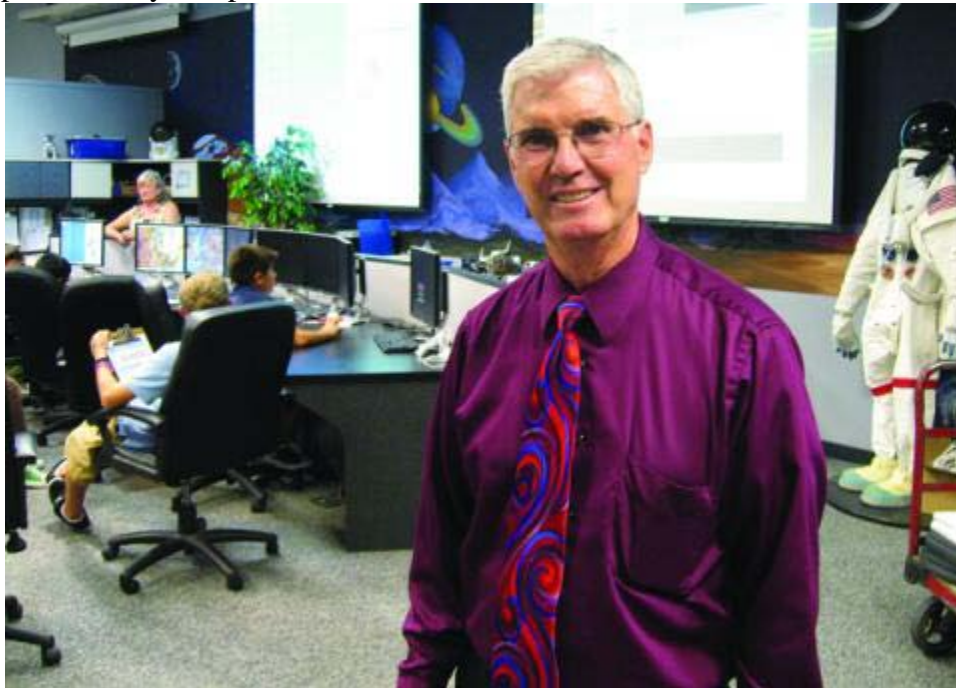




## Q & A with Rick Piercy: A hands-on learner

published by mhprov on Tue, 09/20/2011 - 11:10



Rick Piercy's grandparents moved to Victorville in 1945, and his dad went to Victor Valley High School, graduating in 1948.

The next year, Piercy's wife Linda's parents arrived and her father took an industrial arts teaching job at Victor Valley High School. Both Rick and Linda, as well as their siblings and some very close friends, were born at Onofrio's Maternity Home (on the east side of Victor Valley High School's football field). Rick and Linda have known each other since she was 5 and he was 6. (Linda was in Rick's mother's Brownie Troop.) The couple has been married for 39 years. They have two daughters and six grandchildren.

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Q: Describe a special memory you have of Apple Valley.

A: When I was pretty young my grandmother and I attended Church of the Valley, and Roy Rogers and Dale Evans sat down next to us. I watched Roy's television show every week and I remember how surreal it was. We began to sing a hymn and he put his arm on my shoulders and held the hymnal for both of us. Years later we were active members of COV and got to interact

with the Rogers family on a regular basis, but I'll never forget our first meeting.

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Q: What do you do in your free time?

A: I have lots of interests. I love woodworking and working in my yard. But spending time with my wife and playing with my grandchildren has to be my favorite free time activity.

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Q: Tell us one thing that most people don't know about you.

A: Before becoming a teacher, I spent about seven years as a California State Park Ranger. Rangers are State Peace Officers and I was stationed at three different parks. At Santa Monica State Recreation Area I was head of the cliff rescue team.

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Q: What is your passion?

A: I am passionate about the education of our nation's children. I am convinced that we can change the 19th century assembly line school model into a system that will prepare students for the demands of the 21st century and empower parents to be consumers of educational opportunities with schools of choice. I want to see teachers empowered and elevated to a level of professionalism consistent with the importance of their calling. I want to tear down the burdensome and expensive bureaucracy that permeates the state and federal government and put the power back into the hands of parents and the local community. I believe that we will not only raise our academic score higher than any other nation, but that our schools will once again be institutions that promote high standards of character and patriotism.

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Q: What person, living or from history, would you most like to have dinner with and why?

A: This was a difficult question because I get to have dinner almost every night with that person: My wife. But other than her, I would love to have dinner with my grandfather, Elmer Piercy. My father wasn't around much when I was growing up and my grandfather was my role model. He let me use power tools, gave me great advice and was always there for me. I am a "hands-on learner" and he was a hands-on grandpa. He built his own television in the late '40s and would love our Mission Control Center at the Lewis Center today.

