



## Richard M Roberds

June 22, 1934 - September 11, 2020

On Friday, September 11, 2020, Richard “Dick” Roberds, Loving husband and father of three children passed away at age 86. Dick was born in Lawrence Kansas to Wesley and Dorothy Roberds June 22, 1934. In 1956 he graduated from the University of Kansas with a Bachelors degree in Physics. On August 8, 1958 he married, the love of his life, Marian “Marcy” Lanyon. They raised a son, Michael and two daughters, Catherine and Wendy. In 1956, he was commissioned in the United States Air Force where he became a highly decorated combat pilot and academic scholar. In the Air Force, he flew the F-102, T-33, T-37, T-38, and O-2 aircraft. He served a flying tour in Vietnam from Nov '70 - Sep '71, as the commander of the O-2 Night “Rustic” squadron, and flew over 100 combat missions. While in the Air Force Dick earned a Masters Degree and PhD (Doctorate) in Nuclear Engineering. Following his tour in Vietnam, he worked in the AF weapons Lab, Kirtland AFB 1973-'76, the applied Physics Branch, Kirtland AFB, 1976-'77 and the Avionics Lab, Wright Patterson AFB 1977-'80. In 1980, Dick retired as Colonel, after 24 years of distinguished service. During his time in the Air Force, he was highly decorated; awarded the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross (2), Air Medal (8), Meritorious Service Medal and Air Force Commendation Medal. He was very proud of his accomplishments in the Air Force and would jokingly request to be addressed as “Colonel/Doctor”. After his retirement from the Air Force, Dick decided to go into academia, fueled by his love of teaching and working with students. This included stints as the

Head of the Engineering Technology Department, Clemson University, 1980-'84, Clemson S.C. Dean of the School of Engineering, Univ Tenn Martin 1984-'86, Martin Tenn. Associate Dean Academic affairs, Acting Dean and Professor of Engineering Science, Univ Tenn Space Institute, 1986-'93, Tullahoma Tenn, and lastly, Head Integrated Science and Technology, James Madison Univ, 1993-2004, Harrisonburg VA. Dick retired in 2004 and moved back to Tullahoma Tennessee to be close to his brother, Donald Roberds, sister, Sharon Baxter, and friends. He was very active in the church and loved spending time with family and friends. He had a big heart, loved to laugh, meet new people and socialize. One of his favorite pastimes was to play and sing church hymns on his piano. Always making the list was "How Great though Art" and it's befitting last verse; When Christ shall come With shouts of adulation And take me home What joy shall fill my heart Then I shall bow In humble adoration And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art. Dick is survived by his wife Marcy, his three children, Michael, Catherine and Wendy, five grandchildren, his brother Don and his sister Sharon and several nieces and nephews. A funeral service will be held for immediate family, due to Covid restrictions, Saturday 19 Sept 2020 at 11:30am at Rose Hill Cemetery in Tullahoma Tennessee. In lieu of flowers please send donations to Tullahoma First Christian Church, 120 W Grundy St, Tullahoma, TN 37388 or The Alzheimer's Tennessee Association, South Central Tennessee Office, 309 N. Jackson St, Tullahoma, TN 37388.

Please visit our website at [www.davesculbertsonfuneralhome.com](http://www.davesculbertsonfuneralhome.com) to leave online condolences. Daves-Culbertson Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

# Cemetery Details

## Rose Hill Memorial Gardens

4758 New Manchester Highway  
Tullahoma, TN 37388  
<http://www.rosehillmemorialgardens.com/>

# Events

**Details are pending.**

# Tribute Wall



“ *Richard M Roberds*

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January 25, 2023 at 12:28 AM

MM

“ Dear Marcy and family ,  
We have never met and Dick probably never mentioned my name but I was a junior flight instructor at Reese AFB in the T-38 in the same flight with Dick. We flew a number of training missions together. Though senior, with Major leafs ,he was the pilot I most respected and enjoyed as a friend in the flight with Forrest Fenn as our Flt Commander. He went to academics and I left the AF for Northwest Airline. Serendipity arrived and several years later we crossed paths at Reagan International in DC. Renewed our friendship and you folks even surprised us with a Christmas Card that year! I don't recall how it came about but we reconnected just before our son made a choice for university attendance and he then was anxious for Neil to attend his University , Clemson? Neil chose Cedarville U near Dayton. What I remember was the sincere interest Dick had for Neil to get a very good school. Well that was about 2002 and the last time to talk to Dick but not the last time to think of him and appreciate his distant but genuine friendship. I am writing now as I had in mind to reconnect with him. Sadly I am about a year too late. Happily his obituary secured what I often thought was his solid Christian faith that we neither discussed but seemed to recognize mutually. Thus we will connect again and join him in those great hymns. Playing piano was a well kept secret I think as was my fairly advanced violin skills. Bless you and we'll see Dick again soon. Time flies.

