



Richard Dean Keil

June 7, 1921 - June 11, 2024

Richard Dean Keil died of natural causes on June 11, 2024. He was age 103 years and 4 days young.

Richard was born in 1921 in Haileyville, Oklahoma, a town of approximately 800 people, to Albert Keil and Florence Easton. He lived on a farm with his two brothers, two sisters, four horses and parents. He rode his horse to school and learned to hunt at an early age, acquiring a lifetime love of the outdoors.

At age 14, Richard and his family moved to North Tonawanda where he spent the rest of his life. He initially attended a one-room schoolhouse on Niagara Falls Blvd. He graduated with honors from N. Tonawanda High School and received an American Legion leadership award.

Following high school, Richard enlisted in the US Army where he served for one year.

Subsequently, World War II expanded and Richard's life as a civilian was interrupted. He was drafted by the US Army for a second term of about three years. He was

assigned to the US 8th Airforce, European theater, based in England. He was a B-29 bomber crew chief.

Richard also had musical talents the Army recognized, and they enlisted him as a tuba player who also played strings in the Army's dance band. Harmonica was another of his favorite instruments.

After the war, Richard married Jane Ewald, and they raised a family. Richard earned a bachelor's degree in education from University of Buffalo. He taught school in Cato, NY

briefly before returning to N. Tonawanda and joining Bell Aerospace in 1950 where he spent the rest of his career in contracts management. He is proud to have worked on the Minuteman missile and other notable projects.

Richard had many interests and hobbies, including hunting, fishing, camping, business news and personal investing. He never met a garage sale he didn't like. He held leadership responsibilities in his local church and the Chautauqua Institute Disciples of Christ

Richard earned media attention as a centenarian and WWII veteran. He participated in two Honor Flights to Washington, DC. He frequently spoke to students and veteran groups about his life experiences. He acquired many new friends later in life who met regularly for coffee and conversation at Tim Hortons.

Richard's wife, Jane, and his four siblings predeceased him. He is survived by

his four

children: Douglas Keil (Beverly); Deborah Cramer (David); David Keil (Karen); and Dena

Lupke (late Robert); ten grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

Richard lived independently through his advanced age in part because of the excellent care

he received over many years from the VA Hospital of Buffalo. He also enjoyed a network of

neighbors and good friends who were there when he needed them.

Visitation will be on June 19 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Wattengel Funeral Home, 533

Meadow Drive, N. Tonawanda, NY. Services will follow at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers,

donations are appreciated to: American Legion Band of the Tonawandas, P.O. Box 122,

Tonawanda, NY 14150.

Cemetery Details

White Chapel Memorial Park

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 19. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Wattengel Funeral Home (Meadow Drive)
533 Meadow Drive
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
(716) 693-0440
wattengelfh@gmail.com
<https://www.wattengel.com>

Services

JUN 19. 11:00 AM (ET)

Wattengel Funeral Home (Meadow Drive)
533 Meadow Drive
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
(716) 693-0440
wattengelfh@gmail.com
<https://www.wattengel.com>

Tribute Wall

MM

“ To Richard's Family,

I had the good fortune to work with Richard for a number of years as volunteers in the AARP Tax-Aide Program. He was such an asset to us with his tax expertise and his friendliness.

He also had some kind of candy to share with the volunteers and clients alike. We began to refer to him as our "Candyman."

Even as recent as this past tax season we had clients ask about him and they always had kind words in reference to their memory of him.

He and I shared another interest that he seemed to enjoy discussing with me and gave more than a few "Good Tips," that being active in the Stock Market.

God Bless you Richard.

Mary Marcinkowski

Mary Marcinkowski - June 19, 2024 at 09:33 PM

LG

“ Hi my name is lisa geraci from Payne avenew Christine church mr Richard keil whole family I met mr Richard keil a few times in church about three years ago pastor bob a few others went too his house for a birthday parade in front of his house I'm truly truly truly sorry for your family's loss my deepest sympathy and sincere condolences too all of you please please remember your not alone all friends at Payne avenew Christine church are with you also

lisa geraci - June 19, 2024 at 11:24 AM

CH

“ Mr. Keil and my dad, ‘Charlie’ Hobbs Sr were friends for many decades after our family’s arrival in NT in 1959. Dad spoke many times of his best friend Richard as they shared many public and private occasions together over the years. Thank you for sharing your dad with the population of western NY.

Charles Hobbs - June 14, 2024 at 10:30 PM

DS

“ Mr. Keil was a dear friend to my dad, Charles Hobbs, and he attended my dad's memorial service three years ago just after he turned 100! He was a kind gentleman with a gentle smile. He was my dad's best friend for decades. God bless you, Dena, and your family at this time. We are sorry we cannot be with you, but we are with you in spirit. Blessings, Diana Hobbs Sollars

Diana Sollars - June 14, 2024 at 09:51 PM

MI

“ Spent plenty of time with Richard these past several years. We’d go for coffee a few evenings a week. We got out fishing and hunting a few times and spent many evenings shooting the baloney over milkshakes. He was such a treasure. I’ll miss him greatly!

Mark Irlbacher - June 14, 2024 at 07:37 PM

LG

Hi it's lisa geraci from church I'm truly truly sorry for your loss mr Richard keil will be truly truly truly missed a lot from his whole family friends all friends at Payne avenew Christine church too my deepest sympathy and sincere condolences

lisa geraci - June 19, 2024 at 08:46 AM

JT

“ I was honored to have known Dick Kiel for most of my life. He was a very dear friend of my dad’s. A true gentleman who so loved god and his country.
May he RIP. He is with Jane now. I will miss you Dick.

Judy Tyler - June 14, 2024 at 06:27 PM

PS

“ I am so sorry to hear about Dick's passing. We were next door neighbors for many years. Our families did many things together. Doug & I played together growing up. I often wondered if he & Janie were still around after my Mom & Dad passed. Only good memories of our families. Hugs & prayers go out to Doug, Debbie, David & Dena.

Pam Harrison Senia - June 14, 2024 at 04:04 PM



“ We’re so sorry to hear of the passing of Richard. We were neighbors for several years, when we lived across from Jane and Richard on Pioneer/Nash Rd.. Richard used to come over and chat with us, as my husband was outside working and renovating the farmhouse. He’d offer to help and give us the history of the farmhouse, which was his family’s former home. He was always so kind and would share his knowledge about history. We truly enjoyed our conversations with him. He will be greatly missed. Love, Leslie and Sean

Leslie Mulligan - June 14, 2024 at 12:31 AM