



Ricky "Rick" A. Henderson

September 7, 1955 - March 10, 2026

Ricky Arvid Henderson, age 70, left this world to enter eternal salvation on March 10, 2026. Rick was born September 7, 1955 in Kalkaska, Michigan to Arvid "Zeke" Henderson and Erma Lucille Warner Henderson. He was the eldest of four brothers. His brother, Mike Henderson, spent hours talking about history and Vikings and was his confidant. Dennis (Jolanta) Henderson was the one he wanted to talk to when he needed some laughter. His baby brother, Andy (Molly) Henderson, was the gentle and caring one that Rick guided through educational and parental responsibilities. Deb Brode, a loyal friend of Rick, was consistently present, bringing him happiness, and the comfort of her pets.

Rick was raised in Rapid City and frequently returned there regardless of his career pursuits. He valued the memories of exploring forests, rivers, and fields with the Dalton, Guy, and Deater children, among many others. David Dalton, Dale Gaylord, and Mark Guy maintained lifelong friendships, often contesting who was his closest friend. Rick graduated from Kalkaska High School in 1973, which he regarded as the best class ever. His passion for learning led him to Northwestern Michigan College, where he developed an interest in Geology. Subsequently, he attended Western Michigan University. Although college kept him away from home, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology and Elementary Education. His love for his hometown led to his viking poem:

Rick the Red of Rapid City

Brave and Bold

And what a pity

He is so very witty

Ta Ha... Ta Ha... Ta Ha!!!

Despite obtaining his degree to pursue his passion for teaching, Rick was employed by the State of Michigan as a Geologist within the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality (DNR/EGLE). He remained a dedicated employee, advancing to the position of Senior Regional Geologist. His career included postings in Roscommon and Cadillac, and he worked remotely until his retirement after more than 4 decades of service. Throughout his career, he spent weekends in Rapid City. Had health issues not arisen, he would likely still be working. His continued guidance and advice for colleagues after retirement were sources of great pride.

Rick was a lifelong member of the Rapid City Church of Christ, where his beliefs were deeply rooted in tradition and community support, with God as the central focus. Through his faith in Jesus and commitment to community, he provided opportunities for numerous youth in Rapid City to engage in various activities and work. He frequently employed cousins, nephews, nieces, and neighbors for odd jobs on the family property, often concluding these chores with target practice using an assortment of firearms. He spent many hours driving through the woods in the Upper Peninsula disguised as bird hunting with his friend Bill Cornish as a way to connect with God's creation.

He was the uncle to four nephews—Dylan (Lindsay Gondol) Henderson, Deryk (Kyleigh) Henderson, Jack Stewart, and Mykolas Henderson—and four nieces—Nicholle Sherwood Trubiroha, Kelly Jeanne Sherwood, Alayna Stewart, Gabrielle Henderson, Three great nieces and nephews Wyatt Gondol, Juna Gondol, and Mckinley Henderson—whose lives he enriched through advice, homework assistance, vehicle loans, and critiques of farming practices.

Rick was preceded in death by his mother Erma, father "Zeke," and brother

Mike. He is survived by his brothers Dennis (Jolanta) Henderson and Andy (Molly) Henderson; his devoted friend Deb Brode; stepmother Patricia (Udell) Henderson; step-sisters Debra Meadows, Sharon (Rex) Alspaugh, Jody Fritz; and stepbrother David Meadows.

The visitation will be held at the Kalkaska Church of Christ on Tuesday, March 17, from 1:30 to 3:30 PM, followed by a service beginning at 3:30 PM. Burial will take place in the spring at Clearwater Township Cemetery. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home.

Cemetery Details

Clearwater Township Cemetery

6833 Gillett Road NW
Rapid City, MI 49676

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 17. 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM (ET)

Kalkaska Church of Christ
1725 W Kalkaska Rd NW
Kalkaska, MI 49646
<http://www.kccwired.com>

Funeral Service

MAR 17. 3:30 PM (ET)

Kalkaska Church of Christ
1725 W Kalkaska Rd NW
Kalkaska, MI 49646
<http://www.kccwired.com>

Tribute Wall



“ Like Rick, I too have a geology degree, which is how I first met Rick in the mid-80's. Also a warm, fuzzy professional for the State of Michigan inspecting oil & gas drilling.

Donald Emerson II - March 27 at 01:22 PM

SH

“ Shelley lit a candle in memory of Ricky "Rick" Henderson



Shelley - March 21 at 02:10 PM

TS

“ I shared a vehicle with Rick on many trips to the field to look at wells and facilities. I've heard all the stories!! He loved his family and talked of his property up north, his nephews, swords, and everything geology. He was a true educator. I will never forget his kindness and willingness to help. God bless you and keep you Rick.

