



Richard Navratil

August 1, 2024

Dick Navratil was born in Lincoln, Nebraska to Verla and Joseph Navratil in 1951. He passed away at home in the arms of his loved ones on August 1, 2024 after a two year battle fighting pancreatic stomach cancer. He was a warrior. He spent his youth in Crete, Nebraska, played baseball in the schoolyard, rode bikes with baseball cards in the spokes and caught fireflies at night with his older sister, Linda and his younger brother, Doug. He shared fond memories of playing with neighborhood kids on summer evenings... especially the Coffeys. The three siblings went to Catholic schools together, did chores such as peeling potatoes and mopping floors at the family tavern/diner. He was the kind of brother that they both looked up to. He loved spending time at his grandparents' farm in Valpariso, Nebraska. Many of his happiest memories tell of adventures with cousins, picking mulberries, and Grandma Lillie's fried chicken and sugared rice.

Dick was very proud of his Czech heritage and enjoyed traditional Czech dishes such as roast duck, dumplings, and kolaches. He even made his own sauerkraut. He and Heather had wonderful trips to Czechoslovakia, Ireland, Italy, cruises to Alaska, Hawaii, and down European rivers.

After graduating from Crete High School, Dick attended Milford Technical College, where he earned an Associate Degree in Applied Arts and Building Construction Technology. Upon graduating, he moved to Fort Collins,

Colorado and worked for custom home builders including Carl Nelson, Homes by Holz, and Aspen Construction. In 1986, he went to work in the carpentry shop for Poudre School District. He designed and built custom cabinets, miles of computer tables, desks for handicapped students and many trophy cases throughout the district, until his retirement.

Heather and Dick were introduced in 1976 at a party (preplotted by friends). They shared so many interests, including hiking, fishing, and concerts at Red Rocks. Heather loved to cook and Dick loved to eat...it was a match made in heaven. They were married in 1978 and they have been soul mates and best friends ever since. They were married 46 years and shared the same birthday. Dick enjoyed dancing; country swing, square dance, waltz, polka, foxtrot and tango. He was never shy about being the first one on the floor, telling people, "Dancing is not a spectator sport."

Both loved to travel in their Chevy conversion van, "Big Brown". People would tell them, "We saw you at such and such a place." One summer they drove 9,700 miles from Colorado to the east coast. They went from Virginia to New York City to see the Yankees play baseball, and on to Maine and Canada. Heading home they stopped at Gettysburg and Antietam, then over to Portland, Oregon and on to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

In 1987, their son Scott was born. Dick adored that little boy, teaching him to dunk Oreos, play baseball, and ride his bike. They cross country and downhill skied together and enjoyed attending Rockies baseball, as well as Nebraska football games.

Dick was an avid Nebraska Cornhusker, win or lose. He usually wore his Nebraska hat and Big Red gear, no matter the season. He would talk to Nebraska fans in stores and tell them "GBR" (Go Big Red) and "Keep The Faith." He started each day checking updates on the Husker website and

spent many happy hours talking with his nephew, Chris, about upcoming recruits and games.

Hunting and fishing were a big part of Dick's life. His father-in-law, Frank, was so pleased to have him as a hunting buddy. They trailered their mules with the turquoise blue Ford and drove them over Monarch Pass to Crested Butte. What stories they told about packing in 7 miles and setting up their hunting camp in the high country. Dick also enjoyed the family cabin until it burned in 2020.

He played baseball from the time he was 8 years old playing on the Crete Town Team and at Milford Trade School. In Fort Collins, he played fast pitch softball with Mile High, Moose Lodge and Hofbrau teams.

Dick was a cabinet maker, carver of decoys, and loved to be out in his shop building Windsor chairs and turning bowls on the lathe. He made lots of "man glitter" (sawdust). Dick was also a member of the Buckeye Community Club. A special "thank you" to Doc Carter, his lathe mentor.

Many wonderful pets shared his life from childhood guinea pig, Smokey, Rado, his first golden retriever, many kitties, to his special cat, Rooster, who would walk the fence and ride to the barn on Dick's shoulder. His current golden retrievers, Kemper Fi and Gunner have added much joy to his life. He had the pleasure of the company of his five mules, Radar, Zeke, Bunny, and Lefty. On this last Wednesday afternoon, he rode his mule, Tillie, around the pasture with a village of people that cared about him walking alongside.

Todd Helton, the Rockies player, was an athlete Dick admired. In 2008, visiting Cooperstown, he said, "If Helton ever makes it into the Hall of Fame, I want to be there!" It was a highlight on his bucket list to be in New York on July 21, 2024 (Dick's birthday) with Heather and his brother to enjoy the

induction.

His parents passed away before him as did his son, Scott (2020). Dick is survived by his wife, Heather, sister Linda Sweetland (Bob), brother Doug (Deb), nephews Chris Sweetland (Angela), Rob Sweetland (Jill), niece Lisa Davis, numerous great- nieces and newphews, along with cousins Kirk, Tim, Pam, and Sandy. A special thanks to great- nephew Ben, who helped care for Dick.

