



Richard R. "Dick" Wagner

March 16, 1941 - February 9, 2023

Richard R. "Dick" Wagner, 81, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, passed away on Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023, in Libertyville.

With his wife of 55 years, Jan, his proudest legacy are his sons, Steven (Berchetta) Wagner and Brian (Jennifer Rich) Wagner, and his 5 grandchildren, Jenson, Ava, Hope, Rosie and Nathan Wagner. A close second is his restored '57 Ford, which could often be seen at Car Fun on 21 and other local car shows.

Dick was born March 16, 1941, in Waukesha, WI, and settled in Libertyville in 1984. From an early age, he was a car guy, racing go-karts and stock cars, which he built and fixed up himself. His passion for 'anything with a motor' also extended to earning a private pilot's license and building model railroads.

In 1961, Dick was a member of the Wisconsin Army National Guard that was called up during the Berlin Crisis and was sent to Fort Lewis, Washington. After returning to Wisconsin and graduating from Carroll College in Waukesha, where he met and married Jan, he started his 35-year career at the Ford Motor Company, eventually traveling over most of the country. Dick never met a road trip he didn't love, especially if there was family to visit, an obscure landmark to learn about, or an old car to see.

When his boys were young, Dick spent many hours passing on to them his knowledge and love of racing, teaching them to fix up cars and motorcycles, and taking them to race tracks in the midwest. Later in life, he returned to his early passions, restoring a '36 Ford pickup truck and a '58 Pontiac, before his '57.

Dick was a huge supporter of all of his grandchildren's exploits, attending many baseball and hockey games and theater performances, and always bestowing upon the participating grandchild a celebratory root beer barrel, which he bought specifically for that purpose. When he wasn't able to attend, he always called the next day for an update, just to see how it went.

Dick was preceded in death by his parents, Raymond and Dorothy Wagner, his father- and mother-in-law Howard and Catherine Rosenow, his sister and brother-in-law, Beverly and Ray Orlopp, his brother-in-law, Gene Schopf, his brother-in-law, Larry Grafwallner, and his sister-in-law, Gloria Wagner. He is survived by his brother, David Wagner.

A private celebration of life will be held at a later date. Please help us fondly remember Dick by sharing a memory at www.burnettdane.com. Arrangments by Burnett-Dane Funeral Home in Libertyville, IL. For info: 847-362-3009.

Tribute Wall

DW

“ I would like to thank you, Jan for taking care of my brother especially during his final days. Your care and kindness helped me cope with what has become a tremendous loss in my life. Dick and I put on a lot of miles together. We worked on and enjoyed so many projects -- especially about cars and racing which became more than fun. They became learning experiences for us both. We had many good years --some not so good but few by comparison. I would like to propose a legacy for him which was a wish and desire fulfilled by the many trips to my workshop. We put in many hours of hard work (we called this fun!) on all the various projects - gokarts, race cars and restorations. To me my brother's greatest legacy among others is the final three vehicles the 34 Ford truck, the 58 Pontiac stock car and the 57 Ford a Jerry Unser replica which we built to honor Jerry's runs up Pikes Peak and the 1957 USAC stock car championship. They are still here despite Dicks being gone a truly great achievement. I am so glad he got to finish them all what more can I say he was my brother.

Dave Wagner - February 24, 2023 at 08:30 AM

PS

“ Uncle Dick, I will always remember your “quick wit”, your laughter, your wonderful “squeeze’s” and the questions you’d come up with for Mom, like ‘Do you remember who owned a particular store in the Waukesha of your time’!
I will miss you very much, but when I feel sad that you’re no longer with us, I will find comfort in knowing that you are surrounded by your “heavenly family”.
Love you always, Patty

Patty Schaefer - February 21, 2023 at 12:45 PM

MO

I have admired UD since I was a youngster. Remember him racing up Estberg Ave. either on the street or more likely on the sidewalk and then giving us rides on it much to my mom's dismay. You always had a joke and a story to tell. Your wealth of knowledge was unbelievable. After every conversation we had, I came away feeling a little bit smarter. Thank you for all you did for me. I will always miss you. You were a very special person to me and I am honored to call you my uncle. I love you. Until we meet again. Have some new jokes for me. Your favorite nephew.

Mike Orlop - February 21, 2023 at 01:18 PM

DW

*Uncle Dick was the "real deal." (If you know, you know!)
I cannot remember a time when UD was not around.
From living across the street from us, to traveling the east coast together. (He was kind enough to point out a 'lady of the evening ' to me, in NYC. (I can still see AJ poking him for that one! 😊)
He was the first one who let me drive a tractor. (And taught me the proper method. As not to waste gas)
I remember racing home from church, on Sundays. Literally, he and my dad drag racing home. What a blast!!
I learned how to "plan accordingly," on road trips. Because we had to "make good time. " And I still travel like that, to this day.
One of the greatest days was when UD let me DRIVE the '57!! I think I still have a smile on my face from that day.
I learned so much from him and will always treasure our time spent together.
I am still going to Gus's, UD. For that burger and an orange soda, like we planned.
Thank you for always making me feel loved and for being the world's greatest uncle!
I love you and I miss you. ❤️*

Diane Wagner-Feight - February 22, 2023 at 02:05 PM



Dick will be fondly missed by all who had the blessing of knowing him. I especially remember our many phone conversations. When calling the house I was frequently greeted by "Joe's Pizza Parlor" or some other unknown fictitious shop.

When asked how he was today, his response was "perfect!" He always spoke with a smile, that I could feel through the phone.

When Dick called our house, he would frequently ask "How is the weather on the East side? It's sunny here on the West!" This always made me smile because our houses are about two miles apart.

Dick shared his love of books and flying with Steve which further connected our families.

I am so grateful the Wagner family moved to Libertyville from New Jersey about the same time we moved here from Ohio, and our third grade sons became friends. Our families traveled through school and into adulthood together. Dick was always part of our stories.

Linda Tilton - March 16, 2023 at 01:09 PM