



Richard A. DesRoches

July 11, 1934 - October 14, 2015

Salisbury – Richard A. “Dick” DesRoches, 81, of Salisbury, passed away on Wednesday, October 14, 2015, with loving family by his side, at Country Center for Health and Rehabilitation in Newburyport after a lengthy illness.

He was born on July 11, 1934, in Amesbury a son of the late Romeo and Lenore (Patnode) DesRoches. Raised in Amesbury, he attended Saint Joseph’s School and graduated from Amesbury High School with the Class of 1952 where he participated in many clubs and enjoyed performing in the school theatre, being voted ‘Best Actor’ by his classmates.

Shortly following his graduation Dick enlisted in the U.S. Army and happily served his country during the Korean War. He was selected in open competition as Soldier of the Month as the most outstanding soldier in the 24th Infantry Division during September 1954. Above all, Dick was especially proud of his time spent on Special Duty with the Chaplain’s Section where he spent two months assisting the chaplain by helping with religious services, playing the organ, making improvements to the chapel, and helping to organize parties and programs for thousands of Korean orphan children throughout the Christmas holiday. He was honorably discharged in 1955 and then went on to a long career in positions of increasing responsibility with the former Bailey Corporation in Seabrook, NH, retiring in 1996 after 44 years of service.

Of all his jobs, Dick would tell you that his favorite was being a father. He was most happy in the company of his family and his greatest joy was his five granddaughters. During his retirement Dick enjoyed reading, gardening, theatre, and movies.

Dick shared 56 years of marriage with his wife, Jeanne E. (Parent) DesRoches. In addition to his wife, he leaves three children, Michael DesRoches and his wife Linda of Londonderry, NH, Laurie Harrigan and her partner Rick Girardin of Portsmouth, NH, Stephen DesRoches and his wife Linda of North Attleboro, five grandchildren, Casey, Molly, Courtney, Emma and Olivia, his sister, Lenore "Pat" LeBlanc of Amesbury, and several dear nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his two brothers, Robert and Edgar "Slugger" DesRoches.

Private services will be held at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations be made in Dick's memory to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105, www.StJude.org. Arrangements are by the Remick & Gendron Funeral Home-Crematory, Hampton, NH.

Tribute Wall



“ *Richard A. DesRoches*

September 18, 2022 at 12:49 AM

“ Celebration of Life - Part 1

Dad would have been, in his words, “tickled pink” at the outpouring of love for him and our family during this difficult time for us. As you know, he wasn’t much into pomp and circumstance, and wished for us not to mourn his passing, but rather to celebrate his life. So it is only fitting that we join here today, in one of his favorite restaurants, to celebrate all things ‘Dick’.

By looking at the many pictures and memorabilia we’ve assembled for our tribute, you can get a glimpse of the full life Dad enjoyed – a passionate actor and lifelong lover of the theatre and movies; a dedicated serviceman, a loving husband, an adoring father and grandfather, a fierce friend and trusted mentor to those he considered family and folded into his circle of care. A devoutly spiritual man who found strength in God and family.

Unquestionably, no one knew my father more completely than my mother, his partner in, well, everything for 56 years. You don’t spend that much time together without becoming a single force, so much a part of the other that you no longer know where one ends and the other begins. If Mom were delivering this tribute she would share stories on a level that only she could know as Dad’s wife, but I have the honor of introducing you, from my heart’s eye, to the man I knew as “Dad”.

To me, the proverb “still waters run deep”, could not more aptly describe my father. Often referring to himself as “Captain Dum Dum” or “C-“, his unassuming way concealed great depths of character and intelligence. Existing quietly in the background he listened while everyone else spoke their mind, his face buried in a book but his ears open to everything. He was a keen observer of life with a profound understanding of, and sensitivity to, the human condition. He was a voracious reader and to say that he was well-read is a drastic understatement. My father was beyond humble.

If you were wise enough to ask for his thoughts, you would be blown away by his insights into love, life, politics, theatre, literature, religion, and so much more – including sports, the Patriots and all things Tom Brady and Logan Mankins.

