



Richard Eldon Walker

September 20, 1931 - December 11, 2024

Richard Eldon Walker left this world peacefully on December 11, 2024, in the presence of his astonished family. He was 93 years old.

Richard grew up in Western Kansas, the first child of Eldon and Muriel Walker, who had met as musicians in a Ragtime band. His father was a homebuilder and cattle breeder, whose herds grazed in a rare, verdant valley fed by Artesian wells. His mother was a prairie homemaker and played piano for the silent movies shown in a local theater. Richard learned the virtues of hard work and independence from them, but, though a skilled horseman, aspired to a career in the booming post-WWII economy.

He graduated from Fort Hays State University in 1953, where he met the love of his life, Marietta, and then began a 25-year career with a national hardware and appliance retail company.

By age 36, as a store manager in Ottawa, Kansas, he attained the highest revenue and profit in the company's 2000-store chain and was then promoted to an executive position at the company's headquarters in Minneapolis in 1967. He was admired by his colleagues as a natural, charismatic leader, who always looked out for the less fortunate.

In 1978, he and Marietta acquired a furniture manufacturing company,

expanding its markets to all 50 US states and Europe, receiving industry quality awards, and then selling it to its employees before retiring in 2001.

Richard and Marietta were married from 1952 until Marietta's death in 2021. By example, they taught their four children and six grandchildren the virtues of trust in God, kindness, patience, generosity, hard work, and perseverance. Their motto was: "The impossible takes a little longer." A convert to Catholicism, Richard was active in his parish, Saint Margaret Mary, as a parish trustee, leading programs in adult religious education, and supporting the diocese seminary.

Together, Richard and Marietta enjoyed dancing, bridge, par 3 golf, time with family and friends at their lake home, fishing, (Richard only), five decades of season tickets to the Minnesota Orchestra Hall, local plays, and watching the Twins, Vikings, Kansas City Chiefs, and Notre Dame sports.

Among many world travels, their most cherished trip was to the Holy Land, with their life-long friend and spiritual guide, Archbishop Robert Carlson, (now in Saint Louis). Family photos reveal that Richard's greatest delight, with the largest smiles and most glistening eyes, was being with his grandchildren, whom he loved dearly and of whom he was so deeply proud.

Richard was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 68 years, Marietta; parents, Eldon and Muriel; brother, Dennis; sister, Norma (husband Marvin Klein), and son-in-law, Richard Skudlarek. He is survived by his brother, Ronald (wife Kathy) of Paola, Kansas; children, Randall Walker MD (wife Patricia Dunn-Walker), Stan Walker MD, Michelle Skudlarek (husband Richard Skudlarek, deceased), and Kevin Walker MD (wife Alice O'Hara); six grandchildren, Sophia, Gregory, Kip, Eleanor, Ryan, and Margaret; and many nieces and nephews and other in-laws.

The family expresses their gratitude to Richard's caring staff at Summit Place Senior Living, in Eden Prairie, and to Saint Croix Hospice.

After a small family service, Richard will be laid to rest at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations in memory of Richard be made to the Parkinson's Foundation, (parkinson.org). They are sad but grateful for his long life and eternal love.