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Meeting Richard Driehaus was like walking into a novel, and, for me, one by Charles Dickens. "It was the best of times." In large part, Dickens' magic is thanks to his eye for details. The success of any undertaking depends on getting the details correct. During the restoration of the Nickerson mansion and its adaptation to become the Richard H. Driehaus Museum, it was a constant source of pleasure for me to discuss details with Richard who always found time when the best answer to the achievement of beauty was at stake. We came to call each other "my bi-ocular friend."

My wife, Jane, and I met Richard in the Fall of 2000 in the library of 25 East Erie Street, home to Driehaus Capital Management. It was a rainy, snowy, slushy day. Jane was with the Getty Conservation Institute, part of the Getty Trust in Los Angeles. I was Executive Counsellor for International Cultural Heritage Policy, the Ministry of Culture, The Netherlands. Jane and I set up the non-profit organization The St. Petersburg International Center for Preservation. It was funded by the Getty Trust and the Dutch Ministry of Culture seconded me to the Getty Conservation Institute. All wonderful, but we still needed to fundraise.

Richard was very smartly attired, very hospitable, and very down to business. He listened carefully and asked all of the right questions. How could that have been otherwise? It was no surprise for us that Richard wanted to think over what we had discussed and what he might be able to do to help out. His answer came rather quickly, a most generous donation to help restore the building in which the Center was located in St. Petersburg, the Trubetskoy-Naryshkin mansion. With his donation, Richard sent word that he would be coming to St. Petersburg, Russia, to enjoy the White Nights.

What a visit that was! Jane and I developed a program that was not overly crowded. It is always best to see a few important sights properly than so many that you cannot remember exactly what was what. There were behind-the-scenes tours in all of the museums and palaces we visited. The Tsar's box at the Mariinsky Theatre. Outdoor lunches at Tsarskoye Selo Palace and Pavlovsk Palace. Of course, spontaneous stops. St. Petersburg

was a giant chocolate box for Richard. So much grand architecture. We returned several times to von Klenze's New Hermitage, one of the most glorious architectural creations at any time anywhere.

The White Nights Gala at Peterhof was a smashing event. Dinner was served in the gardens; Valery Gergiev conducted the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra above the grotto of the famous fountains, and ended the program with Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture with four cannons fired by Russian cannoners, the fountains turned on in sequence with the cannon fire and the sky and palace were lighted up by a barrage of fireworks. It was all very unforgettable, as was Richard's joyous dancing in the ballroom of the palace afterwards. In 2003 Richard and guests returned for the White Nights and the three hundredth anniversary of St. Petersburg. It did not surprise us that many people in various places we re-visited immediately remembered "Mee-ster Ree-ward." It was like a homecoming party! Richard was not a person easily forgotten! It was also during this visit that Richard and I discussed the possibility of my coming to Chicago to direct the Nickerson restoration and interior design.

What I frequently referred to as The Great Driehaus Museum Project was a moveable feast. It was also the project of a lifetime never to be replicated for any of us who worked daily in the Nickerson. All of us were aware of this fact. That this was so was not just because the building was so unique, so beautiful, so captivating. It was also because Richard was (and I never thought I would ever speak or write of him in the past tense) such a unique phenomenon himself. His love of beauty, and especially architectural beauty, was overwhelming. Everyone working on the Nickerson wanted to please Richard. He often stopped to ask questions about what was being done, why, and how. He was generous with his compliments to people. His enthusiasm for beauty was also contagious. He was a powerful missionary for beauty, and at times fought the good fight to stop horrendous mutilations or outright destruction of landmarks. While he lost the battle to protect Soldier Field, he managed to bring such issues to the attention of the public. Chicagoans, and Richard was an Ur-Chicagoan, are proud of their city and love its beauties which alas are disappearing ever more quickly as skyscraper mania continues.

Due to Richard's business commitments, most of our meetings on the restoration and adaptation took place in the evening in the Nickerson. He always wanted three choices of colors and materials for wall coverings,

upholstery, &c. All three choices were always good; they had to be, but I always had a preference. Richard always took my preference. One night he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "I know all there is to know about loaded dice." I can hear him laughing. I needed statues for the Main Hall, the Front Parlor, the Drawing Room, the Dining Room, and for what became known as the Sculpture Gallery. I also needed the Chickering piano, and Tiffany lamps, and other things. This plunder of 25 East Erie Street required diplomacy and a phased assault. It took time, but at a certain moment my worries ended when Richard said that he saw an opportunity to redo rooms in 25 East Erie. A new project!

When Richard's schedule allowed, we would have lunch or dinner. Our conversations were often, but not always, what I would term kaleidoscopic with topics changing with the rapidity of a Gatling gun, anything from how much interest banks paid in the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the masterful use of the color black by Frans Hals and Velazquez. Beauty and architecture and museum display and lighting were regular topics. What wonderful memories these moments will always remain.

Some people, for whatever reasons, have very incorrectly called the Driehaus Museum a rich man's vanity project. I never detected a moment's vanity in Richard's thinking about the Nickerson. What some people may miss is Richard's humility. He knew who he was; he knew his many talents; he had vision; he had flare. He did not need to brag. He simply moved forward. He was also extremely generous. He wanted to save the building. From what and why?

When Richard took his good friend Buzz Harper's advice not to buy a bust in the art gallery that once occupied the Nickerson, but the mansion, Richard saved the building from property developers who wanted to change it into apartments, or a men's club. Thanks to Richard, the Driehaus Museum exists. It is Richard's gift to the people of Chicago, and people far from Chicago. It is a major landmark monument. It is a very beautiful landmark monument. It is a very serious museum that does what all serious museums do — it is open to the public; it holds major exhibitions; it publishes scholarly catalogues; it has a lecture program; it has musical events; it has film evenings; events can be held in the museum.

Richard was not an architect, but he was a great builder. He built for the future by saving the Nickerson mansion and turning it into a museum.

His beautiful retreat in Lake Geneva is a conservancy thanks to him which will prevent developers from ever destroying it and its surrounding property. 25 East Erie Street has also been saved and been given a new life as a renowned financial enterprise. Saving the past and giving it a new life is Richard's hallmark, one that will provide joy and understanding of the past to future generations.

I marvel at the good fortune I had in meeting Richard Driehaus, carrying out a great project for him to his satisfaction, and in the process gaining one of the very best friends I will ever have in my life.

With my deepest condolences to his family, and to all who loved him, I remain deeply thankful I had the good fortune of his friendship.

Most sincerely,

*Mansfield Kirby Talley, Jr.*