



Richard D Hays

November 12, 1942 - June 30, 2020

On Tuesday June 30th, Richard D. Hays, loving husband, father, grandfather, adventurer, and friend to all passed away at age 77.

Richard was born on November 12, 1942 in West Frankfort, Illinois to Ramona and Arthur Horrell Hays. He graduated from Purdue University in 1966 with a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering and a master's degree in Industrial Administration and received his Doctorate in Business Administration from Indiana University in 1969. Richard spent his early career and many later years as a professor at Tulane University and was selected as the University's Executive Master of Medical Management Program's "Best Faculty Member" five times. Later in his career he served as the President and CEO of First Commerce Corporation in New Orleans, provided consulting services for clients ranging from the US State Department to Exxon and published two books. As part of the Sarasota community for over 25 years, Richard was on the board of First Step, Sarasota and volunteered for Habitat for Humanity and Embracing Our Differences. In 2002 he co-founded Sarasota Crew, which has helped over 2,000 kids and won several national championships. He co-led a community-based effort to pass an operational millage for improved school district funding that is still in effect today. Richard subsequently worked for several years as the Associate Superintendent for Sarasota County Schools. He was an active member with several leadership roles at the First Congregational United Church of Christ, and a driving force behind the Sarasota Bayfront Planning Organization.

He is survived by his wife Deb Hays, his sister Jill Hays and his four children, Kristin Chaffin (Les), Karin, Alexander (Sammie) and Jonathan. He also was a beloved grandfather to Natasha, Harper and Lillian Hays. Also, significant in Richard's life were Deb's children, Brandon, Chris, Nathan, and Jonathon Mitchell. He became an adoring grandfather to Caleb, Autumn, Janel, Turner, Ally, Adam, Hannah and Abby Mitchell. His love and prioritization of family was a hallmark of his life.

In addition to his family, one of Richard's greatest passions was adventure. He structured his life to pursue the experiences that he so relished with the friends and family he loved.

To achieve his desire to explore, Richard became certified as an instrument rated pilot and logged over 3,500 hours of flight time, including a US transcontinental speed record for general aviation piston powered aircraft in his open cockpit Stearman biplane and a journey over the length of Lewis and Clark's trail with his wife Deb.

Richard loved sailing throughout the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean, navigating over 25,000 miles at the helm of his own sailboats and continued this passion with later long-distance cruises in trawlers.

Richard instilled his sense of adventure and confidence in all his children and it will live on in his grandchildren. Always willing to help a friend or stranger, he was truly a remarkable human who lived life to its fullest. He is deeply missed and will be forever honored.

Services to celebrate Richard's life will be held on Monday July 6, 2020 beginning at 1:50 PM. Because of the need for social distancing, the service will be streamed live through Face Book at <https://www.facebook.com/uccsarasota/>. Following the service, there will be an opportunity to remember Richard via a Zoom Room.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests remembrances be directed to First Congregational United Church of Christ, Sarasota's memorial fund or to other charities that are representative of the significant relationships and causes that were part of Richard's life. Although these charities are unique to each relationship, several of the causes that Richard supported were Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity (SURE), Equality Florida, Habitat for Humanity and United Way.

<http://memorial.yourtribute.com/richarddalehays/>

Events

JUL **Celebration of Life**01:50PM

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Zoom

FL, US