

Richard Leonard Sidwell

August 10, 1936 ~ January 23, 2025

The world lost one of its gentle giants this week, as Richard Leonard Sidwell passed away on January 23, 2025, after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease.

Richard was born in Salt Lake City to Leonard Sidwell and Stella Bates on August 10, 1936. He was the 4th of 4 children and definitely doted on by his older siblings Irene, Robert and Ruth. Richard's dad was active duty military and so they moved multiple times during the first years of his life including to Sioux city, Iowa and Colorado Springs, CO. His early life was darkened by his mother's diagnosis of breast cancer when he was only a few years old. She had surgery, but passed away when Richard was only 9 years old. During these hard years, he spent a lot of time with his maternal grandparents in Richfield, Utah. Richard's father remarried when he was 11 years old to Maureen Joseph and Maureen truly mothered him for the rest of her life. The remarriage also brought 3 new sisters into his life - Betty, Karen and Alberta. Life wasn't always smooth sailing for the blended family, but the siblings truly learned to love each other. Richard never referred to them as his step sisters or Maureen as his step mom.

After the remarriage, the family settled into the home on Clayborne Avenue in Salt Lake City and Richard attended South High School. He then went on to University of Utah majoring in Elementary Education. He took a 2 year break to serve an LDS mission to the Eastern States mission. After the mission and graduation, Richard taught elementary school in Tremonton, Utah for 1 year. He decided he wanted to continue on with his education so he moved to Boston and attended Boston College and received a Masters in Peripatology. After graduation, he found a job in Seattle, Washington helping the blind reintegrate into the community. It was during this time that Richard was introduced to the sister of one of his basketball buddies. Ruth and Richard hit it off immediately. Richard enjoyed dating and didn't really want to settle down, but he had finally met his match in Ruth, and they married on March 23, 1965. Richard also felt he needed more skills to help the blind and people trying to reintegrate into communities so he enrolled at the University of Washington for a second masters degree in Education/Vocational Rehabilitation.

Soon after their marriage, Richard's life changed dramatically again with the birth of Terra in 1966, less than a year after they were married. Her birth was followed by Laurel in 1967, Andree in 1969 and Scott in 1972. About this time , Richard was offered a job as a vocational rehabilitation counselor in Port Angeles, Washington. The growing family needed more room and the thought of living in a small town appealed to the couple. They packed up their family and moved when Scott was less than a year old. Jennifer was born a few months after they unpacked. They lived in a small rental home until they found their dream house off of Brown Road where the family lived for the next 50 years. Cris and Mike were born here and completed the Sidwell family.

Richard continued his work as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, but soon found himself drawn into little league baseball coaching. He was given awards for his dedication and many years of service to Port Angeles Little League. He also coached soccer and basketball. During this time, he was also active in the LDS community in Port Angeles and served in multiple callings.

Richard retired from the state in 1998, but almost immediately went to work part time for Community Services helping keep people with mental illness on their proper medications. He retired from this in 2004. He never did figure out that some people actually make money when they go to work. But he definitely figured out how to make the world a better place. He spent his whole career helping the disadvantaged, the physically disabled, the mentally disabled, the mentally ill.

Richard loved baseball, especially the Mariners; golf, camping, taking walks with his dog Sparky, watching any sport on TV, and being “Grandpa Toad” to his grandkids.

Richard is preceded in death by his parents, his 6 siblings, his wife Ruth and his beautiful granddaughter Maggie Anne. We are comforted by the reunions that are happening on the other side at this time, especially with his mom Stella who he hasn’t seen in 80 years.

Richard is survived by his 7 children: Terra (Peter) Trent; Laurel (Jim) Bennett; Andree (Patricia) Sidwell; Scott (Lynae) Sidwell; Jennifer (Jason) Bringhurst; Cristopher (Diana) Sidwell; Michael (Jenny) Sidwell; 21 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

He will be buried next to Ruth, his wife of 57 years, in Port Angeles, Washington.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, February 1, 2025, at 11:00 am at the Port Angeles LDS Chapel , 591 Monroe Road, Port Angeles, WA.