



## Mr. Van Rensellaer Richards

December 10, 1957 - January 31, 2015

Van Rensellaer Richards died unexpectedly at his home in Riverton, NJ, January 31, 2015. He was 57.

Mr. Richards was a graduate of New Canaan Country School (CT), South Kent School (CT) and Allegheny College in Meadville, PA.

He taught elementary students in several schools, United Day School (Laredo, TX), Moorestown Friends (NJ), Chapin School (NJ) St. Peter's (Philadelphia, PA). Most recently, he worked at the Quaker School of Horsham (PA), where he was the director of development, wrote grants, and was in charge of alumni relations. He also organized the fundraising, public relations and "refilling the towel dispenser."

He is survived by his partner, Brit Brennan of Riverton.

He is also survived by his mother, Jan Richards, of Stamford, CT and siblings: Peter Richards of Vinalhaven, ME, Ginny Perrakis, Brookfield, CT, Alden Richards, Brookline, MA, and Chris Richards of Ft. Collins, CO. Plus 11 nieces and nephews to whom he was a caring and devoted uncle.

Van loved fires, clearing brush, cats and slapstick comedy. He was the go-to person concerning DVD players, cable connections, programming appliances and trouble-shooting chainsaws. He lovingly cared for a 1946 A Model Farmall

tractor. Wherever he lived, he made friends and was known for his generosity of time, humor, money and effort. He was a talented Tex-Mex chef and, most recently, discovered cairns and built several dozen of the stone structures for love and (sometimes) money. He was vitally interested in The Taylor Wildlife Preserve which lay next to his residence in Riverton, NJ. He wrote about it, cleared clogged water-courses, and made his rounds frequently, trash-picking, noting everything, and delighting in the wonders of nature. Van's loved ones plan on having a "Tree Planting" in the Preserve in his honor.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Van Rensellaer Richards*

September 09, 2022 at 01:27 AM



“ *Long before the days of Facebook, I often remembered "Mr. Richards" warmly. He was one of the most unique, funny, energetic, gregarious, always encouraging, joyful hearted and "cool" teachers I have ever had in my academic lifetime. His presence sincerely made my sensitive 4th grade self feel safer, more capable and appreciated. A truly great teacher is a gift to all of us, and Mr. Richards was just that. I am grateful to have known him as a student at nine, and again as a friend at... a lot more than nine. ;) I will think of you, Van, when out in my woods, or practicing long division, and always smile.*



*With Heartfelt Blessings and Condolences,  
Anik Palulian*

*4th grade, NCCS, 1981-2*

anik k. palulian - February 14, 2015 at 01:30 PM

DB

“ My heart sank when I heard the news of Van's passing. I had the complete pleasure of working with Van during all of his time in the Moorestown Lower School when he was a 3rd gr. teacher. His sense of humor and unique manner of communicating with the students in his care was always great to watch. I remember many a time when Van and George Thomas, the 4th gr. teacher, would share jokes, play jokes and keep a lighthearted atmosphere within the staff on the lower floor! Van loved to tease and would often stop by the Art Room to see his students creating during his prep time, and make comments that were always filled with gentleness and a bit of humor! A special note of condolences to Brit and to Van's family. "Gone, but never forgotten!" Deb Binder, MFS Lower School Art Teacher, '81-'97

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**Deborah Binder** - February 10, 2015 at 11:39 AM

CB

“ I worked with Van at the Quaker School in the mid-2000's. No matter what, Van could always be counted on for a smile and a cheerful hello. I was so sad to hear of his passing; he was truly a good person.  
Connie Bovee

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**connie bovee** - February 07, 2015 at 11:20 PM

 Sara Sweeney

“ I had the immense pleasure of working with Van on the design of the new building for The Quaker School back in the early to mid-2000's. I worked with Blackney Hayes architects at the time. He was always a joy to be around. I am so sorry to hear of his sudden passing, but I am glad I had the chance to know him. He was a neat guy. My condolences to the family and I will keep Van in my prayers.

Sara Sweeney

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**Sara Sweeney** - February 07, 2015 at 03:08 PM

TM

“ I met Van a number of years ago in the travel agency I worked in on Main Street. He was a client of mine. Even after the agency closed we kept in touch some. I thought he was such a nice guy with a great sense of humor. I am shocked and saddened to hear of his passing. God Bless.

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**Tracy Moskowitz** - February 05, 2015 at 03:22 PM



“ Mr Richards was my third grade teacher. He was funny, patient and so kind. He never talked down to me, and made me feel respected, and that my opinions mattered. He was the first man to teach me how to dance. He liked silly word puns that he wrote on the chalkboard, and I still remember some of them. I have such fond, sweet memories of him, and am so sorry to learn that such a spirit is gone from the world. Laura Oppenheim

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**Laura Oppenheim** - February 05, 2015 at 09:25 AM

MM

“ I met Van Richards some years back, when I was working in a Moorestown design firm. I found him to be very enjoyable company, with a lively intelligence, great sense of humor, and an abundance of creativity. I am sorry about his passing. I know many people will miss him.

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**Margaret Manzi** - February 05, 2015 at 07:12 AM