

## THE PASSING OF A LEGEND - DICK AVERY



### **Richard D. Avery 9 January, 2016**

Richard "Dick" Avery passed away peacefully Saturday, Jan.9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at his home in Delray Beach, Florida. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of almost 60 years, [Maureen, who passed away on Oct. 16th, 2015](#).

The Averys were well known and friends to many members of the Commander Club. **The Averys joined the Commander Club shortly after its inception and** began to attend club rendezvous' where they made many long time friendships. Their first rendezvous was in 2002 and they continued attending club rendezvous' until 2009 when health issues prevented long distance travel. They maintained their interest in the club and followed our activities over the years through their computers.

Dick was educated in styling and design, and after college took a job in Ford's Detroit styling group in Dearborn, MI, as a designer of concept and show cars. His boss once told him that many of his designs looked somewhat like boats. This may have been a

harbinger of things to come! In January 1962 during an especially cold Michigan winter, Chris Craft put an ad in a Detroit newspaper for a stylist/designer for their headquarters facility in Pompano Beach, Florida. Dick flew down to Pompano for an interview. Chris Craft liked him, he liked Chris Craft, and the rest is history.

Two years after moving to Florida and joining Chris Craft he was promoted to Chief of Styling, a position he held for many years. These were the years that saw the introduction of the Commander line of boats. Dick was deeply involved in the styling of every legacy (2 digit) Commander except for the 38 Commander Express which was already complete when he joined Chris Craft. He was also involved in the design of many of the later 3 digit Commanders, plus every new model of non-Commander Chris Crafts built during the sixties & seventies.



His design excellence is evident even 50 years later. Many of our members know the feeling of pride when someone bypasses modern boats costing way more than our Commanders to compliment you on how nice your boat looks, then asks the age, and is flabbergasted when you say something like “50 years young”. This is the true tribute to Dick Avery.

Dick had the reputation for being the “quiet, reserved half” of the Avery team. While it’s true Maureen was bubbly & vivacious, under the right circumstances, such as a cigarette, martini, and spirited conversation on Commanders (or boats in general), Dick could hold his own with any good conversationalist. Following is an excerpt from the Facebook page of his son Scott:

*Richard D. Avery passed away peacefully in his home this morning, joining his wife and my mother Maureen Avery in eternity. He was a man of few words but great talent. He was a celebrated industrial designer, working as Chief Of Styling at Chris-Craft for many decades, as well as Ford Motor’s, Glastron boats and Mark III vans. If you are a boater, or spend any time near the waterways of this country you still see his work to this day. There are no plans for a public memorial service at this time, but if you knew him (or even if you didn’t) you will find a bit of his spirit whenever you are beckoned by the beauty, mystery and adventure of the sea. Of the gifts he gave me, I am particularly thankful for the confidence to pursue my passion in my life’s work as he certainly did in his. God has blessed me with a great family, past and present. To*

*paraphrase my Mom, "Go dance on the golden stairway" Richard and Maureen, and look in on us when you can.*

Beautiful words, certainly from the heart. Both Dick and Maureen will be missed by son Scott, daughter-in-law Rosemary, and the very special granddaughters, Julia & Grace. The Commander Club will also miss our friends, the Averys, but the following words by poet M.D Hughes may help us put this loss in perspective:

*The tide recedes but leaves behind bright seashells on the sand.*

*The sun goes down but gentle warmth still lingers on the land.*

*The music stops, and yet it echoes on in sweet refrains...*

*For every joy that passes, something beautiful remains.*

Dick Morland - 1/10/2016

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Additional information:

[Dick Avery received the Commander Club Hall of Fame Award 2006](#)

[Dick Avery designed the present Commander Club logotype](#)

[Video featuring Dick Avery describing the development of the 19 & 23 Commander](#)

[Dick Avery - Chris-Craft Chief Stylist Video by Whitney Pillsbury](#)