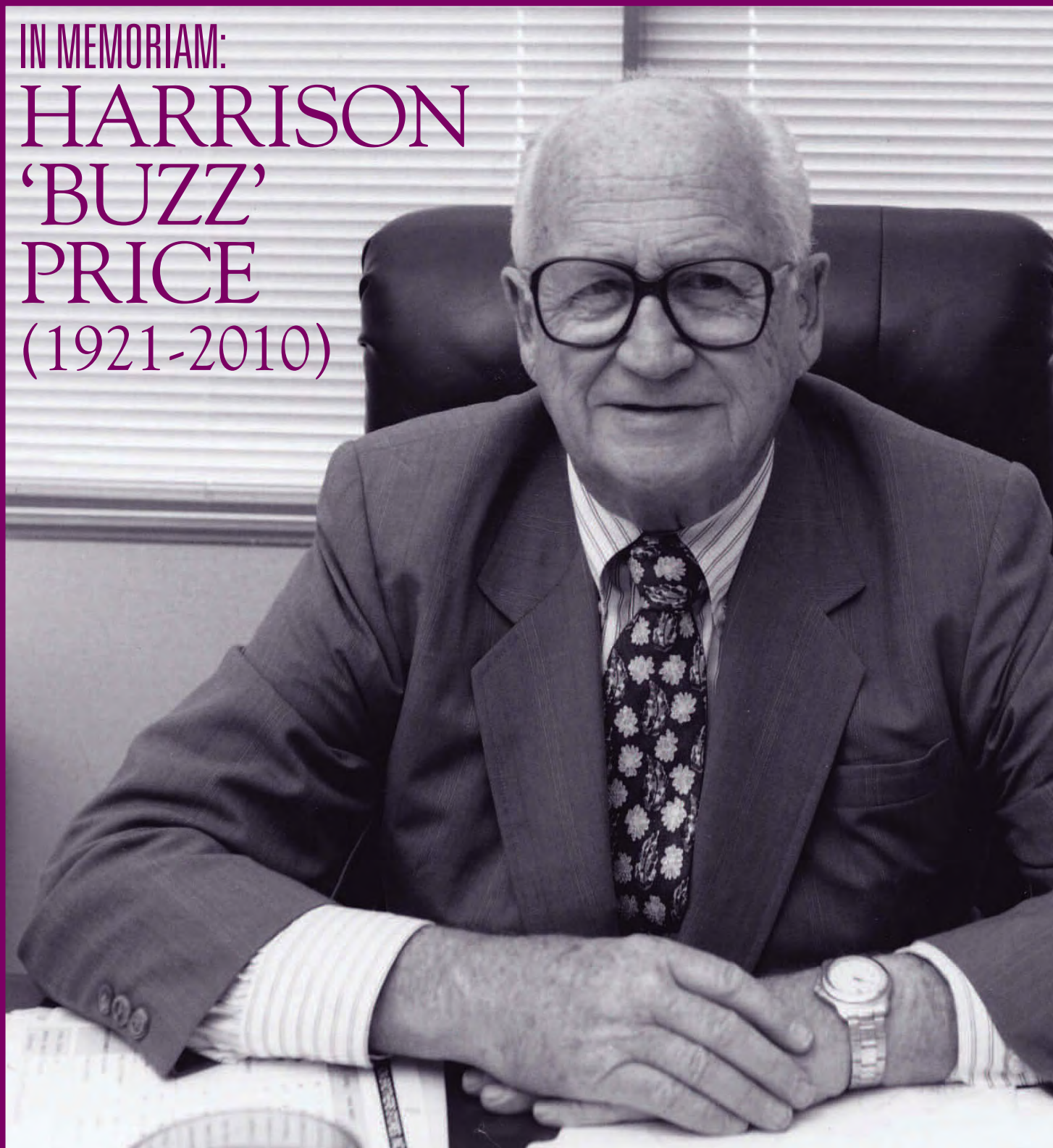


IN MEMORIAM:
HARRISON
'BUZZ'
PRICE
(1921-2010)



COURTESY OF THE HARRISON PRICE FAMILY



The inventor of 'roller coaster math,' Buzz loved music, art, and a good story

by Marty
Sklar

Less than one week after Buzz Price passed away, I received a call from his son Bret, a well-known sculptor. "Dad would have loved this one," Bret said, and he proceeded to tell me the most off-color joke I have heard in some time.

