

LIFE STORYMEMORY BOARD

Richard Gene Smith

View memory board

Share a memory, offer a condolence

Share obituary

Let your community know



Richard Gene Smith of Upton, MA passed away peacefully at home on Sunday, February 12, 2023, due to complications from cancer. He was 75.

Richard was born April 15, 1947 in Long Beach, California the eldest child and only son of A. Gene and Joyce H. Smith. His father worked for Shell Oil

and the family moved often; from California, to the Netherlands, then Long Island, New York, and finally Nassau Bay, Texas where Richard graduated from Clear Creek High School in 1965 at the top of his class. Throughout his youth, Richard was active in Boy Scouts, model railroading, building model ships, and especially sailing at which he excelled. He was one of the youngest individuals to win the prestigious Tommy Lee Trophy at the Houston Yacht Club.

Richard attended college at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he earned both Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Mechanical Engineering with a specialization in control systems. He was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity and was Captain of the Varsity Sailing Team which won a National Championship.

In 1970, he married his first wife, Carol Frappier of Huntington, MA, and stayed in Boston after graduation to work at Stone & Webster Engineering designing instrumentation and controls for power plants. Two years later, they moved to California to work for Systems Control, Inc in Palo Alto as an Engineering project manager for advanced control system projects for the Navy, wastewater treatment, and electric utilities. The return to California was just in time for his son, Stuart, to be born at Stanford University Hospital in 1973 – another native Californian!

Richard took 2 years off from work in California to earn an MBA from Harvard Business School. Afterwards, he continued to work at technical companies in Marketing and Product Management in various locations.

After two more years in sunny California, Richard moved back to Sudbury, MA for a 30-year career with Digital Equipment Corporation and successor companies. He held positions in Product Management and Marketing for many different product organizations, from large scale data center systems to small minicomputers, personal computers, and networking.

During the family's time in Sudbury, Richard's passion for sailing continued. He joined the Boston Harbor Sailing Club, and later purchased his own sailboat, 'Strider'. He and his crew of family and friends spent many weekends sailing the waters of Buzzard's Bay and beyond, to Martha's Vineyard, and even Nantucket.

A six-year assignment in the 1990's near Nice in the south of France managing the PC network business in Europe for Digital proved a fantastic professional and personal experience. He consciously recruited members of the group he managed from across Europe – France, Belgium, Germany,

Italy, Great Britain, Sweden, Finland, Morocco, Lebanon, and Israel. Richard learned to speak French fluently, and dine fabulously.

In 2002, he married Yuh-Rong Tsay of Northborough, MA who had a son, Eric, who Richard had the privilege of helping to raise. In 2021, Eric and his wife Caitlin were blessed with a daughter, Natalie; Richard's only grandchild. After 22 amazing years with Yuh-Rong she died from metastatic breast cancer in 2021. Richard and Yuh-Rong loved to travel, visiting Taiwan, China, Europe, numerous National Parks, as well as several cruises over the years. Richard's devotion to Yuh-Rong and her medical care was profound and moving to all those who knew him.

Richard joined and actively participated in the life of churches wherever he lived – Methodist Churches in California and Sudbury, the Église Réformée in Antibes, France, and the Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts in Southborough.

He is survived by his son, Stuart Gene Smith, of Houston, TX; step-son Eric Hou Hsu, wife Caitlin Abusamra and granddaughter Natalie of Northborough, MA; sister Christine Joyce Smith-Byerly and husband, James A. Byerly of Houston, TX; nephew Daniel Leonard Moses, wife Anna Schwartz and daughter Brittain A. Moses of Pittsburgh, PA, and countless dear friends.

He is predeceased by his wife Yuh-Rong (2021), his sisters Barbara Lynn Smith Moses (2011) and Janet Louise Smith Bozarth (2008) and his parents (2013).

The family is greatly appreciative to Richard's special friend, Tehui Chou, for the extraordinary help in caring for Richard during his illness.

A calling hour will be held on Tuesday, February 21, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts, 60 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA. Funeral services will immediately follow. Interment will take place at the Howard Street Cemetery in Northborough. Arrangements are under the care of Hays Funeral Home, 56 Main Street, Northborough, MA. To leave an online condolence please visit www.HaysFuneralHome.com.