



Fred A. Richard

April 14, 1947 - January 16, 2026

Fred A. Richard, aged 78, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend to all, passed away on January 16, 2026, in Athens, Georgia, after a courageous five-year battle with leukemia.

Fred was born on April 14, 1947, in Ottawa, Canada to Adrien and Ethel (Needham) Richard. He received his early education in French and spent two years in seminary preparing for the Catholic priesthood before, as he later joked, “discovering girls.” He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of British Columbia in 1969.

After college, Fred joined the staff of the Canadian Parliament, later transferring to the diplomatic corps. His career took him to Washington, D.C., Sydney, Australia, and Chicago, Illinois.

Fred met the love of his life, Peggy Ryan, while both were vacationing in Hawaii and they were married on January 20, 1979, sharing nearly 47 years of marriage. Parenting brought Fred his greatest joy. He poured himself into the lives of his children and grandchildren, teaching Sunday school, volunteering with Vacation Bible School, and embracing every chance to hold babies.

In 1985, Fred left government service and embarked on a wide-ranging professional journey. Along the way, the family lived in Chicago, Illinois, Camden County, Georgia, and Fernandina Beach, Florida, before settling in Winder, Georgia in 2019, a place Fred and Peggy often said made them happier than ever.

Fred had a deep love for those who felt like outcasts, which he expressed most powerfully through service. He devoted nine years to the Kairos prison ministry. His warmth and authenticity earned him honorary recognition at several Georgia prisons. He was known especially for his hugs, which made countless people feel safe, seen, and cared for.

Fred's determined fight with cancer far exceeded medical expectations, allowing him the extraordinary gift of time: time enough for each of his grandchildren to know him, love him, and form lasting memories of their "Papa" and "Grandad."

Beginning in 1986, Fred wrote an annual Christmas letter that became a beloved tradition among family and friends—beginning each letter with "Dear Friends, Family and Creditors." His letters were cherished for their humor, warmth, and gratitude.

Fred is survived by his wife, Peggy; his children, Andrea (Carl) Schindler and Dan (Laura) Richard; his grandchildren, Aria and Baz Schindler and Ethan, Caleb and Lyla Richard; and his sisters, Claire Richard and Betty Humphrey. A celebration of life service for Fred Richard will be held on Saturday, January 31, 2026 at 2:00 pm at Winder First United Methodist Church, 280 N Broad St, Winder, GA. The service will be followed by a reception.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Fred's memory to Eagle Ranch (<https://www.eagleranch.org/>).

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JAN 31. 2:00 PM (ET)

Winder First United Methodist Church
280 N. Broad Street
Winder
Winder, GA 30680

Reception

JAN 31 (ET)

Winder First United Methodist Church
280 N. Broad Street
Winder
Winder, GA 30680

Following the Service, a Reception will be held in the Fellowship Hall of the Church.