That was Harrison "Buzz" Price. He traveled in the company of chairmen and CEOs (often on Walt Disney's own private airplane), founded the two most influential companies in the business of economic feasibility for the attraction/ amusement/leisure/recreation industry, was a patron of the arts and lover of music and poetry, and was always the life of any party. Nobody enjoyed a great numbers challenge (his friend Terry Van Gorder called it "roller coaster math" when he was president of Knott's Berry Farm) or a good story well told more than Buzz. Price died Aug. 15, 2010, in Pomona, California.

"Buzz Price created, defined, and dominated the world of theme park math and financing," says Chip Cleary, 2010 chairman of the IAAPA Board of Directors. "His contributions to this industry and his work for The Walt Disney Company are legendary.

"On a personal note," Cleary recalls, "many years ago when I started out, I met Buzz at an industry meeting. What amazed me was that here was a guy who created a new industry, worked with the giants, but took time to talk to a young newcomer as if I was the most important person he talked to. He was a class act."

It seems as though everyone has a Buzz Price story—and wants to tell it. One of my favorites was one Buzz told on himself.

Preparing for the 1964 New York World's Fair, its organizer, New York City Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, hitched a ride with Walt Disney on the Disney company's private aircraft. While Walt and Moses argued over the location of the designated amusement area for the fair, Buzz served as bartender, refilling the combatants' glasses "more than once," Buzz recalled. Suddenly, Walt changed the subject—to Buzz. "You're too fat to fly on my airplane!" Walt stated quite emphatically.

Buzz took the boss' words seriously. In the next six weeks, Buzz lost 30 pounds. Always the numbers man, he counted every mile run, every weight lifted, and every calorie consumed!

It was his relationship with Walt Disney that truly came to define Harrison Price. "From the time of his first involvement with Dad in the selection of a site for Disneyland, Buzz was involved in nearly everything our family did," Walt's daughter, Diane Disney Miller, told me.

Working with Walt

That relationship began in 1953. Buzz received his MBA from Stanford University and had gone to work for Stanford Research Institute. Walt and Roy O. Disney, the company's president, chose SRI (where Price worked at the time) "to determine the economic feasibility of the best location for a new project—Disneyland." Buzz, an engineering graduate of California Institute of Technology, got the assignment.

"I asked Walt if he had a bias about the location for his Magic Kingdom," Price recalled years later. "Absolutely not!" he said. "You tell me where the best location is." Price analyzed the potential sites in the Southern California area, ultimately focusing on Orange County after considering population trends, accessibility, and climate factors. They selected 160 acres of orange groves in Anaheim, just off the still-in-construction Santa Ana Freeway at Harbor Boulevard.

Buzz Price: Industry Honors and the Arts

We all recognize Buzz Price's role as *the* pioneer and mentor in the theme and attraction industry, and many honors came his way: IAAPA Hall of Fame (1995); the first Lifetime Achievement Award (1994) from the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA); the coveted Disney Legend award (2003).

But there was another aspect of Buzz's life. Few people have created the opportunities for learning and training young talent in the arts as Buzz Price did. Whether we are film, theater, or theme park fans, we should all thank our lucky stars that Walt Disney had a "numbers man" who loved music, art, and poetry.

Perhaps Buzz's most deserved (and favorite!) recognition came from the California Institute of the Arts. Recognizing more than 40 years of leadership, CalArts in 2005 presented Buzz with an honorary doctor of arts degree.

The concept for a school of all the arts was near and dear to Walt Disney's heart—and the legacy he wished to leave. "Before he entered the hospital," Diane Disney Miller reminisced, "Dad had placed a stack of notebooks in Buzz's hands, saying, 'Here, take care of my school for me!' Dad knew the hands to place his dream in, that Buzz would see it through ... and he did."

