



## Richard Milton Decker

June 21, 1940 - April 27, 2023

Richard Milton Decker, 82 of Ballston Spa, NY died Thursday, April 27, 2023. He was born June 21, 1940 in Oswego, NY, the son of the late Milton Decker and Vivian (Garlock) Decker. Richard received his Bachelor's degree from St. Lawrence University and his Master's degree from SUNY Albany. Richard married Kathleen Wawro in 1965. A very devoted couple who were happily married for 57 years and enjoyed traveling the world, trying new restaurants and attending the theater together. Richard and Kathleen lived half the year in Summerfield, FL and half in Ballston Spa, NY. Richard was loved by so many in both of the communities he called home.

Richard had a career in education for 40 years in the Saratoga Springs City School District. He taught social studies for 20 years and later served as a guidance counselor for 20 years. During this time, he was also a wrestling coach and official. Richard also dedicated many years to the Adult Education Program for the Saratoga Springs School System as its director.

Richard kept very busy over the years as a member of many clubs and organizations. He was involved as a director of the Saratoga County Fair for 40 years, a member at the Clifton Park Elks Club, and was instrumental in the formation of the Ballston Spa Little League.

In his retirement Richard loved to read and was an avid pickleball player and

instructor. During his time in Florida, he volunteered as the Resident-Chair of the Spruce Creek Games for Charity. He was very involved in the success of these games over many years. He dedicated so much time to these activities because what Richard loved most was to see people have fun and be happy.

Richard loved watching sports and spending time with his sons and grandchildren. His biggest love of all was his wife, Kathy.

In addition to his parents, Richard was predeceased by his sister, Elizabeth Decker, and brother, Larry Decker. He is survived by his loving wife Kathleen Decker; sister, Debra Munno (William) Great Neck, NY; sister-in-Law, Judy Decker, Medina, NY; two sons, Kurt Decker, Saratoga Springs, NY, Chris Decker (Lori), New Smyrna Beach, FL; and five grandchildren, Jack, Nick, Cali, Sarah and Julia.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donation be made to the American Cancer Society.

Arrangements entrusted to Beyers Funeral Home of Lady Lake, Florida.

# Tribute Wall

BM

“ I met Dick in 1968. His younger sister, Debby, was at nursing school in Schenectady, and he always looked after her. Debby and I were dating and married in 1970. Dick gave Debby away at the wedding. Since then, Debby and Dick spoke weekly. Our families were close. We had vacations on the Jersey shore, went to plays and watched sporting events as Kurt and Chris were growing up. Dick was an outstanding teacher and counselor. He brought classes to New York City for a whirlwind trip, including a Broadway play. Wherever we were, at the race track, at the grocery store, at Disney, students and others would say hello and chat, clearly remembering him fondly. Dick ran an adult education program, and for many years organized the Saratoga County Fair. He was always on the go with an easy-going ready smile. After Dick retired, he ran the annual charitable games at the Florida community where he and Kathy, the love of his life, spent half the year. As his brother-in-law, I was fortunate to know him for 55 years. I will miss him.  
Bill Munno

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**Bill Munno** - May 17, 2023 at 10:22 AM

JC

“ Our family moved into Ballston Spa exactly 52 years ago and it was our good fortune to have Dick and Kathy Decker as our next door neighbor. We have so many memories of observing all that Dick did in devoted, loving support to his wife, Kathy and sons, Kurt and Chris, and their children as well as of what he gave back both to the community and the countless number of students he taught and counseled during his 40 years in education. He is deeply respected by so many in both communities, here and in Florida, and will be sorely missed by us all. Our deepest sympathies to Kathy and the entire Decker family.  
Jerry, Vivian Crouth & Family



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**Jerry Crouth** - May 08, 2023 at 11:00 AM

CJ

“ Mr. Decker was my favorite guidance counselor. May he rest in peace. My condolences to his family and friends. May his memory be with you always.

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**Colleen (Cooley) James** - May 03, 2023 at 12:13 PM

LS

“ I remember Dick from my first year as an art teacher at Saratoga Springs Jr Hi in 1970. After 53 years, you might say he was unforgettable. He took us younger teachers under his wings mentoring us, showing by example how to be effective, good teachers and citizens. I remember his enthusiasm, good humor and warm smile. I hope it is a comfort to Kathy and the family to know how fondly Dick will be remembered. With Sympathy, Linda Schmidt



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**Linda Schmidt** - May 03, 2023 at 10:35 AM

RM

“ This is such sad news to me, personally.