The family wishes to thank the nurses and Dr. Mathews at the Harmony Cancer Center as well as Dr. Rellas. You were our 'family' for almost two years. Your compassionate care and ever present smiles helped to sustain us.

In lieu of flowers, Dick requested that donations be made to St. Jude's Children's Hospital, as he did not want children to suffer as he did. He said he had been able to grow up and have a great life and wanted them to have that opportunity.

Donations may also be made to Crete High School in Crete, Nebraska to award a scholarship in his name to graduating seniors to attend Milford Technical School. He wanted to encourage young people to enter careers in the trades. Please send in care of:

Dick Navratil Scholarship,
Crete Public Schools Foundation
930 Main Ave.
Crete, Nebraska 68333

"G B R"

Previous Events

Memorial Mass

AUG **12**. 9:15 AM (MT)

Saint Joseph Catholic Parish
300 Mountian Ave
Fort Collins, CO 80521
stjosephfc.org

Tribute Wall

LW

“ Heather and Dick have a cabin next to ours for a number of years and not only good neighbors but also very generous in numerous ways. Several times when we had a large group of people they let us use their cabin for over night and refused any payment. They always checked our cabin when we weren't there. A couple of years after the wild fire a strong wind sent a piece of bark thru a cabin window, Dick found a piece of plywood and covered the window. Dick was a role model for the rest of us. Actions speak louder than words. RIP Dick. Lila and Ben Wacker

Lila and Ben Wacker - August 11, 2024 at 10:22 PM

SP

“ So sorry for your loss of such a special and talented men. Sharon Petty

Sharon Petty - August 07, 2024 at 02:37 PM

DN

“ 1 file added to the album Family



Doug & Deb Navratil - August 07, 2024 at 11:59 AM

CP

I remember Dick always doing a crazy whistle during fast-pitch softball games. I think he would whistle as soon as the ball left the pitcher's hand. Heather and Dick have been very special friends of our family for many years
Cheryl Swartz Prescott

Cheryl Swartz Prescott - August 07, 2024 at 07:05 PM

TB

So sorry to hear of Dick's passing! Saw him at the 55th High School reunion, but unfortunately only got to say "HI", when I had to leave. We went to Catholic school together. I still remember he lost his dad to a heart attack while we were at Saint James Catholic school. He was a friend and classmate that everyone enjoyed. Hitting home runs over the fence in left field. Keeping count on how many we did. Kip Kohl was the eventual winner, but we all tried! RIP my friend and classmate, RIP

Thomas Bauer - August 07, 2024 at 07:46 PM

MH

My oh my... So sorry to hear the news of Dick' passing, Heather. Jane and I have told our story of crossing paths with you on the Hawaiian cruise. Small world. Wish we were there to give you a hug and please accept our sincere condolences. We pray that your reflections of all the great time you spent with Dick will fill your aching heart.



Mick and Jane Hoepfinger

Mick Hoepfinger - August 08, 2024 at 12:36 PM

BZ

“What a life story I just read. A gentleman, with a contagious laugh, a fantastic smile and no better man of great character. Heather and Dick -two peas in a pod. Always together and safe inside that warm pod. The support and love they had for one another was obvious and to be envied. Dick certainly embraced the challenges that he had and left our world as a true warrior.

Brian and Carol Zick

Brian and Carol Zick - August 07, 2024 at 11:14 AM

MS

“ Heather,
What a wonderful tribute to Dick! Thank you for sharing all of those special memories from his early days. We always enjoyed our time together with both of you. He was a great help with all our wine adventures. Tasting was his specialty, I know. We will miss him dearly. Love to you Marsha and Jon Schmidt

Marsha Schmidt - August 07, 2024 at 10:52 AM

BS

“ Dick will forever remain in our hearts! Soft spoken and kind to all. “Fought the good fight” these last two years comes to mind along with his biggest cheerleader Heather. Together they were the dream team!
RIP our friend!
Alan and Beth

Beth Stevens - August 07, 2024 at 10:07 AM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Richard Navratil.



August 07, 2024 at 10:06 AM

DG

“ I got to reconnect with Dick a few months back. Our paths always seemed to cross every year or so, and we'd spend a little time catching up. Dick was always a caring person, whether it was doing his part on the ball field, that we shared for a number of years, or with being a good husband and father. Having him show me the picture of Tick, Gary and himself at a Rockies game, and his signature smile, showed me that he was enjoying life to the fullest. He was nice guy, and I'm glad to have known him. Our sincere condolences to Heather and his family. Dean/Wendy Gebhardt

Dean Gebhardt - August 07, 2024 at 06:46 AM

DN

“ Doug & Deb Navratil lit a candle in memory of Richard Navratil



Doug & Deb Navratil - August 06, 2024 at 09:50 PM