

# Richard **Kitchens**

December 14, 1972 - April 22, 2015



## *Richard's Life Story*

Richard Kitchens will be remembered as a quiet, unassuming man whose actions spoke volumes of his character. He had the kindest, most caring personality that endeared him to everyone he met. Richard had a passion for the outdoors but found the greatest joy in the presence of his family and friends. Life will never be the same without Richard, but he leaves behind wonderful memories that will remain forever near to the hearts of all who knew and loved him.

Life during the 1970s in America was defined by great change in the fabric of our nation with the advancements in civil and women's rights, and in the pursuit of reaching new heights with the space program. Mood rings, lava lamps and pet rocks were some of the fads of this generation while disco music kept people out on the dance floor. It was during these unprecedented times that Ronnie and Mary (Wancowicz) Kitchens of Baltimore, Maryland celebrated the births of their twins - son Richard Allen and daughter Melissa, on December 14, 1972. Richard and Melissa were the middle of four children in their family, and enjoyed a typical childhood growing up in Baltimore along with their siblings, Dawn and Lee. Some of Richard's favorite childhood memories stemmed from the numerous hunting

adventures with his dad, brother and his uncle Tom. The family lived in Kentucky for a time but eventually moved back to Baltimore, where Richard completed his education and graduated from high school in 1992. Richard was a Certified Hunter Safety Instructor and Range Officer; teaching and shooting alongside his uncle Tom they formed a lifelong bond.







Richard was in his late 20s when he answered a question in an online chat room; and much to his surprise, he ended up finding the love of his life, Erika Bartlo. The two hit it off right away, and Erika was so taken by Richard's kindheartedness. She was new to the Baltimore area and Richard made sure she felt right at home. Hopelessly in love, Richard and Erika were happily married on September 1, 2001. The newlyweds settled into married life together in Baltimore until 2002, when Erika got a job at Pfizer

Company in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Being nature lovers, the couple moved to their new home in rural Fulton, where they enjoyed the quietness of the country. Once here, Richard also embarked on a new career, and began taking classes at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, where he received his Certificate from the Automotive Academy. However, his line of work changed when he got a job at Pfizer (like his wife Erika), working as an Operator.

Life was good for Richard and Erika, full of hard work and lots of fun. They were both big outdoor enthusiasts and loved being in nature.

They loved camping and taking trips to the Upper Peninsula just

to get away, and fishing whenever possible. Richard was also an avid hunter, and used both bow and rifle when hunting deer and turkey. At home, they enjoyed time with their beloved brood of pets, which included their three miniature Schnauzers, Jack, Louie and Sophie, and three cats, Mindy, Niko and Dixie. Throughout his life, those

he loved were so important to Richard. He cherished his family, and especially loved his nieces and nephews, who just thought he was the "best uncle"

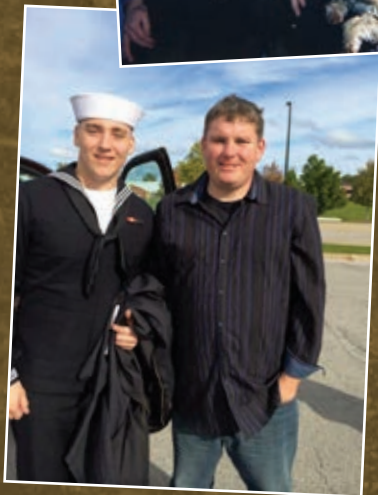


in the world. It was the moments he shared with those he loved that meant the world to Richard.

Richard was the kindest, most caring man to everyone around him. Yet, he suffered with depression, and wasn't able to carry the weight of his demons any longer, and took his own life on Wednesday, April 22, 2015. Richard's absence will be deeply felt, his light extinguished much too soon.

Richard is survived by his wife, Erika; his parents, Mary (Ken) Culbertson and Ronnie (Paula) Kitchens; his twin sister, Melissa (Mark) Harper; his sister, Dawn (Vernon) Lechner; his brother, Lee (Sally) Kitchens; his mother & father-in-law, David & Ulla Bartlo; his brother-in-law, Kevin (Jaime) Bartlo; and his nieces and nephews, Garret & Josh Elseroad, Erica & Sarah Lechner, Carley & Gavin Kitchens and Anders & Kacey Bartlo, his uncle Tom & aunt Diane Phillips as well as many other relatives.

Visit with his family on Saturday, April 25th from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at Life Story Funeral Homes, Vicksburg; 409 S. Main Street (649-1697), where a memorial service will immediately follow at 11:00 a.m. Visit Richard's memory page at [www.lifestorynet.com](http://www.lifestorynet.com) where you can archive a memory or photo and sign his guest book. Memorial donations may be made to Gryphon Place.



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