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Q: Where do you get your values from?

A: My maternal grandparents lived in Pomona. I stayed with them a lot. My grandmother made it fun to memorize Bible verses and told me stories of my great-greatgrandfather, Orceneth Asbury Fisher, a traveling evangelist who preached in San Francisco during the gold rush. I have been so blessed to have had strong Christian mentors in my life.

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Q: Who is someone who had a big influence on your life?

A: Rev. Bill Hansen and his wife Mary Ellen have had a tremendous impact on my family and me, as well as thousands of other families throughout the Victor Valley.

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Q: What is your favorite quotation?

A: "Character cannot be summoned at the moment of crisis if it has been squandered by many years of compromise and rationalization. The only testing ground for the heroic is the mundane. The only preparation for that one profound decision which can change a life is those hundreds of self-defining seemingly insignificant decisions made in private. Habit is the daily battleground of character." — Senator Dan Coats

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Q: Tell us about your faith.

A: I am a very imperfect human, a work in progress, a sinner saved by grace. I am a Christian.

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Q: What is your secret to living a happy, satisfying life?

A: Work hard, give without expecting anything in return, forgive those who have hurt or offended you and love others as you would want to be loved.

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Q: Tell us about the charities that are close to your heart and why.

A: Since I'm employed by the High Desert "Partnership in Academic Excellence" Foundation, Inc., I have to say it is certainly where my heart is. But I'm very excited about the Hollow Leg Society, a new nonprofit foundation that will provide support for the 1960 to 1980 graduates of Victor Valley High School. It was created in honor of Craig Campbell, a wonderful friend to so many of us in the Victor Valley.

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Q: What words of advice do you have for the next generation?

A: Being successful is more about tenacity, honesty and hard work than most people think. The habits and discipline you develop when you're young will be the character traits you have when you are an adult.

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Q: What's your favorite sports team and why?

A: I am a huge NASCAR fan and have been a Jeff Gordon fan from the very start.

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Q: What is something you are particularly proud of?

A: My two daughters. They are amazing people. They are wonderful mothers, strong leaders and have a deep faith that directs their lives and leads them to help others.

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Q: Tell us about your favorite thing about Apple Valley.

A: Living in an area virtually all my life I have lifelong friends. I can call on them or they on me any time. Even though Apple Valley continues to grow and covers a lot of land, I can't seem to go anywhere in town that I don't see someone I know. Our Police Department works very hard to keep our streets safe, our Fire District is one of the best and I believe that you would be hard pressed to find better teachers, parents and business owners. What's not to love?

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Q: What is the best thing about your job?

A: I get to spend every day helping incredible people educate the hope for tomorrow.

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Q: What book had a significant impact on you?

A: "Extraordinary, Ordinary People: A Memoir of Family" by Condoleezza Rice.

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Q: Tell us about a special vacation.

A: On the advice of our dear friend, Brad Towle, my wife and I took a trip to Mount Rushmore with no agenda. It was incredible and we had no cell reception. When we returned, I had about a million emails and phone messages but it was worth it.

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Q: What makes you tick?

A: Being a grandpa is number one, but I love going to work and am amazed and awestruck by the people I get to interact with every day.

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Q: Tell us about one thing you want to accomplish in life.

A: I want to fundamentally change the American education system. The current system is almost 150 years old and was designed to meet the needs of the Industrial Revolution. Think about it. Schools are designed like assembly lines with teachers treated like factory workers, moving children from grade to grade. This system might have worked for Henry Ford but it doesn't work in today's digital world. Teachers are more highly trained in brain research and pedagogy today than any time in history, and they need to be empowered to do whatever it takes to get results. My goal is to move teachers to the top of the educational ladder with support personnel being just that. Our children and their parents need to have the best possible educational opportunities available to them regardless of where they live, and they should be allowed to choose the school that they feel will best suit their needs and expectations. I believe in the competitiveness of the free market and in the wisdom of parents to know best what their child needs.

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Q: What's your favorite guilty pleasure?

A: Coffee mocha lattes.

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Q: Tell us about a happy memory in your first car.

A: As the oldest child in my family, I convinced my mother to go in with me on a 1969/1970 Opal Cadet. A year later my sister bought a 1958 MGA, so I traded her straight across (with my mother's permission). I had to work on that car all the time, but it was great fun. Oh how I wish I hadn't sold it for \$450. It would be worth a whole lot more today.

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Q: Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

A: Most days I just can't imagine not doing what I do now for the rest of my life. I do hope to have a little more balance in my life as far as family time.

Who would you like to see profiled in an upcoming Q&A? Drop us a line at [News@AppleValley-Review.com](mailto:News@AppleValley-Review.com).

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