



Richard C. Edwards Jr.

May 17, 1930 - February 26, 2020

Richard C. Edwards Jr, age 89, of Kankakee, passed away surrounded by friends on Wednesday, February 26, 2020.

Richard was born in 1930 to Helen and Richard Edwards of Muncie, Indiana. Preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Nancy Sonia Baspiñeiro Edwards, and his son, Carlton Edwards, he is survived by brothers Robert (Wanda) Edwards of Albany, Indiana, and Donald (Susan) Edwards of Ducks Creek Village, Utah, and sister-in-law Roberta Clevenger of Union City, Indiana, grandchildren Anthony, Stefen, Brittany, Adam, Cruz and great grandchildren.

He was class valedictorian of Green Township High School, Ridegeville, Indiana, class of 1949. He received a BA from Olivet Nazarene College and an MA in Cultural Studies from Governor's State University. He also pursued advanced studies at University of Illinois, Champaign and at Purdue University.

Richard was a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving from 1955-1957 in Japan as a personnel clerk. He also taught English classes for professionals at the American Consulate and through Toastmasters.

He began his teaching career at Thornton Fractional High School North, where he was theatre manager and English instructor. In 1960, he was offered a job teaching at a school in Oruro, Bolivia, where he met his future wife, Sonia Baspiñeiro.

“Mr. Ed” was a beloved Speech, English and Theatre teacher and Chairperson of Fine Arts Department at Kankakee High School (formerly Westview High School). He organized and hosted the Westview Invitational Speech meet each year, as well as numerous IHSA district and regional speech, drama and readers theatre competitions. He directed and produced over 60 full-length plays, musicals and many more cuttings. Among the productions were My Fair Lady, The King and I, Godspell, A Man Called Peter, The Night is My Enemy and Flower Drum Song.

As English and Speech Instructor at KCC, Richard served as representative on the Illinois State Articulation Communication Panel working on the general education requirements for transfer among the higher education institutions of the state. He was a member of the faculty team introducing computer-based instruction of English courses.

Richard was a member of the South Interscholastic Conference Association, as well as on their Board of Control. He was member and President of the Community Arts Council, and Illinois State Director of the International Thespian Society. He was a volunteer at the Kankakee County Historical Society.

As a poet often inspired by seasonal changes, Ric was a distinguished member of the International Society of Poets and his poetry was published in various journals. He also authored Thus It Was: The View of the Poet.

He enjoyed the company of his French poodle, Shih Tzu and Yorkie dogs, and was known for his beautiful garden.

Burial will be private.

Memorials may be made to the Kankakee Community College Foundation for the Ric Edwards & Sonia Baspiñeiro Edwards Scholarship <https://foundation.kcc.edu/give/form/general/>

Tribute Wall

TW

“ Terry Wilson-Lloyd lit a candle in memory of Richard C. Edwards Jr.



Terry Wilson-Lloyd - May 11, 2022 at 09:41 AM

TT

“ A wonder man he was. I had him in HS as a teacher, play director and also a member of the Thespians Society. I ran across him again later in life at KCC when I took speech. Always a light and and that touched so many of us. RIP Mr. Edwards.

Tamara Thoma - April 06, 2020 at 10:05 AM

KK

“ I knew Rick when I worked at KCC. He was a talented man with a huge heart. I would visit with him over the phone after many years of friendship and now he is at peace. God Bless his memory. “Soar High, Rick!” Kevin Kennedy, Fort Myers, FL



Kevin Kennedy - March 19, 2020 at 10:53 AM

LW

“ Mr. Edwards was a beautiful person who showered all every one who came in contact with him with his sports of Love, happiness, energy, and appreciation of the arts. I was one who was blessed to have him as a teacher, director, and producer. I enjoyed and learned from him during my Junior and senior year s at Westview High School. I was fortunate to be in every one of his productions, the speech team, the reader's theater team, and a thespian. Mr. Edwards helped me select an oration selection/ one person play and directed me for my talent portion of the Miss Black Kankakee pageant during my freshman year in college. Mr. Edwards' gifts of Love, and the curation of his students' talents will live on through the generation of his students, and them passing their learning to their children and others!
May his family and friends be wrapped in his love, and memories they made and shared with him. RIP Mr. Edwards!