Laurie - November 06, 2015 at 09:27 AM

JW

Thank you for sharing that wonderful tribute to your father. My thoughts and prayers go out to all of your family. He will be missed. The wonderful memories that we have of our lived ones helps to bring us peace with their passing. I have fond memories of Dick and the rest of his family as I was a neighbor of theirs when they lived on first St.lake attitash. They were wonderful neighbors.

Janet allison welch - January 26, 2016 at 10:07 PM

“ Celebration of Life - Part 2

Like a teacher, Dad introduced me to the works he most admired. It is because of Dad that I know that George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion was the basis for the musical My Fair Lady. That James Dean received posthumous Best Actor Academy Award nominations for his performances in adaptations of two of my favorite novels, Edna Ferber's Giant and John Steinbeck's East of Eden, his copies of those titles a treasured part of my library. That the line "Whatever Lola wants Lola gets!" is from the musical Damn Yankees. It is because of Dad that I know it is a huge challenge to any actor to play Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman. Or that I ever read the brilliant novel Song of Solomon by Toni Morison, a famous African American writer of the black experience. (He found that gem for \$.99 cents in a goodwill store in Londonderry and passed it along to me.) And I know that Dad jokingly considered Thomas Hardy "highbrow" and several years ago he kept a lifelong promise to himself to tackle "Tess of The Durbervilles", "Jude The Obscure", and "The Mayor Of Casterbridge", in succession, being originally introduced to Hardy's "Return Of The Native" as mandatory reading in high school. A while back Dad passed on to me his entire collection of plays. One of my most favorite things in the world is to open the cover of one of the older books to find his familiar name tag and if I'm lucky, a newspaper clipping of the stage performance he neatly folded and placed inside which is now yellowed with age around the edges – like buried treasures for me to find. It's hard to adequately describe the feeling I get knowing he held that same book in his hand, turned those same crisp pages and savored those same words, wondering if he was moved by the same thoughts and emotions as I. The most gentle and kind man I have ever known, Dad led by example. He showed genuine concern for others over himself and although he never sought recognition personally, he was the first to praise others for their unselfish acts. He would often write to me, "I tell ya Laurie, there are angels out there", talking about the kind neighbors who helped Mom and him upkeep the yard through his

declining health. Although he would never admit it, my Dad WAS one of those Angels – whether it be helping orphans in Korea; taking a neighbor in need to church every Sunday; or caring enough to write a moving response to a troubled teen’s pleas, Dad unfailingly would lend an ear or offer sage advice through difficult times. Stephen always said he would give you the shirt off his back if he had to.

I can tell you that Dad’s love of his wife and children was rivaled only by the love he felt for his 5 granddaughters. He was an emotional being who wore his heart on his sleeve, wonderful traits embodied in both Emma and Casey especially. Of Courtney and Olivia he would say they were the strong, athletic ones who nobody was going to push around. And Molly, well he referred to her as his natural beauty. My Dad measured success by his own yard stick, and he believed his family made him the wealthiest man alive.

Laurie - November 06, 2015 at 09:26 AM



What a lucky girl you must be rooms have such beautiful memories of your dad

Eddie Rupkus - April 09, 2016 at 07:48 PM

“ Celebration of Life - Part 3

Many of you here today have shared with me your own stories of my Dad and for that I am forever grateful - remembering him as “always a ray of sunshine”, a “heart and soul man”, and believing that “the world today sorely needs kindness like his.” Even friends who spent time with him only once or twice called to tell me what a wonderful man he was and how thoroughly they enjoyed talking with him at gatherings. People instantly liked him, remembering his great charisma and the caring way he had about him. It is clear to me that Dad left an impression on everyone he met.

So, what will I remember most about my father? I made a list last night that went on and on and on, but here are a few favorites:

- How he ironed his handkerchiefs and folded and stacked them neatly in his top drawer, all 30 or so of them. I received an email at least once a week that included his dripping sinuses as a topic of discussion.*
- Laughing our asses off while playing the card game Phase 10, Casey shamelessly lobbying to sit to Grampy’s left, counting on the fact that he would invariably and repeatedly mess up and discard a card that she needed.*
- How excited he was when Mom gave him his “allowance”, he used to tell me how rich he was and “secretly” greased the palms of us kids with \$20 bills to use for gas or extra spending money. He left this earth with \$120 in his wallet which my mother fittingly divided up between Michael, Stephen and me to use to buy adult beverages today. I’m going to use my \$40 to enjoy Dad’s Pink Drink, essentially a Bombay Sapphire gin and tonic with a maraschino cherry, some of the cherry juice, a sprig of mint and a squeeze of lime.*
- How he gave me a package of marshmallow peeps every Easter,*

without fail, up until this past Easter, knowing how much I still liked to rip off their little heads with my teeth.