Today, according to President Steven Lavine, CalArts has an enrollment of more than 1,400 students in all the arts—music, dance, theater, art, film and animation, and critical studies/writing. "For almost the entire life of CalArts, Buzz was our 'go to' person when there was a difficult issue to be addressed," Lavine says. "He wrote the original feasibility study for this school, and at one time served as chair of virtually every committee, including chairman of the board."

Since opening its doors in Valencia, California, in 1969, CalArts has launched the careers of a "Who's Who" of creative alumni in animation, film, theater, dance, and music, including entertainment icons John Lasseter, Brad Bird, Tim Burton, Bob Rogers, Ed Harris, Andrew Stanton, Bill Irwin, and Don Cheadle, among others.

To honor Harrison "Buzz" Price's contributions to Southern California's culture and community, the Price family suggests contributions to any of "three projects Buzz loved": the Music Scholarship program at CalArts, where he was a director emeritus; the Los Angeles Master Chorale, where Buzz was a founding board member and former president; and Ryman Arts, a program for talented high school artists, where Buzz and Anne Price were founders and board members of the foundation named in honor of their friend artist Herbert Ryman, who drew the first overall depiction of Disneyland for Walt Disney.

Industry friends and associates who wish to honor Buzz Price through these programs may do so at these addresses:

- CalArts (Music Scholarship Program), 24700 McBean Parkway, Valencia, California 91355-2340
- Los Angeles Master Chorale, c/o Terry Knowles, 135 N. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, California 90012
- Ryman Arts, c/o Diane Brigham, 315 W. 9th Street, Suite 806, Los Angeles, California 90015-4202

"We hit it right on the nose ... dead center," Buzz later enthused. "That was the perfect place for it."

Keith Murdoch, city manager of Anaheim from 1950 to 1976, believes Buzz's vision helped push Walt's idea far beyond those former orange groves. "I feel that Buzz was instrumental in expanding Walt's dream of a small park to one of worldwide significance," Murdoch explained to me. "Buzz's ability to recognize potential problem areas, but also areas of major opportunity, was legendary."

Murdoch also says Buzz "was extremely helpful in convincing Gene Autry and his partners that Anaheim was the location for a Major League Baseball stadium. He could and did visualize the growth pattern of Southern California, with Anaheim as the future center of attraction for amusements and athletics."

An Eye Toward Florida

Flash forward to the 1960s. With Disneyland a national success, Walt and Roy Disney looked across the United States to seek a location for a second Disney park project. "Walt asked us to look at Florida and figure out where the park should be," Buzz said. "Late in 1963, we studied in depth a location in Central Florida. The key conclusion was that Central Florida (not Miami, as most people expected it would be) was the main point of maximum interception of Florida tourism, and Orlando, centrally located, was the point of maximum access to the southerly flow of Florida tourism from both the east and west shores of the state."

Walt Disney World had taken its first step toward reality.

Michael Eisner, chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company when Buzz was named a Disney Legend in 2003, recognized his role in establishing Disney Parks and Resorts. "Buzz Price was as much responsible for the success of The Walt Disney Company as anybody except Walt Disney himself, in that he worked with Walt not only on finding the sites of both Disneyland and Walt Disney World, but on many other new initiatives, like the 1964 New York World's



Left to right, Walt Disney, C.V. Wood, Jr., and Harrison "Buzz" Price share plans for what would become Disneyland in Anaheim, California.

COURTESY OF THE HARRISON PRICE FAMILY

Fair and the 1960 Winter Olympics in the Lake Tahoe area," Eisner recalls. "But more than being a pioneer and visionary, he was one of the nicest and most professional and gentle friends of the company."

Math Wizard

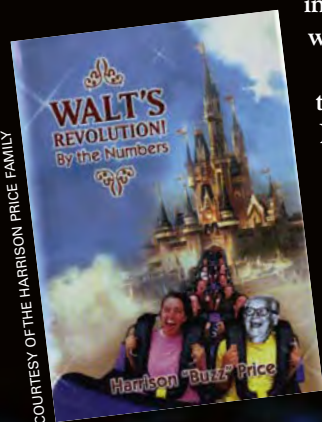
It was Walt Disney who encouraged Buzz to establish Economics Research Associates (ERA) in 1958. Ultimately, after selling ERA in 1969, and a stint at Planning Research Corp (1969-1978), he formed Harrison Price Company (HPC) in 1979. The 150 studies he undertook for The Walt Disney Company are dwarfed by the "over 3,000 projects" he analyzed for other companies, including eight World's Fairs, SeaWorld, Knott's Berry Farm, the Six Flags parks, museums, zoos, and many feasibility evaluations for international projects. Some believe it was more than 5,000 studies.

