



Richard Porell

April 2, 1933 - October 10, 2025

Richard “Dick” Porell passed gently on October 10, 2025. His family is comforted by his legacy of love, humor and good works.

Dick Porell was born on April 2, 1933 to Douglas Alphonso and Blanche (Touchette) Porell in Derby, CT. His father was a music teacher which influenced his lifelong love of all types of music. He especially loved singing and performing and could play several brass and percussion instruments. As his children learned to play brass instruments, he would form impromptu bands and take them, and their friends caroling in the neighborhood and, as they got proficient, to the Jefferson House in Newington.

While living in Ansonia, Porell joined the Boy Scouts, eventually becoming an Eagle Scout. Scouting was an important part of his life. He lived by the principles included in the Scout Oath and Law and could recite both well into his 80s. He served on the Board of Directors for both the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts in Connecticut.

Porell attended Yale on a scholarship and earned a degree in mathematics in 1954. This act of charity greatly influenced him. He once said “Someone provided me a free education. I owe it to others to help them.” Upon graduation, Porell worked with his class alumni on fund raising. At their 50th reunion the Class of 1954 set a record for donating \$110 million to Yale.

While at Yale Porell met Elizabeth (Betty) Heery at a mixer with Albertus Magnus College. There began a love affair that thrived for 69 years of marriage. Porell would go to work before dawn in order to get home each night in time for a quiet time with Betty before dinner with the six children. To the “shock” of the children they were often found in quiet embraces well into their 90s. They radiated love for each other and served as examples for all their children and grandchildren.

Between graduation and marriage Porell served in the Army as a Machine Records Specialist. Upon completion of training at the Adjutant General School, he was selected to remain at the school as an instructor. There he worked on the Army’s first pay computer along with five other ivy league graduates. With nine months left in the service, when he could no longer be sent overseas, he returned to Connecticut and married Betty.

Most of his career, Porell worked at Travelers Insurance Company. He began in the Actuary -Data Processing Program but quickly moved into data processing. When Travelers got their first computer, he became one of the first programmers. On the edge of emerging technology, he met multiple times with Bill Gates and Admiral Grace Hopper (the founder of Cobol). While head of the data center Travelers was one of the top ten postal customers in the U.S. with its post office branch and postal inspector. He would meet quarterly with the Associate Postmaster General. Eventually, Porell became an Executive Vice President at Metrahealth, a spinoff of the merger between Travelers and Metropolitan Life’s group health business, where 20,000 employees worked for him.

After retirement Porell began a long association with the diocese of Venice, Florida and their Catholic Charities. He first served as the treasurer of a small mission church and then as the treasurer of the board of Directors of the

Diocese of Venice, Florida and as treasurer of Catholic Charities in the diocese. There he mentored the charity leadership.

A believer in the dignity of each person, Porell began work on a housing project for migrant workers. Migrant workers had been living in shacks, barns and even old slave cabins. Porell worked to secure funding through grants and other means and advised on the development. On site tours of the property, Porell would stress the multigenerational design and play spaces for children. In recognition of this effort a street, Richard Porell Court, was named in his honor in Arcadia Florida.

With funding complete for the major project, Porell continued to work with the Catholic Charities housing unit. Focusing on battered women and women in recovery, he and Betty purchased several small housing units in Southwest Florida, refurbished, and furnished them. They took great joy in this and their passion for the project resulted in much of the furniture and wares being donated.

Catholic Charities honored Richard and Elizabeth with the Frank Gaelena, Sr. Humanitarian Award in 2016.

No discussion of Richard Porell's life could be complete without mentioning his smile and sense of humor. Along with Betty and perhaps because of it, his smile was his constant companion. His high school profile mentions it, it's displayed in his high school yearbook. He loved a good laugh and often used his six children as his foils. There was not a bit of meanness in him and his laugh was easily shared. Even when Alzheimer's had robbed him of so much, his smile and laughter prevailed.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth; sister Madelyn (Porell) and Anthony

Ranno of Fort Myers, FL; his children, James Porell and Louisa Kaestle of Pine Plains, NY, Robert and Patricia (Arthur) Porell of Wethersfield, CT, Ronald and Barbara (Gardner) Porell of Southbury, CT, John and Agnes (Oetjen) Porell of Glastonbury, CT, Thomas and Mindy (Magalnick) Porell of Newington, CT, Susan (Porell) and Kevin Blenke of Stamford, CT; grandchildren Kelly (Porell) and Brian Cannon, Timothy Porell, Jeffrey Porell, Kara Porell, Stuart Porell and Ryan Tessier, Matthew Porell, Sarah (Porell) and Coleman Rowlett-Porell, Lauren Porell, Adam Porell, Emma Blenke, Jack Blenke , Connor Blenke; great grandchildren Bennett Cannon and Kathryn Cannon. He was predeceased by his parents and sister; Janice (Porell) Brechlin.

The Porell family would like to acknowledge the services and thank all those that cared for Richard in the final years of his life. Particularly they thank Shanna, his home health aide, the staff at the McAuley in West Hartford and the staff at the Residence in Glastonbury. Your dedication, caring and level of service was greatly appreciated.

Richard Porell's life will be honored at a Mass of Christian Burial at 10 AM on November 8th at St Peter Claver Church, 47 Pleasant St, West Harford CT, 06107. This will be followed by a burial at Mount Saint Benedict Cemetery, 1 Cottage Grove Rd, Bloomfield, CT 06002. Finally, a Celebration of Life/Luncheon will follow.

In lieu of flowers Richard asked that donations be made to the House of Bread. Donations can be made at www.hobread.org or by sending the donation to The House of Bread, 27 Chestnut St, Hartford, CT 06120

Cemetery Details

Mount Saint Benedict

1 Cottage Grove Road
Bloomfield, CT

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

NOV 8. 10:00 AM (ET)

Church of St. Peter Claver
47 Pleasant St.
West Hartford, CT

Tribute Wall



“ *Molloy Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Richard Porell*



Molloy Funeral Home - November 06, 2025 at 01:32 PM

GL

“ *My sympathies to the Porell family. Just saw this notice after sharing great memories of Dick with my family. I worked for Dick in the mid-80's. A tremendous mentor to me, integral to my early career. Smart, passionate, always intellectually curious, looked out for his people, great leader. Sorry about your loss, glad you had him for 93 yrs.*

Glenn Lammey - December 26, 2025 at 08:54 AM



“ *Kelly what a legacy of joy and impact. May you find peace and joy in his memory*

Vickie Wms-Cullins - October 20, 2025 at 08:28 PM

TA

“ *Tom, very sorry for your loss. Your father's obituary shows a life very well lived.*

Tom Andrea - October 20, 2025 at 10:56 AM

TP

Thanks Tom, he was a great dad.

Tom P - October 21, 2025 at 12:56 PM

JP

Thanks Tom, he loved working with Catholic Family charities in both Hartford and Florida

John Porell - November 01, 2025 at 12:09 PM

SS

“*Tom, my deepest condolences to you and your family, your father sounded like a wonderful person. The apple didn't fall far from the tree. With sympathy, Sharon Steinle*



Sharon Steinle - October 18, 2025 at 12:09 AM

TP

Thanks Sharon

Tom P - October 18, 2025 at 08:44 AM

MO

Worked for Dick at TIC in the 1970's. It was great reconnecting with Dick when we bought a place on Otis Reservoir.

Mark Orenstein - November 09, 2025 at 01:55 PM