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Richard Quigley, outspoken Santa Cruz motorcyclist, dies at 63

BY TOM RAGAN
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Richard Quigley, a motorcycle enthusiast who was known for wearing a baseball cap in defiance of the helmet law, died Saturday night from non-Hodgkins lymphoma. He was 63.

A resident of Santa Cruz County for more than three decades, Quigley was known for his studious nature and for a host of lawsuits filed against the California Highway Patrol for tickets he received for not wearing a helmet.

Quigley contended that the citations were unconstitutional based on the fact that the Department of Transportation never truly defined what a helmet should be made of and too often left it up to the manufacturer to decide.



Richard Quigley at the County Center in November 2006 when he filed suit against the CHP challenging the many helmet law tickets they gave him. (Dan Coyro/Sentinel file)

[View and sign a condolence book in memory of Richard Quigley.](#)

Last year, Quigley won his case in Santa Cruz County Superior Court, with Judge Michael Barton ruling in his favor and throwing out the infraction.

According to close friend Kate Wells, a civil rights attorney, Quigley died peacefully at 9 p.m. on Saturday in his home in Aptos, his friends and family by his side.

“He was a guy who stood up for what he believed in,” said Wells. “He never told anybody they shouldn’t wear a helmet. He just thought that it should be your choice, not the state’s. I mean, I drive a convertible, why don’t I have to wear a helmet? And surfers, why don’t they wear helmets?”

KSCO Radio between noon and 2 p.m. tomorrow will air a special rerun of a talk show that took place a few months ago with Quigley and the station’s owner, Michael Zwerling, said Rosemary Chalmers, program director for the station, which can be found at 1080 AM.

Quigley often served as a radio talk show host for the station and was very popular among listeners, Chalmers said.

“Dozens of people have been calling in today and saying how much of a hero he was to them,” she said.

