



Richard Kevin Sharkey

November 2, 1953 - December 14, 2025

Richard Kevin Sharkey was born November 2, 1953, in Gregory, South Dakota, to Vincent and Ruby (Dugan) Sharkey. He passed away at home in the company of his beloved wife on December 14, 2025.

Celebration of life service will be held at 11:00 a.m. at All Faiths Funeral Home on Tuesday, December 23, with friends and family gathering from 10 am until the time of the service. Kevin's service will be livestreamed and viewable on this site.

Memorials may be sent to Urban Abbey Church of Omaha, or to the family for later designation.

He was the youngest of five children: three sisters, Bette Blankenship, Bonnie Arend, and Mary Ann Graff, and one brother, Donald. Ten years ago, his life was enriched by the beloved addition of another sister, Dawn Ward. Rich was delighted that he was no longer the baby.

After the family moved from the ranch/farm, Rich spent his early years in Mitchell, South Dakota. He helped his mother teach organ lessons and won the state music competition in trumpet. He also played guitar and wrote his own compositions. Raised and confirmed in the Catholic faith, he attended minor seminary, where the focus was on spiritual formation, character development, and academics. Although he did not continue in seminary, the foundation of that education helped shape his keen intellect and strong

character. He attended high school in Mitchell and was proud to have served as the South Dakota youth campaign leader for George McGovern's presidential campaign—even though they were soundly defeated. Politics remained a lifelong passion.

Rich held a number of interesting and demanding jobs. He worked in a gold mine, and in a coal mine where he drove 17-foot-tall 100-ton Euclid trucks. He drove concrete for Reeves Concrete and left his bachelor's degree program in South Dakota to become a roustabout during the lucrative Wyoming oil boom of the 1970s. Later, recognizing that his body was taking a beating and that it might be better to work with his mind, he returned to school. He served in the South Dakota Army National Guard on a howitzer crew and completed his BA in business administration at the University of Wyoming in Laramie.

Rich married Tina (Shafer), and two children were born to this union: Amanda Lee and Brian Vincent (Rachel). Rich and Tina divorced in 1989.

A career in retail management brought Rich and Brian to Grand Island, Nebraska. In 1993, Rich and Shari Schnuelle began a conversation that continued until he passed. They married in 1997. Rich was the epitome of “still waters run deep”. He was known for his beautiful deep bass voice and a wicked sense of humor. Shari says he was the kindest man she's ever known. Spending even a few moments with them allowed others to feel that their connection was so deep, they had found a beautiful friendship within their devoted love for each other. Rich's business career was realigned to loss prevention, and he completed his professional life as an area investigator covering a five-state region. While much of the work involved computers and data analysis, he secretly delighted in the moments when he could chase down and cuff a shoplifter or reduce “shrink” for the stores he worked with, including Pamida, ShopKo, Sears, and Gordman's. Most of all, he deeply enjoyed the people he worked with. Rich later attended graduate school at the

University of Nebraska at Kearney in the community counseling program.

Rich loved working with his hands, both mechanically and in woodworking. He loved to cook and was deeply creative, eventually taking up oil painting and producing beautiful landscapes. He loved the outdoors, especially Wyoming, and treasured fishing trips with family. Exceptionally intelligent and thoughtful, he read incessantly and had a remarkable ability to synthesize information and present new ways of thinking.

A fiercely moral man, Rich was deeply concerned with justice and with what was good and right. He cared for those less fortunate, for the stranger, for immigrants, and for the downtrodden. An unabashed feminist, he wanted all people to have equal opportunities to fulfill themselves in work, family life, and culture. He loved cars and monster trucks, and he cultivated a taste for opera, art, and Boston Terriers, though for Burt the corgi mix remained his heart dog. Even while terribly ill, he remained himself and fought the good fight. Cancer did not win. It only changed the timeline.

Rich delighted in his grandchildren, Shania, Mariah, Keegan, Gawain, Airyanna, Colton, Madison, and Bridger. Illness prevented him from traveling, but he did meet one of his great-grandchildren, Shaleah. He loved great-grandchildren Kingston, Carter, and Hayze from a distance due to immunocompromise, the pandemic, and his cancer diagnosis. Airyanna is expecting the next great-grandbaby.

Rich was predeceased by his grandparents and parents; his sister Bette Blankenship, her husband Richard, and their son, Greg; his sister Mary Ann Graff; and his great-nephew, Josh Weber.

He is survived by his wife, Shari; his son Brian (Rachel) and their children

Colton, Madison, and Bridger, and his daughter Amanda and her children Shania, Mariah, Keegan, Gawain, and Airyanna; his brother-in-law Robert Schnuelle and niece Rebekah Polski; his sister Bonnie and her children, nephew Bradley (Norma) Arend and their children, great-niece Ashley Arend and great-nephew Tyler Arend, and niece Kristi (Stuart Christian) and their children, great-niece Marissa (Adam) Kappes, great-nephews Devon Weber, and Carter and Tanner Christian; his brother Donald, (Susan) and their children, nephews Troy, Todd and Dylan Sharkey, and niece Emily (Jacob) Palo, and great-niece Ruby Palo; his sister Dawn (David) Ward and their children, niece Raishelle (Justin) Meagher and children, great-nephews Alexander Ojeda, Atlas Meagher, and Titus Meagher, nephew Ronnie Ward, great-niece Zoey Ward, and niece Brittany Ward (Donny); brother-in-law Ken Graff and his children, niece Kim Graff (Doug Turner) and her daughter, great-niece Sofia, and niece Lisa (Evan) McMasters and their children, great-nephews Vincent, Michael, and Andrew; along with many cousins and friends, and his beloved dogs, Buddy and Olaf.

Previous Events

Gathering of friends and family

DEC **23**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

All Faiths Funeral Home
2929 S Locust St
Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 398-2929
allfaiths@giallfaiths.com
<https://www.giallfaiths.com/>

Celebration of Life Service

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Tribute Wall



“ *All Faiths Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Richard Kevin Sharkey*



All Faiths Funeral Home - December 23, 2025 at 10:09 AM

DN

Beautiful, touching service and honor to Rich. May he Rest in Peace. Thank you for the honor of being able to join. Deb and Greg Nicol

Deb and Greg Nicol - December 23, 2025 at 12:48 PM

MT

“ *To the Family of Rich: I'm so sorry to hear of his passing. He was one of the 'neighborhood' kids that spent time with each other. I will always remember his deep voice and good times at Holy Family School. May he Rest In Peace. Marianne Ewing Texley MHS class 1972*

Marianne Ewing Texley - March 27 at 04:37 PM

DS

“ *Don and Susan purchased the Simply Elegant Sp athiphyllum for the family of Richard Kevin Sharkey.*



Don and Susan - December 19, 2025 at 08:32 PM