Vernon(Marty) Martin

NWA Retired 2002

10920 Lake Lane

Lancaster, Wisconsin 53813

309-453-1259

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Marty Martin - September 28, 2021 at 07:12 PM

EK

“ Dick was one of my father's favorite people on Earth. They served together in Vietnam and became lifelong friends. One of my dad's favorite memories was getting to pin that silver star on his chest. When my father was on his deathbed, Dick was there to keep my dad laughing and reminiscing of all the great times they shared. I will never forget Col. Roberds. He's a class act and patriot - 100%. - Eric Koppin



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**Eric Koppin** - June 29, 2021 at 04:58 PM

LC

“ Marcy and family-I was so sorry to learn that Dick had passed away in September. I worshipped with you at First Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg. I also knew Dick from JMU as I worked in the JMU Office of Admissions from 1986-1995. Dick was always so kind, welcoming, and willing to help. I don't ever recall him without a smile and was unaware of his stellar leadership in the military. Nor did I know that we share the same birthday! I will keep you all in my prayers and hope that your faith and the presence of friends and family has been, and will continue to be, a comfort for you.

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**Laura Conklin** - October 27, 2020 at 02:20 PM

MR

“ 1 file added to the album Memories



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**Mike Roberds** - October 05, 2020 at 10:00 PM

DA

“ I was fortunate to serve with Dick in Southeast Asia. I flew a different aircraft than he did, but we were in the same unit, the Rustic Forward Air Controllers. I really got to know him later and appreciate his many talents as we, with several others, worked on putting together and publishing our unit history. What an accomplished individual....smart, funny and caring. My thoughts go out to Marcy and their family, and I pray the Lord gives them peace.

*Doug Aitken, Rustic 16*

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**Doug Aitken** - September 24, 2020 at 07:22 PM

DA

“ 1 file added to the album Cambodia: The Rustic FAC Association visited Cambodia and Vietnam in 2000. It was amazing to visit t



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**Doug Aitken** - September 24, 2020 at 07:17 PM

TB

“ I was blessed to be Caregiver for Dick for the past year. We had so many fun and funny times together and I will forever remember! We took walks, had many breakfasts together, listened while he played his piano and rolled his eyes when I ‘tried’ to sing! Always happy and upbeat. Always being kind and loving to Marcy, although not remembering she was the lady he married and mother of their children.

*I will never forget Dick and the countless days we spend together. Because of Dick, I gained a family I will forever love... Marcy, Mike, Cathy & Wendy* 💕

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**Tammy Buckner** - September 21, 2020 at 01:22 AM

TB

“ Tammy Buckner lit a candle in memory of Richard M Roberds



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**Tammy Buckner** - September 21, 2020 at 12:46 AM

WB

“ Richard "Dick" Roberds will always be "Major Maj," to me. It has been 50 years since I served under Dick's command in Vietnam. Those were tough times but there was no doubt that Dick's mission was to look out for the safety and welfare of his young officers and lead them through their tour.

*His leadership and example will stay with me always.*

*Wishing Marcy and family the very best during this sad timed and beyond.*

*Wayne "Stump" Baker*

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**Wayne Baker** - September 18, 2020 at 06:11 PM

DM

“ I was saddened to learn earlier this week that my commanding officer in Vietnam, Col. (then Major) Richard M. “Dick” Roberds (USAF, Ret.), passed away last Friday in Tullahoma, Tennessee.

*While at the time during 1970-71, as a young lieutenant when in Vietnam and flying most of our missions in Cambodia, I did my best to stay off Maj. Roberds’ radar screen. However, following our mission’s being mostly declassified in 1995 and attending our unit’s reunions, Dick and I became good friends.*

*Over the years, I grew to have a far better grasp of the great responsibilities that he shouldered when overseeing a group of twenty-something lieutenants and a few captains in combat. He was a remarkable man, and we shared a number of wonderful times after the war.*

*After retiring from the Air Force, he became a university professor and concluded his notable career in academics at James Madison University. As I had a few clients stretching from Roanoke to Winchester, I always made a point of stopping in Harrisonburg to catch up over lunch or a cup of coffee.*

*Dick was an outstanding officer. His leadership and decisions made during war no doubt contributed to my being here today. He will be missed.*

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**Don Mercer** - September 18, 2020 at 09:48 AM

KS

“ My thoughts and prayers are with all of you. He was a very special man and I loved him.

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**Kathryn Schroer** - September 18, 2020 at 01:25 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Richard M Roberds.*



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September 17, 2020 at 02:58 PM