



Richard Weldon Raiford, Sr.

May 2, 1941 - January 28, 2025

Richard Weldon Raiford, Sr., age 83, passed away peacefully on January 28, 2025, in Asheville, North Carolina, surrounded by the love of his family.

Born on May 2, 1941, in Atlanta, Georgia, to Thomas and Eleanor Coppedge Raiford, Rich brought kindness, humor, and a dash of Southern charm wherever life took him. A proud graduate of Druid Hills High School, Auburn University, and a U.S. Army Veteran, he cherished his Georgia roots while following his grandchildren and making homes filled with love in Atlanta, Georgia, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, and most recently, Asheville, North Carolina. Rich was a longtime member of St. John's United Methodist Church in Atlanta and St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Mount Pleasant.

Rich had a rare gift for making friends wherever he went, a natural extension of his decades-long career in the newspaper industry. He worked in the newsprint recycling business with Southeast Paper Company long before recycling became popular and later founded Peachtree Papers, sharing his passion for sustainable newspaper production practices on a global stage. Ever the conversationalist, Rich often joked that he would work until he "couldn't talk on the phone anymore," and that's exactly what he did. Rich's devotion to Auburn University was undeniable. Saturdays were best spent watching his beloved Tigers, especially when shared with his son, Weldon.

But above all, family was Rich's greatest joy and legacy. His proudest title was "Poppy," and he never missed a chance to share stories and photos of his beloved grandchildren: Mary Miles, Claire, and Rai Faulkenberry of Asheville, NC, and Richie and Maxwell Raiford of Nashville, TN. His love, pride, and delight in their lives were boundless.

Rich is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Pessie Cochran Raiford; son Richard Raiford, Jr. (Kristin) of Nashville, TN; daughter Windsor Faulkenberry (Scott) of Fairview, NC; sister Pat Thomas (Butch) of Pawley's Island, SC; and niece Holly Raiford (Dave) of Marietta, GA. Rich was predeceased by his beloved brother, Thomas Conaway Raiford, Jr. He also leaves behind a large circle of nieces, nephews, and friends.

As we celebrate his life, we find peace knowing that Rich is reunited forever with his brother and lifelong best friend, Tom Raiford, where they are both whole and healed—and most definitely laughing and playing golf.

There will be a Celebration of Life service on Saturday, April 12, 2025, at 2:00 pm at Brooks-Howell Chapel, 266 Merrimon Avenue, Asheville, NC. A reception at Brooks-Howell will follow the service.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial donations be made to First United Methodist Church of Waynesville, designated for the Hurricane Helene Relief Fund at 566 S. Haywood St., Waynesville, NC 28786.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

FEB 17. 2:00 PM (ET)

Brooks-Howell Chapel
266 Merrimon Avenue
Asheville, NC 28801

A reception at Brooks-Howell will follow service.

Tribute Wall

MM

“ *Posse and Family, so sorry to hear of Rich's passing. I have so many wonderful memories of the great times the 4 of us had when we lived in Atlanta. And then when our paths crossed again in MT. Pleasant! Rich had such a warm and funny way about him, you couldn't help but love the guy! Praying that our compassionate Lord will sustain you in the days ahead.*

Margaret Macferran

Margaret Macferran - February 12, 2025 at 02:27 PM

JH

“ *Dear Possie and Family,
So sorry to hear of Ricks passing. You both have special places in our hearts.*

Many happy memories with our St. Andrews small group and at dinners in Ion and elsewhere. Oo

We are so grateful and blessed that our paths crossed in Mt Pleasant, SC.

Gods peace, Joyce and Bryan Hassell

joyce and Bryan Hassell - February 05, 2025 at 02:06 PM

RD

“ *Possie and Family,*

I was so sorry to learn of Richard's Passing. Please know that your family is in my thoughts and prayers. May you find comfort in your memories and may God's strength sustain you in the days ahead.

Pastor Kelly Dotson

Chaplain, Brooks-Howell Home.

Rev. Kelly Dotson - February 04, 2025 at 01:16 PM

MW

“ *hi possie and family. sorry to hear about rich. he will be missed greatly. rich was the. one who called me some 45 years ago about interviewing for southeast newsprint.best job i ever had. again my condolences. morris weeks*

morris weeks - February 02, 2025 at 04:01 PM

BC

“ *Rich was a gentleman who enjoyed life fully with a keen sense of humor and ability to make one feel at ease in his presence, even a complete stranger. His love and pride for his wife and family were obvious. It has been a privilege and honor to have known him. Heaven's gain is a loss to those who knew him. He will be missed.*



Bobbi Cole - January 31, 2025 at 04:53 PM