



## Richard Norman Ryerson

August 9, 1937 - January 12, 2024

Memorial services for Richard Norman Ryerson will be held at 1:00 p.m. Friday, January 26, 2024, at the First United Methodist Church with Rev. Taylor Anderson officiating. Arrangements are under the direction of Marshall Funeral Home of Alva.

Richard Norman Ryerson, son of the late Norman Albert and Mildred (Starr) Ryerson, was born on August 9, 1937, at Alva, Oklahoma, and went home to be with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on January 12, 2024, at Edmond, Oklahoma, at the age of 86 years.

Richard was raised in his hometown of Alva, where he graduated from Alva High School with the Class of 1955. From there, he attended the University of Oklahoma, where he earned a Business Finance degree, graduating in 1959.

During his time at OU, Ryerson was active in Delta Tau Delta Fraternity, the Men's Glee Club, and the "Pride of Oklahoma" marching band. The band performed at OU football games throughout the country including the Orange, Sugar, and Cotton Bowls, as well as Notre Dame Stadium. Additionally, as an undergraduate, Ryerson was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). Richard's senior year, he was named the recipient of the Wall Street Journal Achievement Award as the Outstanding Senior in the College of Business Administration.

While at OU, Richard met the love of his life, Johnece Ellen Houghlin. They were married at the Pauls Valley Methodist Church on June 12, 1959. Upon graduation, they moved to Lawton, Oklahoma to start their life together. Richard was assigned active duty at the United States Army's Ft. Sill military base, where he graduated at the top of his class in officer artillery advanced training. After his years of active duty, Ryerson continued his service in the Army National Guard as Captain and Headquarters Battery Commander of the 189th Field Artillery Battalion of the 45th Division, a post he held for twelve years.

Following his military service, Richard assumed management duties of the W.W. Starr Lumber Company, a business started by his grandfather in 1909. For over 50 years, Ryerson managed the day-to-day operations of Starr Lumber with locations in Alva, Blackwell, Enid, and Woodward. He also served in various leadership capacities of industry trade groups such as the Oklahoma Lumber Association and Mid-America Lumber Association.

Richard was active in many other arenas outside of his primary business. In 1998, Ryerson was appointed by Governor Frank Keating to serve as Regent for BOROC, the Board of Regional Oklahoma Colleges. During his nine-year term, Richard was involved in numerous campus building projects throughout the state, selected several college presidents, and was named Chairman of the Board of Regents.

Ryerson was a lifelong member of the First United Methodist Church, as well as founder and board member of Community Bank of Alva. He was active in various leadership roles with the Woods County Industrial Development Committee, Alva Chamber of Commerce, Northwest Family Service Center, Bill Johnson Correctional Center, and Alva Kiwanis Club (where he played piano). Upon his death Richard was the longest tenured Kiwanis member in

the state of Oklahoma.

Throughout his lifetime, Richard was recognized in many different areas. One of the most important honors included being selected as a “Distinguished Goldbug” in 2017. This award meant so much to him, as he was always proud to share with anyone that he was a Goldbug.

Richard was preceded in death by his parents, Norman and Mildred Ryerson, and his wife of 59 years, Johnece Ryerson.

He is survived by his daughter, Julia Ryerson Witherington of Plano, Texas, and her children, Elizabeth, Sarah, and David Witherington; and a son, John and daughter-in-law, Amy Ryerson of Alva, Oklahoma, and their children, Ben, Katherine, and Madeline; other relatives and many friends.

Memorial contributions may be made through the funeral home to honor Richard’s life to the First United Methodist Church of Alva, the Northwestern Oklahoma State University Foundation, or the Alva Goldbug Education Foundation (checks made to CFO/AGEF).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JAN 26. 1:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church  
626 College Avenue  
Alva, OK 73717

# Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Service Video*



---

**Marshall Funeral Homes** - January 27, 2024 at 12:12 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Video Tribute*



---

**Marshall Funeral Homes** - January 27, 2024 at 12:12 PM



“ *Carl Ziegler & Chris Gragnani purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Richard Norman Ryerson.*



---

**Carl Ziegler & Chris Gragnani** - January 26, 2024 at 11:43 AM

JS

“ Was always nice to do business with him and he's been missed for awhile now. Prayers to the family and his employees it's like a family as you walk in.



