



## Howard Cecil Richards

June 12, 1927 - October 3, 2020

Richards, Howards Cecil October 3, 2020 Age 93. Beloved husband of Verna (nee Puls). Loving father of Susan (Ronald) Minke, Karen (Gerald) Warson and Catherine (Joseph) Metz. Proud grandfather of Sarah (Andrew), Jason (Lauren) and Mark (Danielle). Adored great grandfather of Lucy, Lincoln and Harper. Funeral Services are Private. Interment Downing Cemetery, Deckerville , MI. Share memories with the family at their "On-Line Guestbook" @ WujekCalcaterra.com

Howard C Richards was born on June 12, 1927 in Royal Oak, MI. He attended Ferndale Public Schools and graduated from Lincoln High School in 1945. After high school he served in the U.S. Army until 1947, then earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Michigan State University, majoring in mathematics and education, and minoring in physical and social science. He started his career in education with Fraser Public Schools in 1951. He taught mathematics and music, and was a counselor from 1951 – 1954, while earning a Masters degree at the University of Detroit. He was named principal of Fraser Elementary School and served five years in that capacity. He was then appointed Superintendent in 1959 and was the longest serving Superintendent in the State of Michigan. He earned an educational specialist degree from Wayne State University during that time. The Board of Education honored Mr. Richards in 1970, naming the former high school the Howard C.

Richards Junior High School. In addition to his long service in education, Mr. Richards had been actively involved in church and community related services. He served as president of the Fraser Kiwanis Club, and was founder and director of the Fraser Civic Chorus. He was chairman of the communications committee of the MCASA. He was secretary and an active member of the Grosse Pointe Chapter barbershop group. He finished his career with a wonderful retirement party May 19, 1985.

He married Fraser High School valedictorian Verna Puls in 1954 and they recently celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary. She was the love of his life. A truer love story was never written. They raised three girls together, Susan, Karen and Cathy. He named his boat No Buoys! They retired to their home in Palms, MI. He loved to work his land. Verna had him install a dinner bell so she could call him in for meals! Both Howard and Verna were actively involved with their golf course and both served as president over the years. Howard started a barbershop group up north and they performed at several places. He was a consultant to the Delaware Township board and a member of the tax review board. He now has 3 son-in-laws, 3 grandchildren, and 3 great grandchildren. The family loved to visit and ride bikes, go to the beach, have bon fires and make smores. His love of family and community was unsurpassed.

Please help us celebrate his life by remembering him fondly. He touched so many lives! More than you can imagine.

\*\*\*\*Please be advised that social distancing and wearing a face covering is deeply appreciated and is mandated by the State of Michigan\*\*\*\*

# Tribute Wall

EF

“ Don't forget Jack Livingston social studies teacher at Kennedy Jr. High. Should have fired him too!

elizabeth f. - October 13, 2020 at 04:39 AM

DK

“ I was so sorry to hear of Howard C. Richards death. He was a kind, funny, and friendly man. He was also very compassionate man. When the school board wanted to fire terrible teachers like Lee O'Bryan, Robert Gordynec Margaret Bartolomei, and Laura Bass (Bassanotis), he let them stay to the detriment of many students who attended Fraser Public Schools.

debbie k. - October 13, 2020 at 04:35 AM

KC

“ I am so sorry to learn of Mr. Richards passing. My family and the Richards family were next door neighbors in the pre-Fraser days and I remember Mr. Richards very fondly as a fun and loving man. I know he will eb missed.

Kitty Conklin

K Conklin - October 09, 2020 at 04:43 AM

SM

Thank you, Kitty. Your family's (and especially your dad's) friendship meant a lot to us. Lots of great memories

sue minke - October 10, 2020 at 12:19 PM

SD

“ Prayers go out to your family with the loss of your dad. He not only was such a great dad but he sure was special to us as neighbors. I enjoyed so many of the things he built at your house for all of us to play with and have a great childhood. I could hear his cheerful whistling around the neighborhood. I loved his popcorn when we would be over there for sleepovers- not sure we got much sleep with all our giggling! I enjoyed reading all that he accomplished in life. I didn't realize all that as we were just kids just enjoying the good life your family brought to the neighborhood. Many great memories. Sorry he's gone.

Love,

Sandy(Flanagan) and Randy Dusdal

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**Sandra Dusdal** - October 09, 2020 at 02:19 AM

SM

Thank so much, Sandy. Those Flanagan-Richards days were wonderful, for sure! The staff at th senior living facility they moved to said Dad was always whistling in the halls. And, they had a popcorn machine that he stopped by every day. I am amazed at how many details you remember and your words mean a lot. Your whole family was a big part of our lives.

