



## Richard Jasper Reece

June 26, 1948 - February 17, 2026

Richard Jasper Reece, a loving husband who appreciated the beauty of nature, music and words, died February 17, 2026 in Santa Rosa, California. He was 77. Rich was born June 26, 1948, in Kansas City, Missouri, to Jasper and Mary Beth Reece.

Growing up with his younger siblings, Jim and Beverly, he excelled in academics and loved to read and write. For young Rich, a good day was fishing with his buddies or golf with his dad. He graduated from Edina High School in Edina, Minnesota and St. Thomas College in St. Paul.

Rich and [then] wife Charlene happily welcomed two children, Evan Richard and Anne Kathleen. Rich was a devoted dad, and his son and daughter adored him. He loved to read Annie's poems and observe the habits of the pet cats in their lives. And he was a fan of Evan at his track meets and when he was playing his guitar.

Rich turned his penchant for reading and writing into a career. He worked as editor of Catholic Digest in New London, Connecticut, before moving to Raleigh, North Carolina in December 2004, to start a new magazine in the diocese.

Never mind his notebook and camera, interviews felt like conversations to his

sources because of his easy-going nature. And never mind his red pen on paper, corrections felt like mentorship to his writers. When he wrote columns, Rich was just as likely to explore what he didn't know as what he knew. He published corrections when the magazine made a mistake and posed questions to his readers.

Rich was a fan of baseball — the Braves in the National League, the Angels in the American and, later in his life, the Yankees. He enjoyed classical music, leaving the library with a good book and a Rob Roy cocktail.

He and his high school prom date, Bonnie Sue West, reconnected around the time of their 50th class reunion. On a website for the event, he offered her an apology for being the worst prom date. She replied and what followed was their love story. There were emails, a visit from Rich to San Clemente, California where Bonnie was living, other visits and a wedding on November 7, 2015. Rich retired in March 2016. They made homes on the North Carolina coast, in the North Carolina mountains and, finally, in Sonoma County, where they moved in 2025. Over meals together, puzzle solving and jazz on the speakers, she called him sweetheart, and he called himself the luckiest man.

Health challenges were a part of their lives, too. Rich was diagnosed with congestive heart failure and COPD in November 2018. But he persevered with Bonnie, who cared for him tirelessly.

Rich was predeceased by his parents, his sister Beverly Kathleen Krieg and, sadly, both of his children. He's survived by his wife, his brother James Reece (Libby Larsen), brother-in-law Thomas Krieg, Charlene Reece, granddaughter Gwyn Jarrett and grandson Jamie Reece.

The family will hold a private memorial. Those who wish to remember Rich with a gift are encouraged to consider Best Friends Animal Society, the Nature Conservancy or a charity of their choice.



# Tribute Wall

DY

“ *I meant America's first female priest!*

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**Donald Yates** - March 28 at 11:59 PM

DY

“ *I met Rich in his bachelor days at grad school at Duke. We were in some English classes together (I remember a Melville and Hawthorne seminar) and hung out talking about girls. He was in love--or I should say awe--over one of the other grad students who wanted to be America's first Catholic priest. The next year, everyone was gone from orientation and only I came back out of that large class. Rich and I corresponded though and he was my best man when I got married. I visited him in Minneapolis once. Late in life he popped up on Facebook. He was always the same Rich as far as I knew--down to earth, direct, personable, loquacious, witty, listening, never asking for much, never in a hurry, never judging anyone severely. A real mensh. He had a wicked gift for satire. I knew Charlene, too, and his brother and sister-in-law slightly. If ever there was someone with family man written all over him, that was Rich. I was sorry to read of his passing.*

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**Donald Yates** - March 28 at 11:58 PM

JR

“ Rich was the best brother anyone could have. Our sister Beverly always turned to Rich for support and advice, and they were both so smart - they were peas in a pod.

*I spent just about every day with Rich growing up - playing sports, fishing, golfing, looking for golf balls, going to the library, looking for agates, going to movies, playing ping pong, hanging out ... I constantly think about the fun we had.*

*Rich was incredibly smart without ever showing it. He was quietly supportive of me, unless I was in trouble, and then he would be loudly supportive of me.*

*My entire life, I watched Rich closely, even from a distance, as he taught me how to live.*

*I will miss him every day, but I am so lucky to have had him as my brother and I will still talk with him regularly.*

*Love to my smarter older brother, Jim*

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**jim reece** - March 04 at 10:17 PM

HW

*Rich was not only smart but also a wonderful writer. If that wasn't true, he and Bonnie never would have had their wonderful life together. I was in a chaotic kitchen remodel and terribly busy when Rich's two paragraph remembrance of his time in Edina was posted. I decided to take the time to read the first short paragraph only, but because it was so beautifully written I decided to read the second paragraph which had the last line, "And apologies to Bonnie West for being the worst prom date ever." I forwarded it to Bonnie who replied back to Rich with an email that said, "Well I wasn't exactly Miss Excitement either!" And that was the beginning of their wonderful life together. I spent a good bit of time visiting them and Rich was a gem among men. I was so happy to get to know him. His is a great loss for those who knew him. Love to Bonnie and his family, Holly Walker*

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**Holly Walker** - March 10 at 06:48 AM