



Richard A. Downs

June 28, 1939 - January 26, 2026

Richard Ancel Downs, age 86, of Shelby Township, passed away peacefully at home on January 26, 2026.

Richard was born in Highland Park on June 28, 1939, to Ancel and Novi Downs. He grew up in Ferndale, graduated from Lincoln High School, and later earned his bachelor's degrees in both English Lit and Accounting from Wayne State University. He remained deeply connected to his hometown throughout his life. Remarkably, up until his passing, Rich still met monthly at Duggan's Irish Pub with the friends he'd known since grade school.

Richard proudly served in the U.S. Army in Germany. Years after his discharge, in 1968, he returned to Germany and explored the country and other parts of Europe by bicycle, traveling with only a pop-up tent, an early glimpse of his adventurous spirit.

That summer, Rich met Kathy—"Kath" to him from that point on—at Detroit's Dakota Inn on her birthday. They were married on New Year's Eve in 1969, beginning a loving partnership that spanned more than five decades.

Professionally, Richard built a long career as a Michigan state auditor, specializing in nursing home audits. For 30 years, he also served as president of his homeowners association, personally welcoming each new family and

fielding every kind of neighborly request and concern. He approached these jobs with the warmth, diligence and integrity that extended throughout his life.

An avid athlete, Rich was a dedicated jogger for most of his life, completing the Detroit Marathon and numerous 10K races. In later years, he transitioned to biking, often riding 50, 60, or even 70 miles at a time. He also loved music—playing guitar in his earlier years and later taking up the trumpet, once ringing in the new year by playing Auld Lang Syne out on the front porch. Jazz, blues, and classic country were his favorites. He also enjoyed literature and classic movies and would light up discussing the difficulty of Faulkner's novels or the quality of a Bogart or Hepburn performance.

Known for his sense of humor and outgoing personality, Rich loved being social and making people laugh. One of Kathy's favorite memories is of Rich singing to her in the mornings to "test his voice," filling her morning with joy.

Above all, Rich was a fighter. He survived multiple cancers, and most recently, fought with determination and courage for more than three years after being told he was likely to have only one. Rich enjoyed a good glass of wine and was known for asking each new doctor if he could have wine with dinner. Anyone who answered yes quickly became his favorite. His humor and indomitable spirit will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all who were fortunate enough to know him.

Rich is remembered as the beloved husband of Kathy (née Schrader). Loving father of Brook (Allyson Lincoln) Downs and Matt (Sarah Mann) Downs. Dear brother of Gloria (the late Art) McRae and Judy (John) Sullivan. He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

Visitation for Rich will be held on Sunday, February 1, from 2:30 – 8:00 p.m. at Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors, 8459 Hall Rd., Utica. All are also

invited to join the Rosary at 2:00 p.m., just prior to the visitation. The Funeral Mass for Rich will be celebrated on Monday, February 2, at 11:00 a.m. (in-state at 10:30) at St. Andrew Catholic Church, 1400 Inglewood Ave., Rochester. Interment will follow at Christian Memorial Gardens West in Rochester Hills.

If you would like to make a memorial contribution in memory of Rich, please consider a donation to Tunnels to Towers (www.t2t.org) or Paralyzed Veterans of America (www.secure.pva.org).

Share a memory at www.SullivanFuneralDirectors.com.

Cemetery Details

Christian Memorial Gardens West

521 E. Hamlin Road
Rochester Hills, MI 48307

Previous Events

Rosary

FEB 1. 2:00 PM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Utica
8459 Hall Road
Utica, MI 48317

Visitation

FEB 1. 2:30 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Utica
8459 Hall Road
Utica, MI 48317

Instate At Church

FEB 2. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Andrew Catholic Church
1400 Inglewood
Rochester, MI 48037

Funeral Mass

FEB 2. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Andrew Catholic Church
1400 Inglewood
Rochester, MI 48037

Burial

FEB 2. 12:30 PM (ET)

Christian Memorial Gardens West
521 E. Hamlin Road
Rochester Hills, MI 48307

Tribute Wall

SK

“ Sarah K. purchased the Lord's Prayer 44" Sonnet for the family of Richard A. Downs.



Sarah K. - January 31 at 04:35 PM

SK

“ Sarah K. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard A. Downs.

Sarah K. - January 31 at 04:35 PM

CN

“ Chloe N. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard A. Downs.

Chloe N. - January 31 at 08:17 AM

-S

“ -Sarah purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Richard A. Downs.



-Sarah - January 30 at 07:01 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Richard A. Downs.



January 30 at 04:41 PM



“ Your friends at DBGorilla purchased the Joyful Memory for the family of Richard A. Downs.



Your friends at DBGorilla - January 30 at 01:47 PM



“ Your friends at DBGorilla planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard A. Downs.

Your friends at DBGorilla - January 30 at 01:47 PM



“ The McRae Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard A. Downs.

The McRae Family - January 30 at 12:57 PM



“ The McRae Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Richard A. Downs.



The McRae Family - January 30 at 12:57 PM

BF

“ Bill Elster and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard A. Downs.

Bill Elster and Family - January 29 at 12:50 PM

BF

“ Bill Elster and Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Richard A. Downs.



Bill Elster and Family - January 29 at 12:50 PM

SR

“ Sterling and Romona Ragoonanan purchased the Love's Journey for the family of Richard A. Downs.



Sterling and Romona Ragoonanan - January 29 at 10:11 AM

SR

“ Sterling and Romona Ragoonanan planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard A. Downs.

Sterling and Romona Ragoonanan - January 29 at 10:11 AM

BS

“ Barbara S. purchased the Tender Tribute for the family of Richard A. Downs.



Barbara S. - January 28 at 01:18 PM

TF

“ The LaPrise Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard A. Downs.

The LaPrise Family - January 28 at 10:05 AM



“ Fiery Lily and Rose was purchased for the family of Richard A. Downs.



January 28 at 10:05 AM