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**sue minke** - October 10, 2020 at 12:22 PM

RR

“ Howard Richards is a legend in Fraser lore. Serving as the district's superintendent for 26 years elevates Mr. Richards to the performance and longevity levels equal to Lou Gehrig & Cal Ripken of baseball fame. His superintendent longevity mark may never be equalled. My deepest memory of Mr. Richards is reflected in the smile in the photo that graces this page. That smile and congenial personality sent a message of encouragement to all. Fraser Public Schools stands tall today because of the rock-solid foundation Mr. Richards provided. Thanks to the Richards family for sharing your husband & father.

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**Rick Repicky** - October 09, 2020 at 12:49 AM

SM

*What a ind tribute. Thank you so much.*

**sue minke** - October 10, 2020 at 12:23 PM

SM

*Meant that to say - what a nice tribute. Thank you!*

**Susan (Richards) Minke** - October 10, 2020 at 05:11 PM

JG

“ *Rest in peace, Howard C. Richards. Great man, great kids.  
My condolences to you, Mrs. Richards, to the girls and to all who  
loved him.*

*John Giolitti*

*Fraser teacher/counselor 1966 to 2000*

**John A Giolitti** - October 08, 2020 at 10:50 PM

SM

*Thank you so much, Mr. G., for your kind words. And, thanks for  
remembering us as well. You taught me much more than art (which, as  
you and I both know, was not my skill. You may not remember, but at  
the celebration of the school naming, you told me you were relieved  
that I became an accountant!) Sue*

**Susan Minke** - October 08, 2020 at 11:17 PM

AB

“ *To the Richards Family;  
My sympathy goes out to you. He was a true professional and  
gentleman.*

*Angie Beutel, retired FHS teacher*

**angie beutel** - October 08, 2020 at 08:21 AM

SM

*Thank you, Mrs. Beutel. I remember you. I feel like you summed him up pretty well.*

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**Susan Minke** - October 08, 2020 at 11:18 PM

GM

“Cheryl and I had the good fortune to be welcomed with open arms to the Fraser school family by Howard and Verna after my appointment as superintendent in 1985. We will be forever grateful for their warm welcome.

*His advice to me. “Make your own decisions based on what you think is right and you will sleep well at night.” These are words I never forgot.*

*Sending our condolences during this difficult time to the entire Richards family.*

*Gary & Cheryl Matsche*

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**Gary Matsche** - October 07, 2020 at 11:39 PM

SM

*Thank you, Dr. Matsche. He was was sad to leave the job he loved but he was ready to enjoy his retirement and was glad to be able to pass the baton to you. The comment you referenced sounds exactly like something I know he would say. He really tried to live that way every day.*

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**Susan Minke** - October 08, 2020 at 11:23 PM

DB

*Mr. Richards was a fine human being who represented Fraser Public Schools so well. I am happy to have known him. My deepest sympathy to the Richards family and all who knew him.*

*Diane Bradley, retired Fraser teacher*

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**Diane Bradley** - October 11, 2020 at 05:12 PM

ST

“ *Richards Family -  
Mr. Richards will be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him. Having lived in Fraser most of our lives, we are fondly reminded of the man who did so much for this district whenever we pass Howard C. Richards Middle School.  
Sending our condolences to all of you and may the good memories bring you comfort during this difficult time.  
Kerry and Sheryl (Raccosta) Terman*

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**Sheryl (Raccosta) Terman** - October 07, 2020 at 08:23 PM

SM

*Thank you so much. He worked very hard to always connect the schools and the community and he felt that a very important relationship.*

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**sue minke** - October 10, 2020 at 12:25 PM

LC

“ *I signed my first job in Fraser starting in 1968. I had only met Dr. Salerno and Mr. Shahly until the Spring of 1969 I had never met Mr. Richards, nor did I know who he was, but this all changed one day when this stranger appeared at my door with my principal ,Mr. Copiellie. Seeing that I was in the middle of a math lesson, he literally took the chalk from my hand and took over the class. I was totally puzzled that someone would do this. Mr. Copiellie took me outside and explained the man in the room was Mr. Richards, our Supt. Such a nice man and a pretty good math teacher too. RIP*

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**larry cronin** - October 07, 2020 at 04:35 PM

SM

*What a wonderful story! I can see him doing that, though, Being with students was his favorite part of the job.*

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**Susan Minke** - October 08, 2020 at 11:25 PM

NM

“ Howard Richards was a truly outstanding gentleman and a leading educator in Macomb County. He was responsible for making Fraser Public Schools one of the most respected in our area. It was an honor to work with him and be guided by him.

