



Thinking about the Future and a Tribute to Richard Rominger

Greetings!

Reflections on the Moment: Looking Ahead

Remarkably, the pandemic's forced isolation has had a silver lining! I sense that as a nation we are quieter, less peripatetic, more rooted in our communities. I see more reflectiveness, interest in dialogue and commitment to antiracism work. More folks are shopping for healthy local food, cooking at home, growing gardens and preserving the harvest. The election results offered a welcome trajectory. Millions of Americans ensured a new President, renewing my faith in the ability of Americans to learn from our mistakes, and setting the stage for important change.



I need [your help](#) to leverage the moment as ROC works to: [READ MORE](#)

Photo credit: Alex Hu, Pixabay

Richard Rominger 1927-2020



I want to share my personal gratitude for Richard Rominger, perhaps California's greatest agricultural leader in the last century, who passed this week. In 2001, not too long after returning to his home farm from Washington DC, where he had been Deputy Secretary of the USDA for eight years, Susan Clark and Bruce Hirsch, the philanthropic leaders who spawned Roots of Change, reached out to Rich. They thought they might want his help in shaping a strategy that would transform agriculture. According to Susan, they thought they were interviewing him, but soon realized that he was interviewing them. He wanted to see if what they had mind would actually

be a positive thing for agriculture. He decided they did. He became a member of the founding Roots of Change Council. A few years later, when it came time to hire their first executive director, Susana and Bruce put out a list of candidates they wanted the Council to interview. I was not on that list until Rich called them to say they should include me. I will be forever grateful to Rich. He gave me an opportunity to part of a great organization with many wonderful allies and a history of making change. As for so many, he became a source of wisdom and advice through the years and he opened many doors for ROC. I had known his son Charlie (now deceased) and came to know son Bruce and daughter Ruth and his lovely and charming wife Evelyn, whose annual holiday letter I read the day before I learned that Rich had passed.

Richard Rominger will be long remembered, honored and deeply missed by all those committed to a brighter future for agriculture. To read the thoughtful tribute by Karen Ross, California's Secretary of Food Agriculture, [hit this link](#). Her piece includes a compelling video about Rich, his family and their farming operation.

This Week's Flipping the Table's Podcast with Naima Penniman

A brighter future is what I think of when I think of [Naima Penniman](#), the poet and multi-talented artist with whom I converse in today's podcast. This final episode of Season II will be a positive end to a trying year. Her positivity is infectious, her spoken word inspiring and beautiful. Naima shares two of her poems, her journey and her vision for a future that will bring abundance to all.

Photo source: Soulfirefarm.com



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Happy Holidays and may 2021 bring you much joy and good health,

Michael Reid Dimock
President
Roots of Change
A Program of the Public Health Institute

The logo for Roots of Change features the word "Roots" in a green, sans-serif font, with a stylized green carrot root and leaf extending from the letter 'o'. The words "of Change" are in a brown, sans-serif font.



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