Jennifer's Salon - January 26, 2024 at 12:04 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Richard Norman Ryerson.



January 25, 2024 at 09:12 AM

RR

“ RUSO Regents planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard Norman Ryerson.

RUSO Regents - January 25, 2024 at 09:12 AM

MC

“ Mary Ann Chapman purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Richard Norman Ryerson.



Mary Ann Chapman - January 23, 2024 at 12:39 PM

KM

“ Always such a pillar of the Alva community and an incredibly kind man. He and Johnece raised a great family and that legacy lives strong. We Love you, Ryersons. Prayers go out for you all as you move forward- may you be flooded with the peace of the best of memories and the promise that your sweet dad and grandfather is in the arms of Jesus with those that have gone before him.

-----  
**kelly misuraca** - January 18, 2024 at 09:00 PM

JW

Thank you KB!!! We had good ones huh  

-----  
**Julia Witherington** - January 19, 2024 at 09:31 PM

JH

“ I knew Mr Ryerson from my time in ABS with Pixley Lumber (Claremore), the Young Lumbermen's Association with MLA, and while I've been with Gulf Coast Building Supply (an ABS member in Robertsdale AL).

He was always kind to me as a junior lumber guy, and very supportive of the OYL.

He will be missed. He was one of the good ones.

BOOMER!!

-----  
**Joe Hurd** - January 18, 2024 at 04:45 PM

JW

Sooner! Thx Joe! I was So lucky 

-----  
**Julia Witherington** - January 19, 2024 at 09:32 PM

MS

“ John, Julia and family. My thoughts are with you all. Richard was such an amazing man and so very distinguished. He was such a blessing and staple to Alva and will truly be missed. My Dad's best friend of nearly 80 years, I have fond memories of our families. RIP Richard, your legacy will live on.

Mike Sterba - January 17, 2024 at 10:03 PM

JW

Thx- your Dad was so good to him!! They were friends from the start

Julia Witherington - January 17, 2024 at 11:56 PM

DC

“ Dear John and Julia and families; Your dad will be greatly missed. He and my dad were best friends for 80 years and thought the world of each other. I always thought that your dad was a good man and when my mom worked for him and got so ill, he proved it. He also proved it by his friendship with my dad and especially after your mom died when he and my dad would go out to eat together and just hang out at each other's houses. One of the last times I saw your dad, he joined my dad and I in going to eat chicken and noodles at the fairgrounds. We had a great time. Your dad was always nice to me whenever I saw him. RIP Mr. Ryerson you have earned the rest. God Bless All of You.



Donise (Sterba) Cinnamon - January 17, 2024 at 08:24 PM

JW

Donise- Thank you for your sweet words- he was the best!!!! Always giving to others 🙏💙

Julia Witherington - January 17, 2024 at 11:58 PM

AS

“ *What a wonderful landlord he has been to our family. He will be missed as our neighbor looking out for each others. Keeping all in our thoughts and prayers. RIP Richard*



-----  
**Annette Schwerdtfeger** - January 17, 2024 at 04:58 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Richard Norman Ryerson.*



-----  
January 17, 2024 at 09:21 AM



“ *May each of your hearts hold special memories of one so dear to you! Sincere condolences.*



-----  
**DaleVaughna Schmidt** - January 16, 2024 at 10:51 PM

DU

“ *I work for him from 1998 to 2003 I got no complaints he always treated me Fair and help me a bunch*

-----  
**Danny Utterback** - January 16, 2024 at 05:34 PM

JT

“ *So sorry for your loss. Prayers, love and hugs to your family .* ❤️🙏

-----  
**jana Terrell** - January 16, 2024 at 01:52 PM