



ERIC (RIC) WOODARD

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My journey since South has been a bit of a bumpy road. I went to UPS in Tacoma for two years in pre-med, but decided that really wasn't my destination in life. I joined USMC in '66, emerging in one piece after winding up as an aviation radar repairman on the East Coast. I finished my BA in English at OSU in '71, then went to law school at Lewis and Clark (JD '74). The GI bill helped a lot.

My first 10 years of practice were spent mostly as a DA – which I enjoyed – followed by private practice in Wilsonville with a friend from law school. From '02 until the end of last year, I practiced in a high level downtown Portland family law firm. I finally got to be in the kind of practice I had always hoped would be the case—a nice way to end a 39 year legal career. The most rewarding cases of my legal career were those in which I felt I was able to assist clients in getting through difficult times in their life with as good a result as possible and their feeling someone had really listened and been on their side.

My personal life has had some rough spots. As I reached my late 20s and 30s, alcohol became an increasing issue. This resulted in the usual problems – divorce, legal matters, and great personal discontent. At age 40 in '85 I became involved in AA through a lawyers' program, and have been sober since.

In 1990, I met Karen, the love of my life. She is an RN at Portland VA Medical Center and is passionate about veterans and their issues from their service. We married in '91 and are very happy. We do not have children, but we at all times maintain two terriers of various types who are grandly pampered. We live in Lake Oswego, a short walk from the lake and our easement. We own a home we have extensively remodeled to fit our retirement needs. We are involved in our church and community and truly are thankful to God for how we have been blessed. Our favorite vacations are spent at the Oregon coast (Neskowin) and at the Bay area in California where Karen's parents live.

As to hobbies and interests, I am fond of hanging out in the gym. I have done a lot of running (four marathons, many shorter races) and have lifted weights consistently since the Marines. I enjoy reading military and political history (especially WW2-Eastern Front and the Pacific) and collecting firearms of that era. I also read best seller novels (criminals, undercover operatives, etc.) and other fiction and non-fiction books. My guilty pleasure is my 1970 Chevelle SS 454, which I have had for 17 years thanks to my tolerant wife, who calls it the Cream Puff. It is now well restored and a time machine I love to drive. (Check out the photo of this gem on the Saxon Cars!)

I can now say that my life has evolved into the life I always hoped and dreamed I would enjoy. Karen will join me in retirement in January, when she will have 30 years at the VA. It is finally as good as it gets!