Linda Walls - March 13, 2020 at 02:13 PM

LA

“ I was privileged to share the office adjoining Ric's while he coordinated the working adults program at KCC. He was a great source for coffee and conversation. He and Sonia welcomed Dee and me into their home. We treasure the memories of our times together.



Louis Anderson - March 11, 2020 at 04:58 PM

ET

“ Peter and I send our deepest condolences to Rick's family. We enjoyed sharing memories with him about experiences working at Kankakee District 111. He was a kind, friendly man.

Evelyn Torchia - March 08, 2020 at 12:58 PM

TB

“ Not only was he my English teacher, but he directed me in my first high school play. Then he introduced me to this thing called Speech Team. I later got the opportunity to be the speech coach at Kankakee High School. Mr. Edward's even wrote a letter if recommendation that got me into grad school. He was a huge inspiration in my life.

Tim Black - March 07, 2020 at 12:05 AM

CV

“ Mr. Edwards was my Drama teacher and play director in high school. He was just a great person and really put the love of theater to my life. I am so grateful to him. My condolences to his family.

Chris Vaughn - March 06, 2020 at 06:49 PM

MS

“ Mr. Ric was a former neighbor and friend. He was so kind and very good to our children when they were growing up. He touched so many lives in Kankakee along with his lovely wife. He could converse on so many different subjects.

Mike and Beth Sergeant

Michael Sergeant - March 06, 2020 at 04:08 PM

MH

“ My very sincere condolences to Richard Edwards family. I spent several years along side of him during the time my 3 children attended Westview High School, and was one of the parents who helped organize the Parents' Fine Arts Support Group for him. I worked the IHSA Speech contests with him, and helped promote his many theatre performances. He was a very talented man with a kind heart, and helped so very many students in the field of speech and theatre. I will cherish the memories of the good times we had, and hope that can do the same.

Marsha Hill

Marsha Hill - March 06, 2020 at 01:01 PM

CS

“ As my English teacher at KCC, I remember when he realized most of us didn't remember how to diagram a sentence. He picked up the chalk and away he went on the board with gusto. I later worked at KCC and had a chance to get to know Ric, who was energetic, fun, and always had something good to say.

Connie Styck - March 06, 2020 at 12:37 PM

PZ

“ What an inspiration he was to the lucky students who had him as a teacher at Westview. He was a FUN teacher to be around and to learn from. He always wore his signature happy smile. My sincere condolences to all of Mr. Edwards family.

Paul Ziemer, Westview Class of 1972

Paul Ziemer - March 06, 2020 at 10:02 AM

VH

“ Thank you, Uncle Ric, for sharing your love of language and theatre with the world. I cannot imagine high school without you, a stage and my crazy speech and theatre friends. You, Lana Brown and my Mom pushed me to "use the words" - which have served me well in so many aspects of life and which I pass on to others today. Thank you. God Bless. #ByMySide.

Viril Hill - March 05, 2020 at 01:51 AM

BP

“ "Mr. Ed" was an amazing teacher. I have so many memories from his class, and from the years he was speech team coach. When I went back to visit Westview after graduating, he was always so happy to visit, I looked forward to those times. I can only imagine the many, many wonderful memories his family must have of him.

Brian Potter - March 04, 2020 at 03:40 PM



“ Rick was always a happy person to be around during my years at KCC. I had the opportunity to co-emcee the annual recognition dinner with him one year and enjoyed working with him on that. I also got to know Sonia as we worked down the hall from one another. I miss them both.

Wendy Goeckner - March 04, 2020 at 03:27 PM

EJ

“ Oh my the conversations we had at KCC, Rick ;and I spent many an hour talking in the office that we shared for a few years, We spent time at dinner over a glass of wine. Loved his poetry felt blessed that I could be with Rick during his final hours on this blue marble that we call earth, I am pleased that he and Sonia and Romeo are together and so happy I knew this man both in good ttimes and dificult times. Rest in pease my friend.



Edwin P Viglia Jr - March 04, 2020 at 02:59 PM

JG

I will miss his laugh and joy in just living.

Judy Gierke - March 04, 2020 at 09:18 PM

JE

I had the pleasure of house cleaning for Mr Edwards and his wife and their little dog, Romeo. He was a wonderful poet and kind soul. He will be missed by many. My condolences to his family.