*Mr Decker played a significant role in three aspects of my life:*

*1. He taught me /us how to Study. As in, learning his means of translating massive amounts of text into a simple heirarchal written outline that is referenced prior to taking a test, with gratifying results. This made both high school and college an absolute breeze for me. Such a breeze that it made me quite lazy academically -- but that's not his fault.*

*2. In his 7th grade class, we all subscribed to the daily NY Times, delivered to us right in school. This embedded into me -- at this early age-- a deep curiosity of the world.*

*3. He plucked me out of nothingness and put me into the varsity wrestling team as a freshman. Although I sucked VERY badly during that one year he was my coach, it did lead to a four year run culminating in at least a somewhat acclaimed level of athletic success -- which seems crucial to the healthy psyche of the American adolescent male. It also made deep friendships and lessons learned that I took with me into the business world.*

*For all this, I am grateful to Mr D. I just wish I had told him so...*

*Robert Millis*

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**Robert Millis** - May 02, 2023 at 01:02 PM

DP

“ I am so sorry to hear this news..I had the pleasure of working with Dick for over 20 years at SSHS. He was involved in everything and he and Kathy raised great kids. My heartfelt sympathies to all of you. RIP

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**Dave Patterson** - May 02, 2023 at 10:47 AM

BW

“ We are very sorry to hear of Richard's passing. He was a great educator. He will be missed.  
*Bruce and Elaine Walcott*

Bruce and Elaine Walcott - May 02, 2023 at 08:47 AM

LL

“ Will always remember what a great and caring teacher he was! He encouraged me to volunteer at BOCES and in the classroom. Deepest sympathy to his family and friends . He will be fondly remembered and sadly missed.

Leslie Trolenberg Lyford - May 02, 2023 at 08:17 AM

AR

“ So very sorry for his family and know he will be greatly missed. He left a mark wherever he went and leaves behind lots of friends with fond memories. He was a very good friend to my folks and they had great social times with him him and Kathy and the group social events he organized. He was a main contributor by helping head up and organize the Senior Games every year in Spruce Creek and this created fun and laughter for many through the years. May his light never be forgotten in this world by those who knew and loved him.

Angie R - May 01, 2023 at 08:38 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Richard Milton Decker.



May 01, 2023 at 07:38 PM

DG

“ *Avery accomplished man, who put up with the Brew Crew in all its glory. Thank you for being a guiding light.*

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**David Grose** - May 01, 2023 at 07:32 PM

BM

“ *Thank you Mr. D for all the memories,we will miss you. Bruce and Jane McVey*

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**bruce and Jane McVey** - May 01, 2023 at 12:03 PM

BB

“ *I first met Dick Decker in 1966 when he was my 11th grade social studies teacher. He made history so exciting and I followed in his footsteps and became a history teacher for 35 years. In later years, my wife, Teri and I moved to Spruce Creek and became lunch partners and great friends with Dick and Kathy. Over the years, we have noticed the only time Dick was ever uncomfortable was when anyone credited him for the many things he had done. With his great humility he always deferred credit to other people. It is a blessing when your mentor becomes one of your best friends. You will be missed but never forgotten. Bruce and Teri Bruno*

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**bruce bruno** - April 30, 2023 at 06:31 PM

JM

“ Dick and I had a long friendship of fifty some years. We enjoyed our working years in the Saratoga Springs City School District and later in many retirement activities. He and Kathy entertained us on many occasions during these latter years through game nights, plays, and of course lunches and dinners in many unique places. Dick for me in my administrative career was the go-to person that I could always count on to take on the project and complete it without fan fair. His style, humor and energy whether it was students' trips to New York City as part of the Big Apple Club or finding a good fit for students in their college pursuits was appreciated over many years. My recollections of famous tours of the Saratoga County Fair and monitoring the pie eating contest are memory that I cherish. Donna and I consider our times with Dick and Kathy as a blessing that will be cherished and long remembered. We pray for the Decker family during these coming days. John and Donna MacFadden Saratoga Springs

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**John MacFadden** - April 30, 2023 at 04:10 PM

CM

“ Dear Kurt and family,  
I am so sorry to see this! I have such fond memories of Mr. Decker and the three times he took our student groups to NYC for the day to sight see and see a play. He truly knew how to relate to young adults and will be missed. ❤️

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**Colleen Moran** - April 30, 2023 at 11:37 AM