- *Sharing books and our ensuing discussion after we both finished reading them, opening my mind to a differing interpretation from his experiences and perspective. I especially loved reading the books he described to me as “an amazing read, plus a lot of good sex!”, as he did the Island of The Swans by Ciji Ware.*

- *His “go big or go home” attitude about gardening. When we were kids he would turn our entire side yard into a vegetable garden, with rows of corn so high it’s all you could see while looking out the kitchen window. Every year he had Mr. Pettengill from the nearby farm come by with his tractor to plow it. Over the years his garden got smaller but his passion never waned. As he would say, he loved “playing in the yard!”*

Laurie - November 06, 2015 at 09:25 AM

“ Celebration of Life - Part 4

- *How he meticulously polished my boots in that special way he learned while in the Army. The key he told me was to hold a flame to the polish to cure it, then give it a thorough buffing. On the photo board is one of my favorite pictures of him, in the army sitting in what he called the “powder pit” shining his boots. He told me that’s where he used to sit to write his letters home, too.*
- *Calling him on the phone if I needed a word for a crossword puzzle that had anything to do with theatre, book titles and authors, or actors. Even while in the hospital when he felt at his worst and his short term memory was escaping him, Dad could rattle off the top of his head a given composer, director or actor, without second thought.*
- *That he thought Marilyn Monroe was not only the sexiest creature to grace the planet, but that she was overlooked by Hollywood as the best comedic actress ever.*
- *How much he enjoyed spending the holidays with the entire family. He loved immersing himself in what he referred to as the “cacophony that is our gang!” happily sitting aside to watch and listen to the action. Each Christmas I would give him a bottle of Knob Creek bourbon along with an assortment of whiskey nips and we’d sample them in eggnog throughout the day.*
- *The basil plants he grew for me every summer, looking long and hard for my favorite Thai Basil, finding just the right spot in the garden for it to thrive under his care. I made many a jar of delicious pesto from that basil.*
- *How his emails, always with the exact same “Hey Gorgeous” subject line and beginning in his Shakespearean way with “How be thee?” began my day with a smile. Anything from reminding me to travel safely in inclement weather to offering a critical review of a*

book I loaned him that he finished reading in 2 days. I loved hearing about \$2 bargain shirts from Kohl's and \$.25 books from Hannaford; his opinion on a political candidate or current event; concern about an upcoming dentist or doctor appointment; or an update on his garden with the exact arrangement of the beds and what's planted in each.

- The way he talked about my mother - Meeting her, falling in love with her, respecting her and all she represented to him: A strong, wickedly smart, financially frugal and generous woman who he never stopped seeing as his sexy size 9 bride. He always used to tell people he was totally enamored with his three kids, but in the pecking order of life, Mom came first, and he made sure we three kids knew it. During Dad's difficult last months, I was privileged to witness tender moments between them that provided a deep insight into a life of love, commitment, and mutual respect in an emotional way I never before saw.*

Laurie - November 06, 2015 at 09:24 AM

“ Celebration of Life - Part 5

Although there are countless more memories to share, I'd like to end with a recent one that will stay in my heart forever. In the nursing home about a week before Dad passed, he dreamt that he directed Emma in one of his most favorite plays, Our Town by Thornton Wilder. It genuinely touched his heart to have one of his offspring involved in theatre and he asked my mother to make sure that his original copy of that book made it safely to her as his gift. I don't know if she knows it yet but hidden inside that book is one of those special treasures of his, an old folded newspaper clipping of his most favorite inspirational poem, Invictus, by William Ernest Henley, an English Poet who had one of his legs amputated at the age of 17. The poem challenges us to accept responsibility for our lives no matter our circumstances, and personifies the way my Dad lived his life through to the end. It reads as follows:

