

Edmund (“Ned”) Martin Olivier de Vezin, 77, passed away at his home in Malibu, California on Saturday May 30, 2015. By his own words, he had a good life. The only son of Lionel Edmund Olivier and Naydeen Martin Oliver, he was born on January 17, 1938 in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

From early in life, Ned displayed a keen intellect and a brilliant understanding for math and science. But more than that, he was quite simply tireless. With an unequalled work ethic, he would put in countless hours and grueling effort to accomplish the physical and intellectual goals he had set for himself.

Ned grew up in Tulsa before attending Rice University in Houston, Texas, where he majored in chemical engineering, and received his BS cum laude, followed by his MBA from Harvard University (Baker Scholar, High Distinction). Ned’s professional accomplishments were many. He managed domestic and international operations for Conoco Chemicals, Corning Inc., and Diamond Shamrock before entering venture capital, first as a Co-Founder of Fairfield/Steuben Venture Partners, then as a founding General Partner of Oxford Bioscience Partners and most recently as Managing Partner of PosCap Ventures and a General Partner of Genesis Life Sciences. Ned was Chairman, President or Director of more than twenty life science companies in the U.S., Europe and Asia and one of the earliest pioneers in the biotechnology industry.

Ned also contributed his time and expertise to a variety of organizations. He was a member of the Board of Regents, Manchester College, Oxford University; an Advisor to Ventureast in India, a Life Fellow of the International Council of the Salk Institute, and former Chairman of the Biotechnology Venture Investors Group. He was pleased to mentor those who sought his advice, and invariably took the time to help others achieve their professional goals.

But as anyone who knew Ned could tell you, his impact in life reached far beyond business endeavors. He had a passion for the arts. Ned loved beauty and innovation and sought to share that love wherever possible, whether sponsoring new plays as a Director of the South Coast Repertory Theatre or supporting emerging artists. Although he loved to observe and cheer on others, he also readily jumped in himself, such as getting costumed and heading on stage as a supernumerary for the opera Aida, or being the first to leap up at a party to perform a song, a dance or some combination at the drop of a hat. Ned, himself, was also an elegant and life-long photographer. He adored capturing images of the world around him and below him in the oceans and seas. You knew Ned was really Ned if there was a camera in his hand, around his neck, in a nearby suitcase, or all three.

He was an avid professional scuba instructor (PADI) and also taught underwater photography. His children remember him spending hours in the swimming pool, getting skin tones right so he could pose them for underwater portraits. (He especially loved digital cameras. So did his children). The ocean and its life was one of his greatest loves, and when he could, Ned swam every day.

Ned cherished spirit and sought the spiritual in the everyday, in his travels across Asia or back at home, enjoying the plants in his garden or exploring discoveries about the natural world, passing out meals at Christmas to those in need or, earlier in his life, serving as a Trustee of the Union Theological Seminary.

Ned engaged all whom he met and lived life fully. He was a voracious reader and he loved to laugh, sometimes at your expense, more often at his own. He was up for any adventure. Hottest Hot Sauce? Let's see. You say there's an indigenous sweat lodge tonight? Let's go. Fashion show in the catacombs? Let's hurry. F-1 Grand Prix Pits off limits to the public? Let's put on these jumpsuits and give it a shot. Forever on an airplane or boat, he loved to travel the world with Ellen, from a walk down the beach to exploring the ancient temples in Nepal. He truly ran the full spectrum. He could just as happily sit holding Ellen's hand, quietly watching the sunset or gleefully hurl his body down at the speed of sound along a toboggan track, head-first at the Cresta Run in Switzerland.

Forever inquisitive, Ned also delighted in whimsical toys, and usually had one perched someplace nearby. He made toy race cars, rockets and planes. And he always seemed to have a flying pig or crazy "mad" cow, ready to greet a visitor. He adored gadgets, and upon visits of his grandchildren, often managed to send a remote controlled helicopter or plane into a tree or out to sea, several times.

What so many remember beyond his countless achievements were his eyes. They absorbed, shone, studied, scanned, laughed and emoted. They were the windows truly onto the richest of souls.

Ned is survived and will be missed by his wife of almost 25 years Ellen Olivier; his son Ted Olivier and his wife Charlotte; his daughter Michèle Laird, her husband David and their two children Sophie and Chris; his son Charlie Olivier and his wife Anna; and the mother of his children, his former wife Flo Burris Olivier.

Ned had people smiling and laughing until the end. And that is, as Ned would say, a good life.