"Buzz was the father of our industry of economic consulting," notes Ray Braun, senior vice president and entertainment practices leader for AECOM Economics (formerly ERA). "He invented the science. He was mentor to me and many of us in this practice. He set the course and paved the way for us."

"To the attractions industry, Buzz was a mathematical Dumbledore or Obi-Wan Kenobi," says Bob Rogers, chairman of BRC Imagination Arts. "He personally pioneered, invented, and taught the profession of economic feasibility for theme parks and attractions. He created and named its metrics. He always found economic possibilities that might make dreams come true."

Economics consultant Nick Winslow joined ERA in 1967. "It was a family with Buzz as Papa Guru. We learned, worked and played hard. Buzz was an incredible mentor, getting us to hone our analytical skills, enjoy the use of language, improve our ability to present and relate to clients, and to be aware that this is a business and we must treat it as one."

Designer Barry Howard (Barry Howard Limited) learned "disciplined study" of new project parameters from Buzz. "He started me thinking about the critical importance of site selection, demographics, visitor flow and capacities, annual operating expense and income, etc., as a disciplined study. Up to that point, the few firms specializing in museums treated these matters as corollary issues—basically a 'seat of the pants' approach. ... Buzz never varied from his convictions and always told it as he saw it. He was most often right, keenly analytical, incredibly intuitive, supremely confident in his opinions ... and funny as hell."



COURTESY OF THE HARRISON PRICE FAMILY

"Walt's Revolution: By the Numbers" by Harrison "Buzz" Price. Price invented the formulas and metrics used to size and locate theme parks and major attractions of all kinds worldwide. In this book he documented his processes and his secrets.

From Buzz's Son, David A. Price

We wish to thank our many friends and all those who knew my father, Buzz Price, through his many community, cultural, educational, and business associations, how deeply appreciative we are of their support and affection. His legacy of laughter, wit, love, passion and commitment leaves its mark on each of us—family, friends, and colleagues.

Buzz was a remarkable person whose talent, intelligence, and humor found great purpose and success by his living a life that gave equal importance to matters of the mind and the heart. This forging of the two found resonance and purpose with leaders, visionary clients, and collaborating consultants who needed their narratives and dreams more clearly understood and defined. As a research economist with an engineering background, Buzz was able to translate numbers and economic data into meaningful and easily understood terms. At home as in his professional life, dad was the "Go To" guy when it came to seeking advice, sharing an idea, or asking a question.

A Legendary Life

Born May 17, 1921, in Oregon City, Oregon, Buzz Price grew up in Southern California, graduating from San Bernardino High School before receiving his BS in mechanical engineering from Cal Tech and his MBA at Stanford. While attending Cal Tech, he met his future wife, Anne Shaw, who was attending Pomona College. They were married in 1944.

Buzz retired in 2005 and is survived by an artistic family: His wife, Anne Shaw Price, a former vocalist; daughter Holly Shaw Ristuccia, who performs with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and her husband, Al Ristuccia, of Claremont, California; daughter and artist Dana Price and her husband, Ken Powell, of Sausalito, California; son and sculptor Bret Price and his wife, Rae Lynn, of Orange, California; son and architect David A. Price and his wife, Alicia of Irvine, California; nine grandchildren, two great grandchildren, and his sister, Patricia Scott Mannarino, of Oakland, California.

And, finally, about that nickname, "Buzz": The Price family authenticates that his sister, Pat, called him "her baby buzzer" when he was a baby ... and it stuck! ■

Marty Sklar is the principal of Marty Sklar Creative, a Disney Legend, an IAAPA Hall of Famer, and recipient of the TEA Lifetime Achievement Award.