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.*

In facing the progression of an illness that weakened him over the

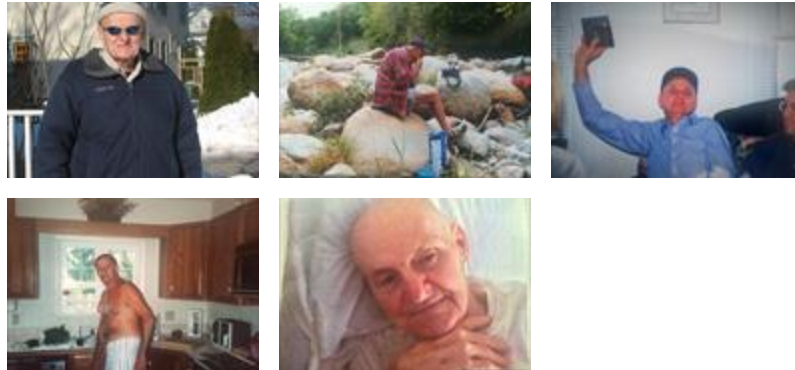
last several years, Dad embodied this creed. He departed this life the way he lived it - selflessly, bravely and on his own terms. With grace and in true "Dad" fashion, his concern in his final days was not for himself, but rather that his family would be okay once he was gone.

While writing this tribute what struck me most was how foreign it feels to refer to Dad in the past tense. I think that's going to take a while to get used to. Above anything else, I would have loved to have had one more conversation with him. I will forever miss him, our talks and his abundant light. Last week heaven certainly gained an "unconquerable soul" and I said goodbye to one of the greatest men I ever knew.

Laurie - November 06, 2015 at 09:23 AM

LA

“ 14 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Laurie - November 06, 2015 at 09:17 AM



“ *Mrs. DesRoches, Mike, Laurie and Steve*
We wanted to express our condolences on the loss of your husband and father. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all

Tom and Pam Doonan

Tom Doonan - October 22, 2015 at 12:03 PM

LH

Our heartfelt thanks for your well wishes Tom and Pam. Best, Laurie

Laurie Harrigan - November 05, 2015 at 08:44 PM

ST

Hey guys, thank you so much for your condolences. It is appreciated and means a lot to me. Talk soon.

Stephen - November 06, 2015 at 01:13 PM

TS

“ *I am very sorry to hear of Dicks passing. I have very fond memories hanging out at the Desroches house in my youth. He always made me laugh and feel at home. My sincere condolences to Jeanne, Steve, Michael and Laurie. I hope the memories of Dick ,soften the pain of his loss.*

Always,

Terry Sullivan

terry sullivan - October 22, 2015 at 11:46 AM

LH

Terry,

Thanks for remembering Dad; he always spoke fondly of you and the fun times we had hanging around the house when we were kids. Dad loved the house full of you guys!. Best, Laurie

Laurie Harrigan - November 05, 2015 at 08:49 PM

ST

Hey Terry! Thank you for your kind words. They are appreciated. I can tell you that you were one of my father's favorites. He always spoke very fondly of you. Thanks again!

Stephen - November 06, 2015 at 01:10 PM

Wendy
Giles
Tinkham

“ I was especially upset at hearing of your dad's passing when I returned to work after being off for a few days. I cared for your dad over the last few months and I adored him! His love for his family was made evident everyday as he told me story after story, always with a smile and a special look in his eyes. He certainly was a memorable man and will be missed.
May you find peace at this most difficult time.
With deepest therapy,
Wendy Tinkham



Wendy Giles Tinkham - October 21, 2015 at 06:38 AM

LH

Wendy,

My heartfelt thanks to you for the special way you cared for my Dad. He spoke often and sincerely of his talks with you and the other caregivers that went the extra mile to spend time with him. He called you his angels...

All my best,
Laurie

Laurie Harrigan - November 05, 2015 at 08:55 PM

BM

“ Dear Laurie,

We were so sorry to hear of the passing of your Dad. He certainly led a wonderful life with such a kind and memorable nature. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this time.

*Love,
Barb & Dick*



Barbara and Dick Mirick - October 20, 2015 at 01:29 PM

LH

Thanks for the kind words Barb and Dick. He certainly was a special man and this Daddy's little girl will miss him in a profound way.

*XO,
Laurie*

Laurie Harrigan - November 05, 2015 at 08:58 PM