



## Richard "Dick" Yates

May 7, 1931 - April 23, 2020

Yates, Richard "Dick"

May 7, 1931 to April 23, 2020

Dick was born Julius Riccardo Yates at the family home on Lincoln Street in Northeast Minneapolis. He was one of 16 children born to Italian immigrants Marie (Susie) Assunta Santillo and Pasquale (Pat) Antonio Yates. Dick was raised in and nurtured by NE Minneapolis, and he said he was lucky to be part of a large and culturally rich community. He was happy to spend the majority of his life within five miles from his home. After graduating from Edison High in 1950, Dick was drafted into the US Army and attended basic training at Ft. Benning, GA. He was deployed to Korea and served as a combat paratrooper with the 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment (Rakkasans). After returning home in November 1953, thanks to the GI Bill, Dick attended the University of Minnesota where he played football for the Gophers, and graduated in 1957. He married his best teammate, Fay Marcella Drier, on August 30, 1958. In 1967, they bought their home in the Kenny neighborhood of Southwest Minneapolis and raised four children. Dick had a 39 year career with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, where he oversaw playground programs at Longfellow and Lynnhurst Parks, and later, as Manager of Special Services, played a significant role in the expansion of Minneapolis parks and golf courses. He was always a sharp dresser and a terrible driver.

Dick maintained lifelong friendships from each stop in his road of life.

He is preceded in death by his parents and 13 siblings. He is survived by his sister Janet and brother David; loving wife of 62 years, Fay; children Brad (Jody), Bob, Doug (Chris), and Ann (Aaron); beloved grandchildren Jackson, Finn, Owen, and Vivian; and many loving nieces, nephews, and friends. The Yates family is eternally grateful to Dick and Fay's amazing Colfax Avenue neighbors for the help and support they continue to provide. Memorials preferred to Minneapolis VA Healthcare Systems ([minneapolis.va.gov](http://minneapolis.va.gov)) or Minneapolis Parks Foundation ([mplsfoundation.org](http://mplsfoundation.org)). Condolences: [Washburn-McReavy.com](http://Washburn-McReavy.com)

# Tribute Wall

MB

“ I’m so sorry to hear of Mr. Yates’ passing. My condolences to the entire family. I grew up playing sports, and particularly hockey, with Bob. Mr. Yates would often drive in our hockey car pool and smoke his pipe. I still think of riding in his car every time I smell pipe smoke.

Mike Boyles - May 17, 2020 at 08:06 PM

KK

“ Dick was the Park Board Director at Lynnhurst Field in the late 50's-early 60's if I am not mistaken. he was like a big brother to many of us who played sports as well as hang out in the park house. We got in trouble at times and Dick, in his own way would yell and shout but in most cases a slight grin was always on his face. I looked up to Dick as did many of my peers during those formative years of growing up in an environment that sadly is no longer with us. I have many great memories of Dick and was fortunate to know him when I became an adult. My thoughts are with Dick's family, Kip Knelman

kip knelman - May 01, 2020 at 09:40 PM

TJ

“ Please accept my sincere condolences regarding the passing of a very nice guy. I met Mr. Yates in 1984 when I worked for the Roseville Park & Recreation Dept. Frank Rog was my boss and Frank was good Buddies with Walter Dzedzic and Dick. I really enjoyed becoming friends with Dick he was such a kind man. We kept in contact through the MRPA and he followed my career in Maple Grove. We last had a great conversation at the MRPA Retirees luncheon last fall. Dick is now checking Parks in Heaven!!!

Terry Just Retired Director Maple Grove Park Board

Terry Just - April 28, 2020 at 10:38 PM

SW

“ Yes, I too will miss Mr Yates. I worked for him for 20 yrs - as Mgr of Parade Ice Garden and then as Mgr of Gross GC. He was mostly responsible for the lobbying, planning, and finally building of our New clubhouse project in 1984 at a cost of \$1,000,000. It replaced the original run down bldg from 1925. Before that - we did NOT have city sewer or water! It was a BIG, Big deal to all the golfers in NE Mpls!

We didn't want him to retire because of the Giant Hole it would create. Sure enough - it took 5 people to replace him!

He had a terrific attitude - always in an upbeat mood - like his buddy, Walt Dziedzic, he had that "We'll get it done" personality. Yes, I'm biased but, Northeast Mpls should have statues of Dick & Walt erected because of what they did for Nordeast and Mpls! What a Great guy! (I could go on and on but, I'm due on the golf course.)

Our sincere sympathy to Mrs Yates and family.

Sincerely, steve walters

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steve walters - April 27, 2020 at 07:47 PM

MK

“ I'm so sorry for your family's loss. You don't know who I am, but I've been a park & rec professional for over 30 years. I was lucky enough to cross paths with Dick many times. What an amazing ambassador for our profession and a genuine nice guy. Last fall, he was taking part in the SMRPA (Southern MN Rec & Park Assn) golf tournament at Brooktree in Owatonna. We didn't have the best weather, and we got stuck in an all-out thunderstorm under a bridge for an hour or so. (Yes, it was one that was meant to drive your cart under.) It was so much fun to reminisce and hear his stories, and remember the good old days of park & rec. I will also say, the picture you have of him here is PERFECT! That's exactly how you would see him, every time. Smile on his face and loving life! He will be missed. I will make a donation to the Minneapolis VA in his memory. He will be missed, my sympathies and prayers to all of you.

Mary Jo Knudson  
(City of Owatonna and Waseca prior to that)

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**MJ Knudson** - April 27, 2020 at 03:13 PM

JW

“ I was sad to read about Dick. I did not know Dick very well, but my husband Gary always enjoyed his friendship with him. When I did see Dick, he was always interested in how I was and what I was doing in life. I pray the Lord will be close to the family during these tough times. Sending my love Janet Wilson.

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**Janet Wilson** - April 27, 2020 at 02:11 PM

JH

“ I met Dick at the Mpls Park Board in 1982. At first he was hard to adjust to, but soon I realized he was a very kind and good man. What a major loss to the world! My sympathies to his family and friends. “ RIP Yateserdoodle”. 🥺❤️🥺

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**Jan Halvorson** - April 27, 2020 at 01:33 PM

DS

“ Dick was my boss, friend and mentor for many years. When I became a General in the Air Force, he was one of the first to salute and tell me he was proud. I assured him that he was one of the inspirations of my life. During my many years on the Minneapolis City Council, I could always count on Dick to give me excellent advice about the Park Board and helping kids in our city. To know Dick Yates was to be his friend. You made a difference in many lives, including mine. You will be missed.  
Denny Schulstad

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**Denny Schulstad** - April 27, 2020 at 11:17 AM