

# John Richard Macfarlane

*May 12, 1936 ~ June 20, 2025*

Richard Macfarlane came,as the poet Wordsworth described: “Trailing clouds of glory from God who is his home.” The date was May 12, 1936. His parents, Grant Macfarlane and Lucy Gayle Langton, had taken care of the down and outers, and Richard and his siblings caught the spirit of loving all God’s children. They raised their children in the Salt Lake Avenues area. At East High Richard was the Captain of the 1953 State Championship Football team and chosen as an All-State player that year. His coach, Talley Stevens, built a team that worked together and were friends for years. In 1954, they again won every game and the State Championship. Richard completed a year at the University of Utah as a business major and a two-year mission to the Northwestern States. These life experiences heightened his love and concern for people and increased his desire to help people improve their lives. He came to his fiancé one evening and said, “I don’t want to be a businessman like my brothers or a lawyer like another brother and my father. We won’t have much money, because I want to be a social worker and help people find more happiness in life.”

He went forth with this goal in mind. He studied with the best of teachers who guided him in caring for others. He obtained a Masters of Social Work from the University of Utah. Later he received training in Psychotherapy at Smith College School for Social Work. Employed at Family Counseling Center of Salt Lake, he aided clients for thirty-six years and was Executive Director for fifteen of those years. He served as a Legislative Advocate for Social Work, as Chairman of the State Licensing Board, as President of the Utah Chapter of NASW--the social work national organization, and for many years as a clinical faculty trainer at the U. He challenged the system to increase professional excellence. In his personal life, he would spend time coaching his N Street Lions football team. The young players learned the game and the way to get along with others. During the past 20 years, he has taken daily walks in the Avenues. While walking, he would phone and chat with “his people.” He learned about their needs and encouraged them in their goals. He didn’t care about people briefly or just for as long as it was convenient. He sustained those he loved long term. He was profoundly influenced by the devotion to God of his ancestors who gave up their homelands and came to Utah from Scotland, England, and Italy to participate in the new gospel that they knew was the way to eternal life. He revered his roots in Logan where one great-grandfather had served as Bishop for over 40 years. That always touched him as a monumental accomplishment and probably led to his willingness to accept three callings as Bishop during the adult years of his life. To him it was a privilege to guide others to the eternal goals that he held.

He died two days before his 65th wedding anniversary. His wife, Karen Cox, and the families of his five children learned of the fast-moving frontal-lobe cancer on May 30, 2025. The family decided to fill each day he lived enjoying being together. They headed to a mountain cabin to hear Grandpa’s stories. They roasted marshmallows over a huge firepit as children and grandchildren recalled special times with Grandpa. The sandhill cranes gathered

in the valley below the cabin each evening, and the family watched them while eating dinner. They encouraged Grandpa to enjoy whatever food he craved. Back home, sons took him for rides to favorite spots. Then hospice care brought comfort as he faded away. On June 20, 2025, he woke, exasperated that he was “still here.” Richard was ready to join his family members who had passed on, especially his siblings Grant, James, and John and Marilyn. He no longer will play Santa on Christmas Eve for his posterity: His son John and children Alexandra, Samantha, Luke, and Charley will miss him. Laura and her husband, John Barrus, and their children Michael, Kate, and Sarah who is married to Alex and parents of Lottie, Kennedy, and Emily won’t hear him ringing the sleigh bells as he enters the room. Son Robert and his wife Stefanie who claim Brody and his bride, Emily, and daughter Marin will find Christmas Eve less full of cheer. William (Wally) and Sammie and Will and Roman will miss “the Old Boy,” and so will son Thomas and his James and Claire. The evening of June 20, 2025, he left us trailing those clouds back to eternal life with the God he loves.

Friends and family may attend a viewing Friday, June 27, from 6 to 8 pm or on Saturday, June 28, from 10 to 10:45 prior to the funeral service at 11am, all services are at the 27th Ward, 185 P Street. Burial in the Salt Lake City Cemetery will follow immediately.

For those unable to attend the service in person, the family invites you to join via Zoom. Please click the Watch Service button above.

Memories can be viewed at https://everloved.com/life-of/richard-macfarlane/