



Richard A. Spradley

May 21, 1940 - April 10, 2020

Richard Alvin Spradley, 79, Passed away at his home in Merrillville on April 10th ,2020 after a long

battle with congestive heart failure surrounded by loved ones.

Richard was born in Madison, Wisconsin to the late Alvin and Doris Spradley on May 21st ,1940 and an

older brother to Susan Almarez. He is survived by the love of his life, Judith Chenoweth Spradley whom

he was married to for 59 years and his beloved children Melinda Galante (Jennifer), Lori Carpenter

(Brian), Ruby Thomas (Tony), grandchildren Logan (Bonnie), Quentin, Rachel and Kyle and

great-grandchildren Trevor and Ellianna.

He was raised in Gary, IN and graduated from Eddison in 1959. At 16 he met Judy and they would

cherish the next 63 years together. After high school he went on to attend Ball State University's School of

Education in Muncie, Indiana where he had his first daughter, Melinda, and graduated in spring of 1963.

After graduating he moved to Merrillville and began a 42 year long and fulfilling career of teaching

middle school math and science and adult education at the Gary career center. He was a hardworking

person who worked any job that would support his family; he later received his master's degree in education and never stopped teaching people around him life lessons. He had a passion for helping others but a bigger passion for his family. His daughters became his greatest joys and he devoted their years of growing up to coaching Merrillville Girls Softball and bowling at Stardust. As the family grew with the addition of grandchildren, so did Richard's devotion to his family: never missing a football game, swim meet, concert, or activity. "Whoever goes, gets" was a classic phrase used by Richard. The phrase, which as a child, meant getting treats, but the phrase for him was another way to spend a little extra time with his daughters and grandchildren. Richard was a man of endless stories, some of which contained only nuggets of truth. Stories were a large part of his connection to others and he never met a stranger. Whether it was a trip to the grocery store or a family vacation to Disney World, Richard would find or be found by someone he knew. He was a selfless man whose generosity knew no bounds as his large personality was equally matched by his willingness to give to others. He dedicated his life to others but never missed a weekend of golfing or fishing trips. Richard's love of fishing began with his father and continued into his adulthood with annual fishing trips with friends or trips to Boaters' Beach with his family aboard his boat the "Mo Lo Ru". As "pop" he was a maker, character, and comedian. He made incredible artwork and puzzles with his favorite sponge bob tattoo on his arm. He made people

happy and smile, making a friend
out of everyone he met. He made a loving family and served as an example to
many of compassion,
devotion, and commitment.
His dedication to family was only eclipsed by the 63 year relationship filled
with laughter, joy and
gambling. Their love was a testament to love itself, demonstrating to all who
knew them that love
triumphs at times of hardships and blossoms during times of the greatest joys.
Due to COVID-19 we are
unable to have a funeral and our family is just asking for prayers during this
hard time a memorial will be
held at a later date. www.burnsfuneral.com

Tribute Wall

JP

“ Our sincere condolences to the family & friends of Mr. Spradley. He was our children’s teacher at Aetna School and a very conscientious, excellent one. He really cared about his students. He was so proud that our son, Jim was a West Point graduate & a veteran of the first Gulf War. He had a wonderful “Welcome Home” tribute for Jim which was greatly appreciated. We’re sure many of his former students later realized how fortunate they were to have been in his class.

James,Sr. & Nancy Petro - April 26, 2020 at 02:20 PM

RG

“ I worked with Richard at Brunswick School. He was always sharing his ideas with the new teachers on staff. When the ‘67 snowstorm hit Gary , he was instrumental in helping several of the teachers get to their cars so they could get home. He was quite a guy. My condolences to Rich’s family. Rest In Peace Rich.
Ralph Gonzalez

Ralph Gonzalez - April 22, 2020 at 09:33 AM

RS

“ Judy,
We just learned about the passing of Rich. We want you to know how sorry we are, and I want you to know how sorry I am that we let our friendship lapse. Rich was a tremendous friend to me at the beginning of my teaching career. I truly am saddened to know he has passed away.
Ron and Peggy Smith

ron smith - April 19, 2020 at 06:24 PM

JS

“ To Richards family I am sorry for your loss!
Richard was s fine man!!

judy schipani - April 17, 2020 at 01:09 PM

SH

“ All our thoughts and prayers go out to the spradley family. The
Kenneth heinz family.

sandra heinz - April 17, 2020 at 12:09 PM

DO

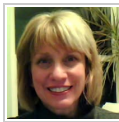
“ He was my Science teacher and every time I came into his class he
would sing Dawn go away I'm no good for you and i would turn red
he was my favorite teacher in 6th grade

Dawn Overman - April 14, 2020 at 07:40 PM

RM

I am so glad that we were able to re-connect later in life (thanks to
social media). As a student I was less than ideal, He and I had our
share of meetings with his "board of education" that was so
prominently displayed in his office. I am so thankful that he provided
that discipline that was lacking in my life. I now know how instrumental
he was in my formative pre-teen years. A really good man that had
such an impact on so many. Rest easy big guy.

Ron Mundy - April 15, 2020 at 08:09 AM



Fabulous teacher! Always looked forward to going to his class. As Ron
said, nice to reconnect a few years ago and see his demeanor & spirit
had not changed in almost 50 years. Sad that he is gone, but so glad
he impacted my life.

Megan Cecil - April 15, 2020 at 05:36 PM

CM

Mr. Spradley was my 6th Grade Math teacher at Aetna Elementary. Through the years, I have always thought of the impact he had on me and was always thought of fondly. May his memory be eternal!

Cathie (Zaharias) Mashburn - April 17, 2020 at 03:08 PM

CS

I just learned today of Sprad's passing. We spent a few years of our young lives in Ball State's Wagoner Hall. Sprad always managed to entertain our wing during the long winter nights in Muncie. Then, in Gary, and later, it was always a comfort to know he was around. He is missed. It is a blessing to have known him.

Chuck Steele - April 24, 2020 at 09:05 AM

LV

To the Spradley Family:

Rich was a good friend and colleague. He will be truly missed and remembered for his charismatic personality. excellent work ethic and leadership qualities, and kindness to everyone he met.

*With deepest sympathy,
Lou Vasquez and Family*

Lou Vasquez - April 25, 2020 at 03:27 PM

TB

Judy, It is with deep sadness to hear Rich passed. Even though we loss touch, we often talked about the great times we had together. May he rest in peace, and again our heart felt condolences. TOM & PAT BROOKS

Thomas & Pat Brooks - April 29, 2020 at 04:47 PM

GA

Just seeing this. Was my science teacher, will never forget how he told us about John Kennedy being assassinated, he later tried to get permission for us to fig up a time capsule we planted at Brunswick school but to no avail. Great man.

Georgene cichocki addison - February 27, 2024 at 06:10 PM

PH

Had Mr. Spradley for Math and Science in 6th grade (64-65). He was a great teacher and made classes interesting. He could be pretty funny also. One of my two favorite teachers ever.

Paul Hill - May 05, 2025 at 09:35 PM