



Richard W. Kasunick

March 15, 1943 - December 6, 2016

Richard Wayne Kasunick, of Agawam, completed his quiet yet luminous journey with us all on December 6th.

He was the youngest of five children born to George and Barbara Kasunick on March 15th, 1943, in Massillon, Ohio. He was predeceased by his parents and his cherished brothers, Jack and Eugene.

Richard was raised in foster care as a baby and then at St. Paul's orphanage and farm in Pittsburgh, PA. At St. Paul's, he formed a special bond with the animal kingdom that he carried throughout his life. His love and care for cows, rabbits, dogs and especially birds was reciprocal. Stray, injured animals often found their way to him knowing that he would care for them.

Upon graduating from South Cleveland High School where he was on the football team and acted in school drama productions, he enlisted in the United States Air Force. He served for eight years while being stationed in California, England and Spain. As a radio announcer at the Torrejon Air Force base in Madrid, he met the beautiful, red-headed, freckle-faced, Mary Ann O'Neil, whom he later married and raised four children with.

Upon returning to the US, Richard worked his way through college. He began teaching at Springfield Technical Community College in 1973 where he taught

until his retirement in 2002. He continued to teach as an adjunct faculty up until his passing. He was a beloved, dedicated English professor.

At STCC, his home, he performed in numerous theatre productions under the direction of his dear friend, Dennison G. Rice. STCC remembers Richard as sharing 'his love of the written word with his students and with the campus community. As a member of the STCC Faculty Reading group he participated in performances of poetry and other literary works. For many years, Richard added his distinctive voice to our Commencement Ceremony, to thunderous applause, as he read aloud the names of students receiving their diplomas.'

Beyond the STCC campus, Richard loved last year's van Gogh exhibit at the Clark, the final 'A Prairie Home Companion' with Garrison Keillor at Tanglewood this summer, all things Shakespeare, being a member of POEM (Professional Organization of English Majors), and serving as Vice President of the Worcester Dickens Fellowship.

Richard's children have fond memories of growing up with a father who drew, painted, wrote poetry, created animations with a Super 8 film camera, built well-crafted cardboard costumes, and welcomed any stray animal into their home. On a road trip in Spain in 1982, his children remember him stopping the car to assist a porcupine who had its face stuck in a yogurt container. He bestowed upon his children his love for animals, creative thinking, strong coffee, whiskey, NPR, words, humor, living in service to others, and a responsible, gracious questioning of the status quo.

Richard was especially proud of grandson Aidan's appointment to the Junior Varsity Wrestling team as a freshman this fall at Volcano Vista High School in Albuquerque, NM. He was starstruck by five-year-old granddaughter Ruby's recent Thanksgiving dinner dance performance of Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker in Abuela's living room.

Richard will be greatly missed by his siblings Susan Kasunick Weckbacher, and Louis Kasunick (of Clermont, FL); his children Jonathan Kasunick (of Springfield), Heather Kasunick and her spouse, Jason Perry (of Florence), Justin Kasunick and his spouse, Anna Benoit (of Buckland), and Mary Catherine Kasunick (of East Longmeadow); his grandchildren Aidan Gurule (of Albuquerque, NM), Ruby and sweet baby Scarlett Kasunick (of Buckland); his former wife Mary Ann (of Springfield); in-laws who treated him as a brother; many nieces and nephews; his outstanding family of colleagues and friends at STCC and beyond; his thousands of students over the last 40 years who each carry a seed of his wisdom.

Richard's children would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the first responders of Agawam who recovered their father with professionalism and loving kindness on Tuesday afternoon. You are commended.

Calling hours will be held on Sunday, January 15th from 3-6pm at New England Funeral and Cremation Center LLC, 25 Mill Street, Springfield.

A public tribute to Richard's life will take place at STCC in the late spring for all to join.

A gift to New England Public Radio in Richard Kasunick's memory would be a meaningful gesture of appreciation and sympathy. Your gift can be mailed to: New England Public Radio, 1525 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103. Visit www.nefcc.net

Richard Wayne Kasunick. (thunderous applause)

Tribute Wall

LC

“ *My sympathies to all the family. Much love to you all as you go through this very trying time. Keep your memories of your Dad close to your hearts.*

Lesley Conant - February 14, 2023 at 10:17 AM

JF

“ *Heather,\r\nI am so sorry for your loss. Your Dad sounds like an amazing person and it is clear he has been a special blessing in your life. Know that all of your Alt HS friends are here for you.\r\n\r\nJudi*

Judi Ferri - February 14, 2023 at 10:17 AM

TD

“ *What a beautiful and moving tribute, bravo!*

Tracy Derrig - February 14, 2023 at 10:17 AM

LD

“ *I have fond memories of Richard growing up as I tagged along with the Kasunick clan on walks through the woods and trips to the Cape. He was a quiet yet wise man, loved by all. I send my condolences and love to the Kasunick family.
#heavenhasanewangel xoxo*

Lucrecia Davis - February 14, 2023 at 10:17 AM

CJ

“ *To the Kasunick Family: May your fondest memories of Richard, who was a kind and caring man, bring you peace at this time of sorrow.*

Cathy Jolicoeur - February 14, 2023 at 10:17 AM

LW

“ I was a Torrejon DJ in 1969 and while downsizing recently, I found a magnetic tape of Rich and I producing radio commercials from that year. I am giving a number of old magnetic tapes to my grandson to see if he can convert to digital. I am sorry to hear of your dad's death. I invite a family member to contact me, and if we are successful in converting your dad's 1969 voice to digital, I will be glad to give you a copy. I am sorry that I missed him personally, but glad that the stars and Google aligned in the last 15 minutes to connect me with his family.

Larry Wannebo - February 14, 2023 at 10:17 AM