Buzz Price received his honorary PhD at CalArts in 2005.

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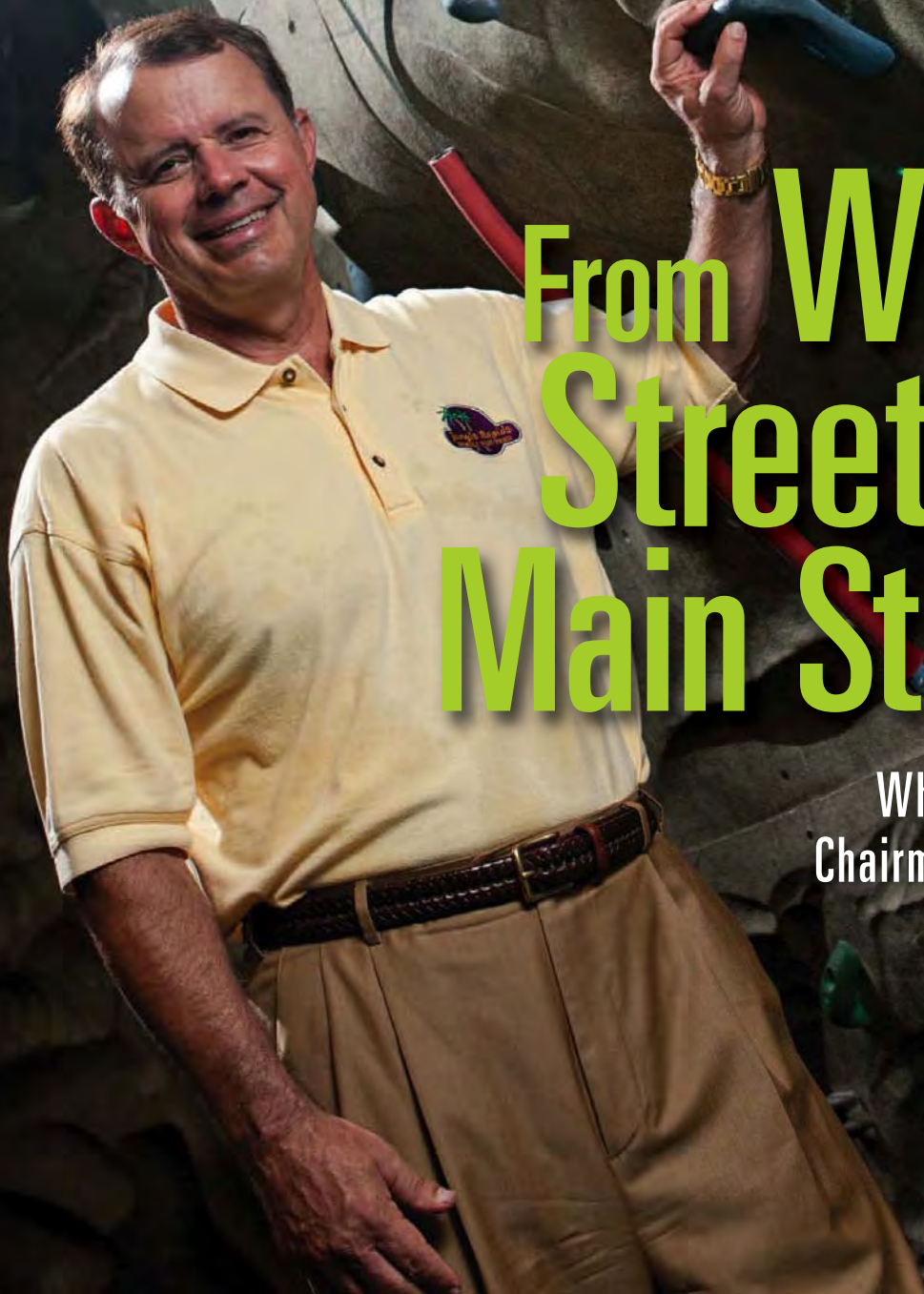
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From Wall Street to Main Street

Why new IAAPA
Chairman Bob Rippy
loves the FEC
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Cover Story

From Wall Street to Main Street

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