Richard Buckley’s passing ignites overwhelming expression of love and respect

By Godfrey Deeny - 22 September 2021

The fashion industry has responded with overwhelming expressions of affection at the loss of Richard Buckley, one of its most esteemed editors.

Buckley passed away aged 72 on Sunday in Los Angeles.

A statement from his partner, designer Tom Ford, read: “It is with great sadness that Tom Ford announces the death of his beloved husband of 35 years, Richard Buckley. Richard passed away peacefully at their home in Los Angeles last night with Tom and their son Jack by his side. He died of natural causes after a long illness.”

Richard Buckley with Tom Ford - Photo: Tom Ford Instagram

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Since news of his death emerged, literally thousands of friends and colleagues—fellow editors, designers, movie stars, communications directors, senior executives, buyers and fashion fans—have expressed their admiration on social media.

Wrote Stella McCartney, the godmother of his son Jack: "His intellect and passion for knowledge always blew me away, and the sparkle in his eyes dove so deep into your heart each time you were blessed enough to feel it."

While Rita Wilson, another godmother of Jack, commented on Instagram: “Richard was one of the funniest, most wildly creative, people I know. He had such an amazing artistic eye (to go along with his own aquamarine eyes.) Richard was an incredible writer. When he described something you were transported into the depths of the experience, the moment, the time and the place."


In 1982, he would move to Paris where he immediately gained a reputation as a particularly insightful European editor of the Daily News Record, the menswear equivalent of industry bible Women’s Wear Daily.

Realizing his potential, John Fairchild, the legendary boss of WWD and W Magazine, appointed him editor-in-chief of Scene, a junior downtown version of W in 1986. Despite critical acclaim for the title, Fairchild pulled the plug on Scene within two years, derailing Buckley’s career, but never his laconic sense of humor or graceful good manners.

He had met Ford in an elevator in the 1980s and invited him on a date and the two became inseparable after that. Going on to have a son together, Jack, whom Richard occasionally brought to runways shows in London. Evidently an enormously proud father, he often spoke of the joys of becoming a parent.

Ford would eventually achieve fashion superstardom at Gucci, while Buckley filed finely wrought journalism as an editor at Vanity Fair.

After something of a hiatus in Milan, Buckley was appointed Editor-in-Chief on Vogue Hommes International, helming the title for a half decade, not without controversy.

Before Ford departed from Gucci in 2004 and he from Condé Nast and the pair settled in a townhouse in Mayfair, and began to raise their son. For a couple which had spent most of their adult life in the limelight they were carefully reticent about exposing Jack to the media, and few photos of the young man exist online.

To editors who met him in his later years, Buckley remained the most courteous and courtly of men. Throughout his life, he never lost his parchment-dry wit and straight-backed military bearing. While the dignity which he displayed throughout a long battle with cancer was an example to all.

He is survived by Tom Ford and their son Alexander John Buckley Ford.

Finis vitae sed non amoris.

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