

GUEST EDITORIAL

FROM THE ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD

Richardson was a model of service

In the cascade of tributes that poured out on Wednesday after the death of Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson, here's a story that caught our eye.

Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum recalled the lunches she frequently had with Richardson, who died Tuesday of brain cancer at age 69. At these "check-in" lunches, Rosenblum said, the two would compare notes about a variety of topics that affected both of their agencies.

Rosenblum said, at their last lunch, Richardson gave her a coin that was engraved with these words: "Having been given much, what will you give in return?"

The words — or, more precisely, the Latin original, "Pro Tanto Quid Retribuamus" — served as Richardson's official motto.

By all accounts, they were words Richardson lived by.

This was a man who served in Vietnam, running rescue missions as a helicopter pilot. After his war-time experiences, he branched out into a different kind of service, becoming a trial lawyer and then serving six terms in the state Legislature.

Richardson earned a reputation for hard work during legislative sessions: As a member of the House of Representatives, it wasn't unusual for him to be the last legislator to leave the Capitol building.

In 2014, he ran for governor against John Kitzhaber, who was seeking his fourth term. The underfunded Richardson campaign had difficulty getting traction, but the debates between the two men always were cordial, although spirited. Kitzhaber prevailed by 6 percentage points.

It says something about Richardson that after losing that election, he took a year off to serve a mission with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In 2016, after being persuaded to run for secretary of state, he defeated Democrat Brad Avakian, became the first Republican to win statewide office in Oregon in nearly two decades.

In the secretary of state's office, Richardson prioritized a series of audits of state government operations that occasionally drew criticism but often highlighted areas that needed improvement.

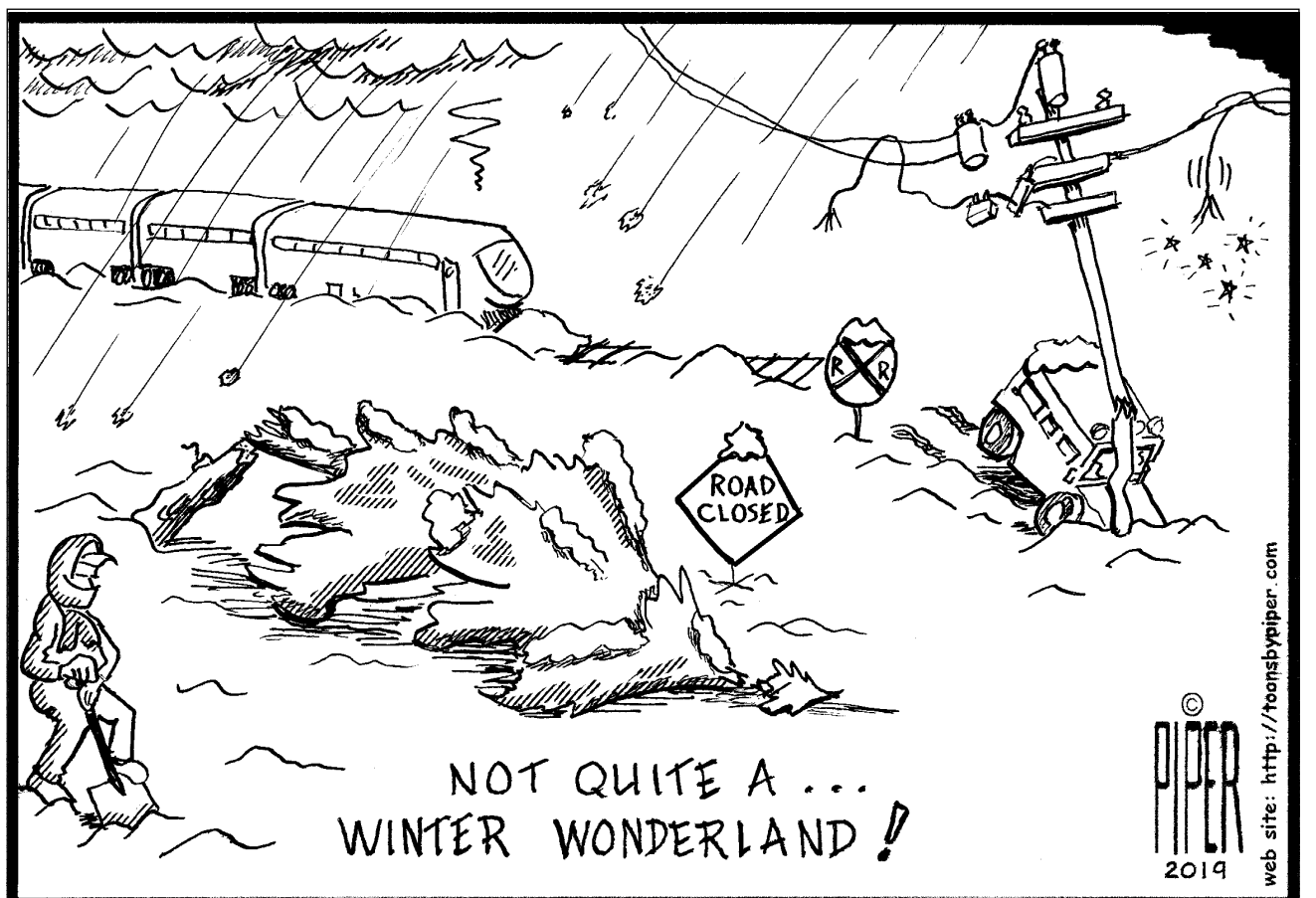
His deep dive into the problems facing the state's foster care system may have been fueled to some extent by his personal life: One of his daughters, Mary Burnell, was adopted from a foster home. "It was amazing being adopted into the Richardson family, so warm and welcoming," she said in a video released as part of the 2016 campaign. "I had never had anything like that."

