



## Richard Allan Holy Bear Carpenter

February 12, 1958 - March 12, 2021

Richard Allan Holy Bear Carpenter was born February 12, 1958, to Joseph Sandy Holy Bear and Emmaline Swimmer in Eagle Butte, Dewey County, South Dakota. Enrolled as a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the fourth child of 11 children, his ancestry was of the Hunkpapa, Sans Arc, and Minneconjou bands. Richard was born on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in deeply impoverished circumstances. Food and resources were scarce, and alcoholism affected most of the adults on the reservation, including his parents. This forced Richard and his siblings to fend for themselves and rely on the generosity of extended family members and his grandmother. Richard blocked out most memories of those early years, and when he left the reservation, he fell out of contact with all biological family to protect his mind from revisiting the trauma.

When Richard was about 9 years old, an older couple by the name of Wiley and Dorothy Carpenter arrived in Eagle Butte as missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (also known as the Mormon church or LDS church). They were good people who wanted to serve others. They lived on the reservation in a motorhome they had brought with them. Perhaps because of his difficult childhood, young Richard felt drawn to their positive spirits and soon began tagging along with them on their religious and humanitarian activities for the Lakota community.

Around the same time period, tribal officials petitioned tribal court to remove Richard and his siblings from their home due to their parents' increased alcoholism and neglect. The court asked the children which aunts and uncles they wanted to go stay with. When Richard was asked where he would like to live, he said, "I want to live with the Carpenters from the Mormon church." The tribal court approached the Carpenters about this, and they were taken aback at first. They were younger than most Mormon couples who served missions, being only in their 50's, but they had already raised a daughter to adulthood and the idea of repeating parenthood seemed a bit daunting. But soon, they realized that the reason they had been called by God to serve a mission in South Dakota at this time in their lives was to bring another child home to love. They readied things to leave their mission and return home to raise a 9-year-old boy named Richard Allan Holy Bear.

The Carpenters returned with Richard in tow to their home in La Crescenta, Calif., where Wiley was working for Howard Hughes, the billionaire. Wiley was a part of Hughes' "Mormon Mafia," ironically named because Hughes trusted their integrity and commitment to honest and clean living. Wiley's work was top-secret, and he did not speak of it to the family. He was, however, able to bring his wife and Richard to some events at The Beverly Hills Hotel, which fascinated Richard as a young boy fresh from a poor reservation. He even met a young Carrie Fisher several times at these events.

A year or so after Richard came to live with them, Wiley retired, and the Carpenters moved to Decatur, Ark., near many relatives who lived in the area. The Carpenters and their extended family embraced Richard as a full member of the family, and he was considered their son in every respect. His sister Dolores, though much older than him, loved having a brother, and they remained close siblings all their lives. He also had two half-siblings from Wiley's first marriage, and he spent a lot of time as a teenager with his brother Edwin. Richard learned the value of hard work during his summers as a youth

working full days on the farm of Dorothy's father, his Grandfather Spoor - Albemarle Farrington Spoor. He spent his later teen years working on an Alaskan fishing boat, and during the school year he worked at the chicken factory in town. While he had gotten a bit plump in the beginning from Dorothy's excellent cooking and large portions, he became an athlete in high school, excelling in football, basketball, baseball, tennis and golf. Football was a serious activity in 1970's Arkansas, and Richard loved the sport as much as his parents did-Dorothy was an active and vocal supporter at every one of his games, as was Wiley, who rarely even missed a practice. Richard was a running back for his high school team in Decatur and was named 3rd string All-American.

In his senior year, his family moved to Orem, Utah. When Richard turned 18, the Carpenters were able to legally adopt him and he was sealed to them in a temple in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, making their family complete. After graduation, he attended Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo for his freshman year, where he served as president of the Lamanite Club and performed the hoop dance for the Lamanite Generation.

