



Richard Avery Bice, a native of Colorado, Dick Bice became a resident of New Mexico in December 1944 when he joined the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos. The son of Edwin Stanton Bice and Elizabeth Avery Bice, he was born on June 6, 1917 in Longmont, CO. Graduating in 1939 from what is now Colorado State University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, he soon married Margaret Fite, also of Longmont, on September 17, 1939.

His first employment was at Colorado State, working for the University of California on a pioneering program to develop sugar beet planting and harvesting equipment. After about two years he joined the Westinghouse Research Laboratories in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for four years, during which time he also took graduate studies in math and physics at the University of Pittsburgh.

In 1944 Dick and Margaret moved to Los Alamos, NM. At the end of World War II, Dick, by then an alternate Group Leader in X-Division at Los Alamos, brought the first contingent of weapons design engineers from Los Alamos to Sandia Base in Albuquerque, where they joined a group of test engineers already in place. These groups became the nucleus of what was then called the Sandia Branch of Los Alamos and later became the Sandia National Laboratories. Before his retirement from the Laboratories in 1978, he had served almost twenty years as a Vice President, his career covering the areas of development engineering, field testing and administration. During this time he was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

In addition to, and during his Sandia employment, Dick served eight years on the Albuquerque City Commission. During his tenure, a new airport terminal building was put under construction, 450 miles of streets were paved and sewer and water lines were augmented for the fast growing city, which was to double its population within ten years. The paths of the interstate highways through the city were chosen and the construction of the freeways started. Agreements were reached with the Flood Control District on intercepting channels to largely eliminate the yearly flooding of the valley area. The first agreement was also made with the San Juan Diversion project for securing long-term water rights from the San Juan River for the City of Albuquerque, now coming into effect some fifty years later. New zoning standards were adopted allowing construction of the Winrock and Coronado malls, the first two major shopping centers in the City.

His volunteer community projects over the years included heading the Advisory Committee that brought the Museum of Albuquerque into being, and then serving ten years as Chairman of its Board of Trustees. He was later appointed as a member of a Governor's Task Force whose efforts resulted in the creation of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History. He played a key role in organizing that Museum's Foundation acting as President during the formative stages and continuing to serve on its Board for a total of 16 years. He also served as a Museum Trustee for several years. Another committed interest was the Albuquerque Archaeological Society, having helped organize it as a charter member in 1966. He served as its Field Director from more than 25 years and co-authored archaeological reports on its field projects. In particular, one of the reports covered the re-excavation of a prehistoric lead mine site which was the first report of its nature to have been published in the United States.

Dick was also a member of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico, where he authored its Certification Program and chaired the Certification Council. He was Director of that Society's Field School for a number of years during the excavation of a prehistoric Pueblo and Great Kiva site near Gallup, NM. In later years he was honored on separate occasions by the Society of American Archaeology, the Arizona Historical and Archaeological Society and the New Mexico Archaeological Society for his extensive work and reports. In 1999 he entered the Albuquerque Citizens Hall of Fame. Dick and Margaret had one son, Stephen R. Bice, now deceased. Steve's family included his wife, Martha in Gettysburg, PA, and two children, Aaron of Dulles, VA and Philip of Silver Springs, MD. Aaron and wife, Chrissie have a daughter, Delany, and two sons, Keller and Gavin. (Courtesy Albuquerque Journal, printed March 12, 2008)