



Richard James Rittenhouse

January 29, 1956 - June 11, 2024

Richard James Rittenhouse, long time resident of Blacksburg, Virginia went to be with the Lord on June 11, 2024. Rich was born January 29, 1956, in Columbus, Ohio, the son of Richard and Nellie Johnson Rittenhouse.

Rich is survived by his loving and devoted wife Faythe, and by his siblings, Sherry (Tom Miller), Mike (Shirley) and Teresa (William Buxton) all of Ohio. In addition, he is survived by brother-in-law David White (Becky) of California and sister-in-law Joy Jacobsen of Washington and a special sister Mary Riley of Riner, Virginia. Other survivors include many nephews, nieces and cousins.

Rich grew up as a U.S. Air Force “brat,” living in New Hampshire, Fukuoka, Japan and Dover, Delaware.

After serving in the U.S. Army, Rich attended and graduated from Virginia Tech, Magna Cum Laude, with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. He went on to earn his professional engineering license from the state of Virginia. Subsequently, he worked as a professional engineer at Virginia Tech and Radford University doing renovation and project design. He was a member of The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).

Rich enjoyed traveling to far-off places such as Cuba, Spain and England. In

his younger days, he had many adventures traveling the United States by motorcycle. He spent many weekends camping and exploring Virginia and the Blue Ridge Mountains. One of his favorite camping locales was Dolly Sods, West Virginia.

Rich was an avid photographer, star-gazer, reader, and musician. He had a curious mind. Other interests included gardening, and tending his many flowers and plants.

Rich loved all music, but his favorite music was rooted in the Blues. His favorite instrument, the harmonica, could always be found in his pocket. Rich could be found playing the harmonica on a street corner with local musicians or on stage with such groups as Doc's Blues Revue, Chicken Wings & Gravy, and the Rising Silo Brewery House Band. Rich was a member of The Society for the Preservation and Advancement of the Harmonica (SPAHA) and The New River and Central Virginia Blues Societies.

Rich was an active member of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. He chaired the church Building Expansion Committee when building additions and renovations were needed. The music team always enjoyed his participation with his harmonica, playing in praise of his Savior.

A private viewing will be held at McCoy Funeral Home followed by interment at the Southwestern Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin, on June 13, 2024. A memorial service (open to the public) celebrating Rich's life will be held at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2101 Shadow Lake Road, Blacksburg, on June 22 at 1:30 PM, followed by a reception.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to charities that express your vision of what freedom means.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUN **22**. 1:30 PM (ET)

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church
2101 Shadow Lake Rd
Blacksburg, VA 24060-2048

Tribute Wall

RD

“ We are so sorry to hear of his passing. We have many great memories of playing music and hanging at The Cellar. Rich was a uniquely kind soul and is greatly missed. Our condolences to Faythe and family.

Reid & Sam Doughten - July 02, 2024 at 03:14 PM

RP

“ My sincere condolences to Faythe and the family.

Rocky Price - June 24, 2024 at 06:31 PM

TL

“ Tish Lamble purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Richard James Rittenhouse.



Tish Lamble - June 20, 2024 at 02:23 PM

LS

“ Lisa Smith lit a candle in memory of Richard James Rittenhouse



Lisa Smith - June 20, 2024 at 11:34 AM

LS

Faythe so sorry for your loss. My prayers are with you.

Lisa Smith - June 20, 2024 at 11:35 AM

DG

“ Rich was my very first friend in the harmonica world. We met while I was in college at Virginia Tech, and I was just starting to play out. Rich started playing harmonica as an adult (as far as I remember), and that's not an easy thing to do. However, I'll say that he became very good at it, probably the best I've heard who didn't start out as a "kid". I had the opportunity to take a long holiday back in 2015. The theme of my journey was to reconnect with people from my musical life. I was able to hang with Rich one night, and it was great. He was just the warmest, kindest, harmonica-loving guy. I'm honored to have known him, and so sorry he's gone too soon.



Dan Gage - June 20, 2024 at 10:00 AM

VN

That was cool!

Victor Nyirongo - June 21, 2024 at 07:23 PM

DG

“ Dan G. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard James Rittenhouse.

Dan G. - June 20, 2024 at 08:56 AM

GH

“Ginger Wagner and Paul Herling purchased the S imply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Richard James Rittenhouse.