Richard then served a two-year mission for the Church, as did most Mormon boys at age 19. He was called to the England Birmingham mission, and his strong testimony of the Gospel, his charisma and his likeability contributed to a successful mission where he was instrumental in hundreds of baptisms and was an assistant to the president of the mission. This was an important calling and he was able to have a great influence on the other elders in his mission. He also met and worked with several general authorities who came to visit the mission and he loved to tell stories about associating with them. His parents were so very proud of their adopted Native son.

When Richard returned from his mission, he had a desire to travel, so he

enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He trained as a Physician's Assistant and was sent to Misawa, Japan. While there, he also represented the Air Force in Judo and Karate tournaments all over Asia and spent his free time visiting other countries nearby, fulfilling his desire to travel. After five years of service, he was honorably discharged from the military, and returned home to Orem to work for a moving company and be near his parents. It was there that he met Janet Nelson, his future sweetheart and eternal companion. They met in the same church ward and after dating for 3 months became engaged. Three months later, they were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on December 12, 1985, just two days after she graduated with her Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language.

Richard and Janet then moved to Logan, Utah where he attended Utah State University and Janet worked full-time. Richard's "favorite daughter," Lindsey Christine Carpenter, was born March 1, 1987. She was the most adorable baby and Richard was so happy to be a father. He carried her around with him everywhere and helped care for her whenever he was home, changing diapers, feeding her and bathing her. He often soothed her to sleep by putting her on his huge barrel chest and patting her back. The young family moved to Seattle a few months after Lindsey was born so that Janet could stay home with Lindsey while Richard worked. The following year, they moved to Richland, Wash., to be house sitters-first for Janet's parents while they served a year-long LDS church mission in Scottsdale, Ariz., and then for the Harmons, who lived around the corner from her parents' house and were serving a mission as well. Richard took classes at nearby Columbia Basin College in Pasco, later earning his Associate degree in business. Richard's "favorite son," Dallin Richard Carpenter, was born August 22, 1990. Richard loved being a dad and was thrilled to have a son now as well as a daughter. He often put Dallin in a baby backpack and took Lindsey by the hand and they were off on adventures to give mom a break. The following year, they moved to Cheney, Wash., so that Richard could complete his degree at Eastern

Washington University. He graduated in May 1993 with a Bachelor of Arts in Health Services Administration, and the family made a big move to St. Paul, Minn., where Richard worked as the assistant director for the Indian Health Clinic there. While he was enormously successful in that job, the clinic's funding was cut in 1995 and the family decided it was time to return home to Washington State.

They moved to Spokane, chosen so that the kids could attend the renowned Mead School District. It was important to both Richard and Janet that their children get a good education with supportive teachers. Richard continued to work in health administration, first for the state of Washington, then the Spokane Tribe of Indians, followed by the Kalispel Tribe of Indians. He developed a reputation for getting things done, and his jobs evolved into tribal development and project management roles. Outside of work, Richard and Janet stayed busy, attending band concerts for both kids, choir concerts and marching band performances for Lindsey, and hundreds of baseball, soccer, and basketball games for Dallin. Richard taught Dallin golf and they spent many happy hours together golfing. He loved his wife and children unconditionally and they were his greatest joy. He spent countless hours with his children throughout his lifetime, lovingly teaching them sports, household repairs, driving, and endless other life lessons that his children will be forever grateful for.

The kids graduated in 2005 and 2008 from Mead High School, and Richard and Janet turned their focus to being active empty nesters. Never ones to sit still at home, they took up biking and spent hours together on bike trips all over the state. They both loved beaches, so they later bought a timeshare and traveled throughout the Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, California, and Mexico whenever they could. It was a great time to reconnect after raising the kids for 22 years.

They moved to Ocean Shores, Wash., in 2013 where Richard worked for the Quinault Indian Nation and Janet enjoyed daily beach walks. Richard was happiest when his wife was happy. The couple enjoyed living five minutes from the beach and they made many friends in the church there. Richard had always been skilled at connecting with youth, and he was able to increase activity in the church's scouting program and young men's group as a member of the branch presidency. He served with his whole heart and was beloved by all the church members there.

