



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 21, 2020

Second Amendment Freedom Fighter Bill Richardson Dead at 92

Gun Owners of America (GOA) [announced the passing of its founder, Hubert Leon “Bill” Richardson](#), on January 13, calling him a “feisty” Republican from Southern California who challenged the powers that be. Called “Wild Bill” by his friends, Richardson served as a California state senator for 23 years, from 1966 to 1989. He failed in efforts to gain a seat in the U.S. Congress, but left a legacy in how successful political campaigns are run.



Blessed with an effervescent personality and a sense of humor, he galvanized efforts to replace three liberal state Supreme Court justices, including Rose Bird, the only Supreme Court justice in California history to be removed from office by voters.

When threats to the Second Amendment appeared in the mid-1970s, Richardson formed Gun Owners of California, using a strategy that remains in place today. Says its current executive director Bill Paredes (Richardson’s son-in-law), “Any time a legislator talked against the Second Amendment, Richardson would recruit candidates and help fund them, train them, and run them against some of these incumbents. They didn’t like that but they had no means to fight back except not to sponsor legislation like that anymore.”

Richardson teamed up with Richard Viguerie, the master developer of direct-mail campaigns in political races, and brought in millions from small donors to fund those efforts.

Richardson worked with then-Governor Ronald Reagan in overhauling California’s welfare program and capping state spending (Proposition One failed but passed five years later as Proposition 13).

He served on the board of the National Rifle Association, but his experience with that group led him to found Gun Owners of America, which now boasts more than two million members. Its purpose is “to preserve, protect, and defend the Second Amendment rights of gun owners, including promoting and developing a greater understanding and awareness regarding the importance of firearms ownership, and conducting education and policy related to such rights.”

The GOA uses its vast network of Second Amendment lawyers to challenge anti-gun legislation in the courts so effectively that former Congressman Ron Paul calls GOA “the only no-compromise gun lobby in Washington.”

While serving in the State Senate, Richardson received Legislator of the Year awards from Christian and sportsman organizations six times.

He wrote five books, including one that still informs political activists today: *Confrontational Politics: How to Effectively Practice the Politics of Principle*. Another, *What Makes You Think We Read the Bills?* is used in political-science classes in community college classes to this day.

A force of nature indeed, “Wild Bill” Richardson will be missed but not forgotten.



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