



AAC Publications

RICK REESE, 1942 – 2022

Rick Reese was a great friend, humble, understated, honest, and so full of life. He had the ability to inspire us and lead us forward. He carefully balanced his zest and daring with common sense in the mountains. Approaching a mountain route with Rick gave us a certainty that he would climb strongly, safely, and joyously. And that he would show deep appreciation of the mountains, the sky, and nature.

In the late 1950s, the Alpenbock Climbing Club was the epicenter of climbing in Salt Lake City, and Rick pushed the limits in forging new routes in the canyons of the nearby Wasatch Range. In 1962, with Ted Wilson, he made the first ascent of The Great White Icicle, long before ice climbing was popular, as well as spectacular rock routes like Crescent Crack, Pentapitch, and Flashdance. Rick's National Guard unit was called to active duty for a year in the early 1960s, but after his service, his ascents spread. In 1963 he and Fred Beckey pioneered the Beckey-Reese East Face Direct on Day Needle in the Sierra Nevada. In the summer of 1964 he became a Jenny Lake ranger in the Tetons, where he and the team performed mountain rescues, including the famed North Face rescue on the Grand Teton in 1967. After the Tetons, while still in graduate school, Rick and his family spent the summer at Mt. Rainier, a mountain he had loved since he climbed it at age 16.

But Rick was not just a climber. He met his wife, Mary Lee, while studying philosophy at the University of Utah. They moved to Denver where Rick worked on his Ph.D. at the University of Denver, doing his research on dangerous revolutionary conditions in South America. They then moved to Helena, Montana, where he taught at Carroll College. Their two children, Paige and Seth, were born there.

Inspired by the mountains of the West, and also greatly influenced by the climbers, explorers, and conservationists who came before him and had worked tirelessly to protect places like the Tetons and Yellowstone, Rick and his family moved to Yellowstone National Park after his teaching career, where he created the Yellowstone Institute in the Lamar Valley in 1970. Building upon the work of his mentors, in 1983, Rick co-founded the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, now the leading conservation group fighting for the protection of this incredible 4.5 million acre ecosystem. Rick went on to co-create the Yellowstone Business Partnership. In publishing, he founded both the Utah Geographic series and the online Mountain Journal.

Moving back to Salt Lake City, he conceptualized Utah's Bonneville Shoreline Trail and worked for years to complete it. Were it not for Rick's tireless and tenacious work on behalf of these magnificent, globally recognized mountain landscapes, there is no question the West would be a much diminished place today, and all of us, and future generations, would be poorer because of it. In 2022, the American Alpine Club recognized Rick's accomplishments by awarding him the David Brower Award for environmental stewardship.

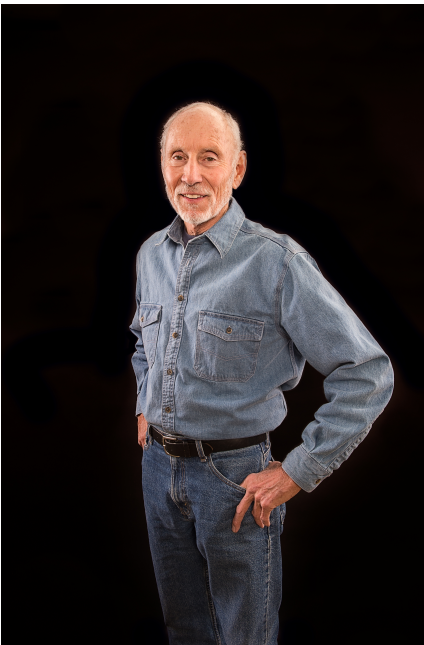
Along with being one of the most important Western conservationists of our generation as well as a bold, tenacious, and accomplished climber and ranger, Rick was a beloved husband, father, brother, grandfather, and dear friend to so many people. We will all remember Rick with the quote of Geoffrey Winthrop Young: "I have not lost the magic of long days: I live them, dream them still. Still am I master of the starry ways, and freeman of the hill." Indeed you are, Rick.

– **Ralph Tingey, Ted Wilson, and Peter Metcalf**

Images



Rick Reese and Fred Beckey, 2002.



Rick Reese portrait.



Rick Reese, Mt. Olympus, 1958.



Rick Reese, 1955.

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