In May 2016, Lindsey graduated with a law degree and Indian Law Certificate from the Sandra Day O'Connor Law School at Arizona State University. Law school had always been a dream of Richard's and seeing his daughter achieve this in his stead was one of the proudest moments of his life. Lindsey moved home to Washington State to work as a tribal lawyer, and father and daughter spent many fulfilling hours discussing the complex Native American issues that they encountered while working for tribes.

In July 2020, Richard and Janet were living in the Seattle area, and decided a change was needed to establish a new family home and find a larger community of people to socialize with. They moved to Florida and bought a home in the Plantation 55 community in Leesburg, halfway between Tampa and Orlando. They both loved being within a few hours of the beach, enjoyed the much warmer weather, and made new friends playing softball, tennis and pickleball. It turned out to be a good decision and the couple made close friends immediately. Lindsey, who had moved to South Carolina, visited often, and enjoyed learning from her father, updating their new Florida home by changing out fixtures, and assisting Janet with the decorating and furnishings. Richard and Lindsey also greatly enjoyed spending hours watching sports together.

Though Richard was disconnected from his Native American relatives and

Lakota community, he was a true Native medicine man. He had the ability to heal physical ailments, which manifested itself shortly after the Carpenters brought him into their lives and showed him true, unconditional love. Richard physically and emotionally healed others throughout his life, and was a counselor, friend, and pillar of strength for hundreds of people.

In February 2021, despite following standard precautions, Richard became infected with the COVID-19 virus. Janet also contracted the virus, but while her infection was mild, Richard's continued to worsen. He spent two weeks in the hospital and when doctors moved him to the ICU, Lindsey and Dallin immediately drove to Florida to support their dad. Despite all efforts, Richard's lungs were ravaged by the virus. On March 12, 2021, his heart became affected, and he lost his fight with the virus. His wife, children, and niece Dawn Richardson Houston were at his bedside.

As his family, we rejoice in the opportunity to have had him in our lives. He was a loving, patient and supportive husband and father who loved his family so much. Richard was a giant among men. He was beloved by all who knew him and admired by the rest. His gentle, warm, accepting spirit was a comfort and strength to all those around him. He also had a keen sense of humor and was constantly using his dry humor to tease and test other people's sense of humor. As a family, we have many stories and memories of his humor which we will always treasure and enjoy retelling to family and friends.

He will be deeply missed and remembered fondly by all who knew him, but his family takes great comfort in knowing that he is with his dear parents, sister and brother, and friends who went before him. Only God could have created such a special soul and we thank Him for the gift of loving and being loved by Richard Allan Holy Bear Carpenter.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Beyers Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Richard Allan Holy Bear Carpenter*



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May 11, 2022 at 07:15 PM



“ *One of my favorite memories of Rick is how amazing of a letter writer he was to my missionary, Jarom, and so many others. Jarom said he might have even been better at it than I was, I don't know how that could have been possible ;p. I know Jarom, Jim and I really appreciated all his support during that time. He continued this practice for so many missionaries who I know loved it as much as Jarom.*

*I also remember when Jim and I had a great evening out to eat with you and Rick at Red Lobster. We don't go there often, so it reminds me of you guys when ever I pass by. Richard will be missed by many. Love to your family, Tianna Abel*

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**Tianna Abel** - April 09, 2021 at 02:01 PM

RD

“ Janet, Lindsey and Dallin, I want to express my deepest condolences to you in the passing of Richard. You can tell what type of individual he was, by the lives of those he influenced.. He was a complex soul and one that made the world around him better. How grateful you must be to have the knowledge that you will see him again. All my Love to your family - Robert Dodd

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**Robert Dodd** - March 31, 2021 at 01:26 AM