

Richard Dean Fisher

September 28, 1939 – December 8, 2019

Obituary

Richard Fisher was a devoted supporter and board member of Bemis Historical Society. He was dedicated to the historic preservation of the Bemis Mill Village. Richard was the contractor in the rehabilitation of the auditorium into our present Bemis Museum.

Richard Dean “Dick” Fisher was born on September 28, 1939, in Bemis, Tennessee, to William Benton and Acenah Mills Fisher. He was part of a close-knit family of 13 children. In his younger days in Jackson he played Little League, Babe Ruth, and American Legion baseball. He was in the first graduating class of South Side High School in 1957, where he excelled in baseball, football, and basketball. He attended the University of Tennessee at Knoxville on a baseball-football-basketball scholarship and graduated in 1965 with a BS in Business Administration. He was a US veteran having served in the National Guard.



In 1965, he married the former Janie Patterson of Jackson, TN. They made their home and began to raise their 3 children Sally, Ricky, and John in Milan. As their children grew up, Richard and Janie were extremely active in their children’s education and athletics. In 1983 Janie passed away from leukemia. Throughout these years Richard worked at ITT and then at H & M Construction in Milan as a Project Manager and later became Sr Vice-President of Project Management. During this time Richard was involved in numerous civic clubs and community activities, such as the Milan School Board, Milan Chamber of Commerce, and as a Babe Ruth and a Little League Coach.

In 1984 Richard married the former Sandra (Sandy) Ary Haase whose children are Brad and Mandy. “Dick and Sandy” resided in Milan and were involved in the local business community, schools, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. In 1989 Richard founded Fisher Construction and chose to locate his new business in downtown Milan. With the help of many great employees, his friends in the local business community, and contacts in the local construction industry he built his business into one of the most respected firms in West Tennessee. Richard managed the firm until his retirement when his son, John, succeeded him. Richard continued to give his support and advice through the years. Throughout this time Richard was involved in the local community working with the West Tennessee Healthcare Foundation, YMCA, CASA, Exchange Club, Chamber of Commerce, and many others. Richard also attended Milan Cumberland Presbyterian Church and served as an Elder and Sunday School Teacher during this time.

Richard later moved to Bemis where he met and married the former Judy Shell Dennison of Ridgely and Jackson, TN in 2013. While in Bemis and Jackson during this time he was involved in multiple organizations and community activities, such as advisor to the Board of the Former 1916 Rosenwald School & West Bemis Community Center, Board Member

of the Bemis Historical Society, Member of West TN Storytellers Club, Active Citizen of the Bemis, TN Community, IONA Community and supporter, Church Affiliations with Anderson Presbyterian Church and First Baptist Bemis.

Richard had many different very special nicknames that relate to many different times and roles in his life - Tootie, Dick, Dad, Grandpa, Pa, Pepaw, Uncle Richard, Papa Tooty, Mr. Fisher... and he took these roles seriously.

He was an incredible father and even more incredible grandfather. His grandchildren were his most precious legacy, evident by the time and attention given to them. He created endless opportunities to ensure that they would understand the importance of love, hard work, and treating others with kindness and respect. Through every season of his life he purposefully created memories through photographs, storytelling, paintings, songs, and poems at the lake house, which left his grandchildren with a tremendous appreciation for the outdoors and their family.

Richard is survived and remembered by so many: his wife Judy, his daughter Sally (Michael) Via, and sons Rick (Rose Mary) and John (Becky) from his first marriage to Janie Patterson Fisher, who preceded him in death in 1983; his former wife Sandra Ary Fisher and her children Mandy (Chris) Kato and Brad (Linda) Haase; grandchildren Ricky Dean, Lily, Hal, Martha, Dominic, Gabe, Max, Ella, John, Ryan, Jack, Lucas, Olivia, Hank, Maddie, Joe, and Clara; and great grandchild Camilla Mae; Judy's children Sara (Dan) Fuller, Michael Dennison, and Chesley (Jenny) Dennison and Judy's grandchildren Zach, Sara, Jozeph, Bella, and Sophie. Richard is also survived by his siblings Kenny (Susan), David (Annette), Paul (Beverly), Ronald (Lenyr), Alice (Joe) Isaac, Louise (Charles) Blankenship, Bobby (Dorothy), and preceded in death by his siblings Benton Jr. (Betty), Nell (Bill) Jones, Betty (Fred) Short, Thomas (Claire), and George (Jolena), and by many, many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions be sent to one of the following organizations: Walter Brewer Bemis Community Center (West Bemis Rosenwald School), Bemis Historical Society, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/jackson-tn/richard-fisher-8954954>