of the last 14 years with box office receipts in excess of one billion dollars each. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures International passed the one billion dollar mark for 13 consecutive years, the only distribution company to have achieved this milestone. To date, the Studio has released 57 films that have grossed more than \$100 million each domestically. No other studio has accomplished this extraordinary feat.

A graduate of the University of Southern California with a degree in political science, Dick has been a USC trustee and has served as president of the USC Alumni Association. He is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, was president of The Chandler School Board of Trustees and past chairman of the Flintridge Preparatory School Board of Trustees and on the board of directors for the Will Rogers Foundation and the Foundation of Motion Picture Pioneers. In 1976, the Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge

awarded him with the prestigious George Washington Medal of Freedom, which was also awarded to Walt Disney by Dwight Eisenhower. In 2004, Dick was honored with the Motion Picture Showmanship Award by the publicists of the International Cinematographers Guild. Among other prestigious past recipients are Jack L. Warner, Joanne Woodward, Paul Newman, Alfred Hitchcock, Lew Wasserman, Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. In 2005, Dick was honored with "The Walt Disney Man of the Year Award" by Big Brothers Big Sisters. Most recently, Dick was recognized by Variety – The Children's Charity of Southern California with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

On behalf of all Members of the Society, it gives me great pleasure to welcome aboard Governor Dick Cook.