And, to his credit, Richardson continued a grand tradition of the secretary of state's office, becoming a fierce advocate of voting access.

That work contrasted dramatically with efforts by some of his counterparts around the nation who aimed to limit the very voting rights Richardson championed.

Richardson always came across as upbeat and optimistic — in fact, it seemed he was confident that he would beat the cancer that had forced him to curtail his official activities: At the time of his death, he was mounting a re-election campaign for 2020.

When people remember Richardson, though, they're likely to first remember that passion for service. The words of his personal motto are words that we would do well to keep in mind: Having been given much, what will we give in return?



Your views

Gilbert: Forest landowners under attack by B2H

To the Editor:

Forest landowners are under attack by Idaho Power and the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line. Idaho Power's application for a site certificate documents its intent to take private forest lands in Union and Umatilla counties.

Decisions regarding the Forest Practices Act would be under the control of Idaho Power and the Oregon Department of Energy rather than the Department of Forestry and the landowner.

Idaho Power plans to change the land use classification to avoid having to pay for reforestation after it clearcuts the right-of-way.

Changing the land use

would reduce the payments required if the land is condemned to build the transmission line.

In 2013 Idaho Power admitted it would be cutting trees over 21 inches and that it would be cutting trees in forested wetlands. Now it claims no trees over 21 inches and no forested wetlands are impacted.

In 2013, Idaho Power estimated it would remove approximately 1,063 acres of forestland in the two counties. Now it claims the amount of forestland taken will be 776 acres.

Idaho Power values the lost forest land at \$488.60 per acre in Umatilla County and \$182.98 per acre in Union County.

If your forestland is in an agriculture/forest area and it loses a tax re-

duction as a result of this transmission line, the land owner pays penalties and increased taxes.

For land in elk or deer winter range, the restriction on construction between Dec. 1 and March 31 can be waived by the Oregon Department of Energy.

If you have birds nesting on your land, the setbacks from nest are between 300 feet and 0.5 miles during construction when the nest is occupied. Even that can be waived by the Oregon Department of Energy.

Owners of property zoned as forestland, in a farm/forest designation, or where soils justify a designation as forest, you need to get involved. You are being attacked by this out-of-state, for-profit utility. Join the STOP B2H Coalition and fight

Write to us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters are limited to 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's address and phone number (for verification purposes only).

Email your letters to news@lagrandeobserver.com or mail them to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850.

for your rights and your land.

Irene Gilbert
La Grande

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