



DONORS:

Pilar Grisco, Dennis and Rosalina Grisco, Richard M. and Barbara H. Grisco, Frederick A. and Patricia E. Dahl, Jeanette A. Raypholtz, Yolanda V. and Randall J. Grisco, Christina M. Grisco

Of the 10 siblings of the Grisco family, all six boys tried their hand at falconry at one time or another, and Briane was the one who started it all.

Originally raised in Chicago, when Briane moved to California at age 16, he started work for Union Oil as a gasoline attendant. He would stay with that company for 45 years and work his way up the ladder. When he retired, only one person had worked with the company longer.

But he was the first of the Grisco boys to become intrigued with falconry, thanks in part to an old magazine article entitled “Killers As Pets.” He took action on that interest, and his brothers followed suit. In fact, his brother Don became quite well known for his handcrafted, swivel block perches.

Brother Dennis would use his expertise in the movie industry.

Briane, himself, played a role in helping to get the sport legalized in California in the late 1950s, along with his involvement in the Southern California Falconry Association. He and Tom Cade drove all night to Sacramento to present the case for falconry before an early morning meeting of the Fish and Game Commission. Later, he would help get the insecticide DDT banned. DDT was bad news, especially for birds of prey, and today the ban is considered to be one of the main factors in the comeback of many species, including the bald eagle and peregrine falcon.

Not only was he big in those areas, he was just plain big. When his brother, Dennis, said he looked up to his bigger brother, he meant much more than admiration. Briane was up in the 6’5” range.

He was a big, brusque fellow, and had “the biggest feet I’ve ever seen in a man,” said his best friend Warren Trobough. He said Briane had been raised on the south side of Chicago and had plenty of rough-and-tumble in him. “He was a hard-working, hard-drinking, hard-playing kind of a guy,” Trobough said. “That’s it in a nutshell. He was very caring and very gentle, but don’t rile him.”

But he also very much enjoyed the camaraderie of other falconers, said his daughter, Jeannette Grisco Raypholtz. He enjoyed talking about falconry and passing his knowledge along to others.

Like others in the area, he liked to fly his favorite bird — a prairie falcon — in the Sepulveda Basin. And that bird was as special as Briane. She liked to hunt jackrabbits.

“He loved that bird,” Jeannette said.



Four of the six Grisco brothers, left to right: Randy, Dennis, Don, Briane

He passed his love of falconry on to his brothers, and even his *family*.

“I have heard of practically no one who caught jackrabbits with a prairie falcon,” Dennis said.

And you’ve probably not heard of any falconer who could play one mean boogie-woogie piano either. Back in Chicago as a kid, he would hang out in the right places to learn some of that classic piano style from some of those musicians for which the city was famous. It was another one of those unpredictable talents that so many falconers seem to harbor on the side. “During his days in the Air Force, he read every book in the Air Force library,” Trobough said.

Then again, maybe it wasn’t so surprising. He did everything in a big way. He was an outdoors person, always in good shape, and he had a serious personality. But he did pass his love of falconry on to his brothers, and even his family. Jeannette’s mother even had a red-tailed hawk for a while, and Jeannette had a pet owl. Briane liked almost all falcons, and flew quite a number of them, but that prairie falcon was always his favorite.

Meanwhile, he and Trobough palled around all over the world fishing and birding. And he advanced the sport of falconry while also helping to save many of the birds of prey species. Whether it was falconry, his career at Union Oil or boogie-woogie piano, one thing was clear — Briane stood tall.

Reminiscences: Dennis Grisco, Jeannette Grisco Raypholtz and Warren Trobough





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