

MAN OF THE MONTH

RICHARD BROWNSCOMBE

Interviewed by Kenneth Sabanosh



Born in California's Central Valley shortly after World War II, our Man of the Month grew up in a family shaped by movement, resilience, and hard work. His father, an engineering consultant for the Department of Agriculture, was frequently reassigned across California, New Mexico, and Oregon. As a result, the family lived in many communities before eventually settling in a small agricultural town near Portland, Oregon.

His early education was both challenging and rewarding, although his first year at the University of Oregon proved disappointing. Seeking a different direction, he left college and joined VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), one of the earliest domestic Peace Corps programs. He was assigned to the White Mountain Apache Tribe in Arizona, where he found himself in a remote and underserved community. What began as a slow adjustment became a deeply transformative experience. He immersed himself in local life, participating in traditions and organizing projects such as a shared community room for movies and a tool-lending program.

Returning to university, his life took another unexpected turn when he was drafted into the Vietnam War. Serving as an infantryman during the Tet Offensive of 1968, this period became one of the most defining chapters of his life.

After completing his service, he earned a degree in Therapeutic Recreation and pursued graduate studies in humanistic psychology. Drawn to the cultural energy of San Francisco in the late 1970s, he became part of a changing social landscape. His professional life centered on helping others—working with individuals transitioning from mental health institutions, providing housing, and leading group and individual therapy programs. He later served as Associate Director of a nonprofit child care agency, expanding services to hundreds of families.

For 31 years, he has shared his life with his partner, Gary. Together they eventually made their home in Fort Lauderdale, where they continued their commitment to community involvement. He served as president of the Broward County Native Plant Society for eight years, helping create a sanctuary of more than 160 indigenous plant species.

Today, he remains active with Prime Gentlemen and the Pride Center, continuing to give back in meaningful, often understated ways. His life reflects a deep belief in service, resilience, and the importance of showing up for others with consistency, humility, and heart.