Terry Saarela - March 21 at 11:00 AM

JA

“ I had the privilege of working with Rick at EGLE for over 15 years before he retired. He was my direct supervisor and we spent hours chatting about geology, life, and many other topics. Rick was a fantastic person, genuinely nice, a terrific orator, and a pleasure to be around. He was my mentor, colleague, and friend. He will be missed but not forgotten. Farewell my friend, rest in peace, I will miss you.

Jim Armbruster - March 18 at 12:44 PM

LP

“ Rick came into Pomas pizza all the time ,to eat, visit,play cards,I loved Rick ,he was a special person,my heart is broken,and for all his family , my thoughts and prayers are with you all, I’m sorry I’m not there fir his servive but I’ve been in the hospital for 3 weeks and just got home a couple days ago, but my heart is with you all, I will miss him very much ,he will always be in my heart RIP Rick 🙏❤️🙏

linda poma - March 17 at 07:41 PM

KS

“ Many good memories had with you through the years! Brody will miss vacuuming for you and hearing Grandpa Mike stories!

Zeke, Rick, Andy pictured



Kelly & Brody Sherwood - March 15 at 05:50 PM

KD

“ Rick was a dedicated employee of the DNR/DEQ & EGLE, he gave 100% to his job, and always a fellow in good spirits. I was GSD Secy in Lansing and kept close telephone contact w/ Rick, he was attentive to detail and took his job as a Geologist to heart. RIP Ricky.

Kay Lynn Duncan - March 14 at 04:05 PM



“ *Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Ricky "Rick" A. Henderson.*



March 14 at 03:38 PM



“ *Rick and I collaborated on many geological projects for the DNR over our 40+ year careers. He was a great individual and a true friend.... May he rest In peace and may his memory be a blessing.*



Dave Forstat - March 14 at 01:20 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Ricky*



Dave Forstat - March 14 at 01:14 PM

MP

“ Rick was a sweet guy who welcomed everyone who came through the church doors. He often gave a communion meditation and he spoke of a true, dear friend of his, Jesus. His comments were coming from a sincere faith, something I admired about Rick. He also identified many rocks that I brought in on Sunday mornings once I learned of his geology skills. I always hoped he could see some of the rocks I inherited from my dad's collection.
Rest in Peace, Rick. Your absence will be felt by our congregation!

Mary Pecar - March 14 at 10:13 AM

SC

“ Remembering the first time he came to the house in December after we'd moved to RC, he saw a decorated Christmas tree I'd just made two months before. He wondered where I'd got the thistles to make it, since they were against the law to pick. Don't know if he felt any better knowing I'd made the "tree" in NE Ohio before we moved. Also remembering this (and only) time I shot a rifle under Rick's guidance out at (I believe it was called "Fort Deduction."

Sara Crain - March 13 at 05:05 PM

SC

“ Rick was the older brother I did not have (as I am the oldest in my family). We had some really great times playing basketball out front, target shooting and a many other great times that are all great memories. He also seemed to remember the things you forgot. He would remind me of the "fort" we made and to my surprise it still standing. The treats were on Saturday he would make breakfast out in the garage with the Coleman stove for all of us. The best would be at the end of a day, if we were lucky, he'd stop at Roy's Pizza and buy us all a large pizza. Those acts of kindness still resonate after 50 years. Finally, as Mike would recall, he was the protector. He was that and a whole lot more. I will miss him. Stephen Carothers (cousin)

Stephen Carothers - March 13 at 04:53 PM

SH

“ Rick was always there to offer a kind word during some difficult times in my life. He always told me he said a prayer for me. I will miss his friendship and the adventures he told of younger days! Prayers to his family. Sharon Underhill

Sharon - March 13 at 11:23 AM

DO

Rick was my mentor while I was in the DEQ/DNR/MDARD Leadership Academy. Though I was in the Kalamazoo District Office, he was always available for me and we had some great discussions. I remember him talking about his family, and I am so sorry for your loss.

Debbie Snith Ostrander - March 13 at 06:45 PM

DF

Rick and I collaborated on many geological projects for the DNR over our 40+ year careers. He was a great individual and a true friend.... May he rest In peace and may his memory be a blessing. ❤️😭

Dave Forstat - March 14 at 01:13 PM

MB

Rick was a fine person and gentle giant! Rick and my husband, Herb were always playing tricks on each other at District 6 Cadillac. Memories are all you have when friends leave and I have fond memories of Rick!

Mickey Burns

Mickey Burns - March 14 at 08:17 PM

MN

Rick hired me as his Gaylord District Secretary back in 2004 when he was the District Supervisor for Cadillac/Gaylord districts. He was always a gentle giant, a great storyteller and loved to joke around and put you at ease. I'm still with GRMD, and it seemed he would always be around. May he rest in peace and hear the angels sing.

Marlene Needham - March 16 at 10:52 AM

MM

I worked with Rick for almost 30 years at DNR/DEQ. Big Rick had a big personality. I'm sorry that I missed the memorial service while we were still recovering from the ice storm.

Mike Moss - March 23 at 10:52 PM