Jennifer - March 09, 2020 at 09:23 AM

JK

“ Mr. Edwards was one of my favorite teachers. I also had the opportunity to get to know him as a professional adult. He was always kind and positive. I admired him and his spirit. It was an honor to work with him. Rest in peace. You and your smile will be missed.

Jolynne keiser - March 04, 2020 at 11:11 AM

MM

“ MR MRS sent a virtual gift in memory of Richard C. Edwards Jr.



MR MRS - March 04, 2020 at 09:57 AM

LD

“ Mr Edwards was my most memorable teacher during my years at Westview. His kindness and understanding and love of the theatre brought e out my shyness. He always took time with his struggling students. Forever in my heart. ❤️

Linda Saindon Duchene - March 04, 2020 at 09:12 AM

RG

“ Mr. Edwards was a most extraordinary teacher who certainly inspired me to teach. From kneeling side by side silk-screening covers for Westview's literary magazine, Prisms, I learned the best lesson any future teacher can learn: "Don't tell, show." He was elegant, gracious and beloved. I was fortunate enough to have Sonia as my colleague and friend for over 25 years, but he was always Mr. Edwards to me. I can see his wink, hear his laugh, and feel the warmth of his smile. With gratitude...

Rebecca Gonski - March 04, 2020 at 09:00 AM

KA

“ Mr. Edwards was the best instructor I had at KCC. His speech class taught me so much about public speaking and communication. Thank you Mr. Edwards. RIP.

Kathy - March 04, 2020 at 08:43 AM



“ *Mr. Edwards was a wonderful teacher. He was so funny and passionate about our Drama program. He always remembered me when we happened to cross paths after high school Thank you for all you did . Rest in Peace*

Marcia Blouin - March 04, 2020 at 07:03 AM

DS

“ *My love for public speaking was, without question, due to Mr. Edward's Speech Class at Westview. He loved what he taught, he loved to get his students enthusiastic about what he taught and he had a flair for the dramatic that I thoroughly enjoyed. I was fortunate to cross paths with him many times post high school. He always remembered me in spite of me being one of thousands of students he had over the years. Thank you, Mr. Edwards, and God speed!*

Dorcilla Ashcraft Schoolman - March 04, 2020 at 12:49 AM

JM

“ *Mr Edwards was as wonderful instructor. I enjoyed his English/Literature classes during high school. He made the class enjoyable, and demonstrated lots of passion for his subject. May He Rest In Peace.*



Jane (Leriger) McLin - March 03, 2020 at 11:37 PM

LM

“ I worked with Ric at KCC. He was a great teacher and colleague. I have a fond memory of the time KCC sent Ric and I to a conference in Vail Colorado. It was a working trip, but we also found time to have some fun, drink some wine and take photos of the beautiful scenery. Rest in peace my friend.

Lou Mansfield

Lou Mansfield - March 03, 2020 at 10:24 PM

SD

“ Had Mr.Edwards for speech my senior year at Westview in 1975. He made the class thoroughly enjoyable. Rest in peace.

Scott Duckworth - March 03, 2020 at 09:59 PM



“ Mr Edwards and his wife were always good to me. Dao Wallace

Mike Wallace - March 03, 2020 at 09:53 PM

DE

“ Mr. Edwards was my speech teacher at Westview (class of 81). He was a wonderful teacher, first person able to get me talking in front of other people. Great memories of a great teacher and friend.

Delilah - March 03, 2020 at 09:30 PM

DA

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Dale T Adams - March 03, 2020 at 09:27 PM

JG

“ *Mr. Edwards carried And shared his love of the English language and theatre in an infectious way. I learned much from him and am proud to count myself among his students. I possess a love of theatre today that I credit in a large way to him.*

Congrats Uncle Ric. You beat me to the finish line.

Jonathan Genson - March 03, 2020 at 09:26 PM

CW

“ *Oh my, so sorry to hear this. Sending prayers to his family. I had him for a teacher and he was a great person. RIP*

cynde williams - March 03, 2020 at 09:25 PM

WM

“ *Deepest sympathy and prayers for family and friends from the Westview Class of 75. He was a great educator and School Drama Director and we were lucky to have had him.*

William Maass - March 03, 2020 at 09:11 PM

JS

“ *Although Sonia was my teacher, I learned a lot about life, poetry, attractive table settings, enjoying the seasons and gardening from this lovely gentleman. I'll miss you, Ric! Jamie*

Jamie Sudikatus - March 03, 2020 at 05:25 PM