Ginger Wagner and Paul Herling - June 18, 2024 at 01:19 PM

GW

“Good times with Rich. I met up with Rich and Faith while on the garden tour last spring. The two of them were chilling on this porch swing while listening to piano music coming from inside the house. Good times!

Rich loved playing with the Blue Monday Band, Paul Doc Herling, Bill Chickenwing Smith, and Keith Cinault. The four of them had some great times playing at The Cellar for close to 15 years and then at Rising Silo Brewery for almost 3 years!

We will miss his friendship and his great musical talent!

Ginger Wagner and Paul Herling



Ginger Wagner - June 18, 2024 at 12:56 PM

Amy Hill

“Faythe, I am so sorry to hear of your loss. Praying for you during this difficult time. Amy Hill

Amy Hill - June 14, 2024 at 10:57 AM



“ I met Rich at a week-long harmonica camp in the 90s. He graciously made me copies of tapes of the lessons we took. What a great guy



Clarke Comollo - June 14, 2024 at 10:45 AM



“ Faythe I am so sorry for your loss. May God and friends and family give you comfort. God bless.
Lynette

Lynette Lucas - June 13, 2024 at 11:03 PM



“ Rich made friends so easily and that's why he and Mary were our first and longest friends at Virginia Tech. Rich just walked over to us in the Library. The hikes we took, the food and drink we shared, the joy of friendship over our ten years in Blacksburg. We love you Rich

carol and paul gassman - June 13, 2024 at 07:48 PM



“ Rich's wonderful harmonica accompaniment on the church music always blessed me, as my mom played the harmonica as well. I once gave Rich a cd of Buddy Greene, as I knew he would enjoy it more than me. I am so sorry for your loss, Faythe, I know he will be sorely missed by so many. The Lord bless you as you grieve with hope.

Christine Winsky - June 13, 2024 at 05:56 PM

BS

“ *Faythe,
I was saddened to learn of Rick's recent death. You are in my
thoughts and prayers at this sad time. Bill Stephenson*

Bill Stephenson - June 13, 2024 at 04:25 PM

FT

“ *From Maud & Tom purchased the Full Of Love B
ouquet for the family of Richard James
Rittenhouse.*



From Maud & Tom - June 13, 2024 at 03:04 PM

JS

“ *Sad news indeed. My late husband Billie and I met Rich at open mic
nights around Roanoke. We loved to hear his musical talent. He will
be missed.*

Judy Sutton - June 13, 2024 at 11:57 AM

MS

“ It was probably around 1990 and I was in architecture school and going to Grace Covenant. Sometimes, during Rich's lunch break we would go into a stair well in Burrus Hall and play, me on the guitar and of course Rich on the harmonica. The acoustics were amazing, of course, so it made perfect sense to us, even if others may have thought it a bit unusual. I always felt that Rich showed great patience with me, as I was not exactly a blues master. He didn't seem to mind so much if we played 'Freight Train' over and over and over and over. We were excited to find out that you could also successfully sing the lyrics of 'Jesus Loves Me' to it, and we planned to play it in church as an offertory. I don't remember if we followed through with that. When I see him again, that will be the first song we play!

Matt Smith - June 12, 2024 at 11:12 PM

DH

“ This is such sad news Faythe. Dale and I are sending our condolences to you and your family. We are so grateful for the musical memories we have of Rich and you.

Deborah Stevens Hamilton - June 12, 2024 at 07:50 PM

BC

“ Faythe, I am so sorry to hear of Rich's passing. I will keep you in my thoughts and prayers as you navigate through this difficult time.

Barbara Crawford - June 12, 2024 at 07:05 PM

CM

“ 1 file added to the album Rich



Charlotte Miles - June 12, 2024 at 06:22 PM

PA

Dearest Fathye, My prayers and thoughts are with you and your family. as we remember such a caring, giving, special soul. Rick touched soo many of us with his kindness and with his awesome music. He will be deeply missed. Sending you all much love. Phyllis

Phyllis Albritton - June 12, 2024 at 11:45 PM

DM

I met Rich at a party at my house in 1985. It was the staff of the New River Free Press and friends. When I got home, the party was in full swing and several people were even in the bathroom, floating rubber duckies and sailboats in the bathtub, and Rich was among them! He's been one of my closest friends ever since. Through good times and bad, he was always ready to help one way or the other. I miss him already.

Don Mackler - June 14, 2024 at 07:14 PM