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**Norman Marvaso** - October 07, 2020 at 03:52 PM

SM

Thank you, Mr. Marvaso. I remember you well and i know he was glad you were part of the staff.

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**Susan Minke** - October 08, 2020 at 11:27 PM

RB

“ Mr. Richards was an outstanding man. I admired him as a leader, boss and friend. He made himself available whenever or wherever he was needed. He kept Fraser Schools in the forefront of the educational community in Macomb County.

He enjoyed and participated in choral and barbershop music. You always knew he was around by the ever present whistling of a favorite tune.

HCR, as we called him, loved and was adored by his girls and wife, Verna. A fine man respected by all who knew him.

*Ray Brunzell*

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**Ray Brunzell** - October 07, 2020 at 03:13 PM

SM

*Oh, what wonderful words, Mr. Brunzell. I remember you as my principal those many years ago and I know Dad respected your leadership. He and mom moved to a senior living residence a few months ago and the desk receptionist, and many other staff, said they always knew when he was taking a walk in the halls because they heard his whistling.*

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**Susan Minke** - October 08, 2020 at 11:30 PM

JE

*“ What a wonderful man who worked so closely with my mother, DeLores Goetzinger on developing a special needs program at Fraser Schools. We also enjoyed him so much when he led the Fraser Chorale for a few years. His smile, laughter and talents will always be remembered. What a special man. So glad they dedicated a school to him so we will never forget this wonderful man. Prayers to the family and blessings  
Joyce (Goetzinger) Ellies*

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**Joyce Ellies** - October 07, 2020 at 02:48 PM

SM

*Reading these familiar names from those years ago is bringing back many memories. I remember him talking about working on that program, Mrs. Goetzinger. Finding ways to make the schools work best for everyone was something he loved doing.*

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**Susan Minke** - October 08, 2020 at 11:33 PM

SH

*“ While serving as secretary to Mr. Richards for many years it was obvious he was devoted to his job -- but even more so to his wonderful family. He was so very proud of all of you and loved you so very much. The board of education honored him by naming the remodeled middle school the Howard C Richards Junior High School.  
Sharron Henderson*

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**Sharron Henderson** - October 07, 2020 at 02:35 PM

SM

*Oh, sweet, wonderful, loyal, Mrs. Henderson! I know I called his office more than once during a work day for some personal teenage crisis and you would find a way in his schedule for him to answer my call. You always kept the many tasks he had to juggle in some kind of order somehow and you were a great work team. We kind of felt like you were part of the family. Thank you for your kind words and for all the years of loyalty.*

Susan Minke - October 08, 2020 at 11:38 PM

PH

“*Dear Aunt Verna, Sue, Karen & Cathy,  
I was so sad to hear of “Uncle Howard’s” passing. Lots of fond childhood memories spent with your family over the years. Our thoughts are with you during this time of remembrance. Fraser has continued to be a part of my life. Howard & Dad provided a strong foundation on which the school community continues to thrive today; I am grateful to be a part of that legacy.  
Much love, Paula Salerno Herbart*

Paula Herbart - October 07, 2020 at 01:33 PM

SM

*Thank you, Paula. We have great memories of you and your sisters and Uncle Ned and Aunt Elaine. And you are right that Dad and Ned did provide a strong foundation for the school system. Fraser is a great system, for sure.*

Susan Minke - October 08, 2020 at 11:41 PM

CW

“*I recognized Mr. Richards from my years as a Fraser student (Class of 1970) when he and Mrs. Richards shopped at Macy’s in Port Huron where I worked. I’d see them every couple of months and he was always so kind, friendly and smiling. We loved talking about the good old days in Fraser. He was a very nice man.*

Carol Wallen - October 07, 2020 at 09:38 AM

SM

*Thank you. He and Mom loved their trips to Port Huron and he ALWAYS loved running into people connected with the Fraser schools. He told us about you and he was always happy to get a chance to chat.*

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**Susan Minke** - October 08, 2020 at 11:43 PM

JL

“ Dear Karen,

*My heart goes out to you and your family on the loss of your wonderful father. It was such a pleasure to see the great love between your parents and devotion you and your sisters had for them.*

*Sincerest sympathy,  
Julie Lundgren*

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**Julie Lundgren** - October 05, 2020 at 10:01 AM