



## Richard Lee "Rick" LaBreche

October 27, 1954 - February 12, 2024

On February 12, 2024, the world lost an incredible man. "Rick The Happy Plumber" passed away peacefully in his home with the love of his life, Eileen, steadfast by his side. Richard Lee LaBreche ("Rick" or "Ricko" as he was affectionately known) was born on October 27, 1954, in Butte, Montana. He attended Emerson Elementary School, East Junior High, graduated from Butte High School and went on to spend four years in the Air Force from 1974-1978 attaining the rank of an E-4 Sergeant and working as an Aerospace Ground Equipment Repairman Specialist before returning to Butte where he then lived the remainder of his life. He worked many a job; bartending at The Fifth Quarter, working at Whalen Tire, Markovich Construction, Hollow Contracting, and various jobs with the county before discovering his true calling, which was life as a plumber. He spent several years working for Bugni Plumbing & Heating until he retired.

He lived a gregarious and adventurous life, frequently camping and hiking during his younger years. As he matured, he found himself riding his Harley wherever the roads would take him when he wasn't busy teaching others to love the art of plumbing as much as he did.

It's no secret that Rick loved riding his Harley. Any time the temperature was above 50, you could find him waving and smiling to anyone and everyone. His passion for the freedom that the open road brought him was shared with all

who passed by. And if you couldn't see him coming, you could certainly hear him coming as he enjoyed his music one way...loud.

Rick loved Butte and loved America and all it stood for. He was proud of his contributions to his country during his time in the Air Force and truly wanted to be a positive influence for others. The best way he knew how was through politics. He was a strong-headed Democrat, and he could be seen at every political event possible showing his unwavering support with his larger than life personality. Volunteering for the Butte-Silver Bow Democratic Party, many may even remember receiving cold-calls from "Rick The Happy Plumber" asking for their vote. In addition, he believed in the ideology of the unions and was an avid supporter. So much so that he would eventually serve as the President of the Southwestern Montana Central Labor Council. The Local 41 Plumbers and Pipefitters of Montana union played a major role in his life, helping to shape him into the man he came to be. He learned from them, worked with them, and eventually taught alongside them. He thoroughly enjoyed being a teacher for the Plumber/Pipefitter Apprenticeship Program and loved sharing his wisdom and knowledge with anyone who would listen. He was a true leader in every sense of the word, even being awarded the Southwest Montana Central Labor Council Union Brother Lifetime Labor Leader Award in 2023.

Rick absolutely loved his children, Bill and Carli, as well as his grandchildren, Morgan, Shelby, Brooke, J.D., and Greg. They all brought so much joy and light into his life, and even if he was not always the best at showing it, his love was ALWAYS there. He was diligent about trying to instill life lessons into them, ensuring they always knew sayings like "The more you learn, the more you earn," "Work with your mind, not with your hands," and "The choices we make dictate the way we live our lives." He always tried to make certain that they were not only doing the best that they could do but also being the best that they could be and he fully supported them in any manner feasible. He

was so incredibly proud of them, and they brought a sparkle to his eye.

Rick lived an OUTSTANDING life. He was selfless in his desire to help others and spoke his mind freely when he felt there were injustices. He truly wanted to leave this world a better place than he found it, and if he couldn't make the whole world better, he would do his darndest to at least make Butte better. He was incredibly generous with his time, his skills, and his knowledge, helping anyone in need and regularly volunteering whenever and wherever he could. He very much lived his life according to one of his favorite sayings which was "Sacrifice is everything."

Eileen LaBreche was unequivocally Rick's biggest supporter and companion in life, standing by his side through all of life's ups and downs. They truly had a love like no other; one that is both admirable and inspiring. A love like that will be deeply cherished forever.

Rick was truly like no other, and his life's accomplishments can't be summarized in just a few paragraphs. He was an extraordinary man with an extraordinary heart, and he will be greatly missed by his family, his friends, and all who were fortunate enough to know him.

Rick is preceded in death by his son William "Bill" LaBreche, parents Ellen May "May" and Clarence "Moon" LaBreche and Betty Lou and Richard Waltee, sister Ellen Barry, brother Lee LaBreche, grandmother Nelly Lockett, and former in-laws Ann "Baba" and Al "Jedo" Sorich.

Rick is survived by his soul-mate Eileen LaBreche, daughter Carli (Hersh) Hoaglan, grandchildren Morgan (Tim) Calnan, Shelby (Taylor) Thiel, Brooke (Teal) Taylor, Johnathan (Justine) LaBreche, Greg (Kendra) Hamaker, great-grandchildren Kylee, Daron, Ryder & Kolson Calnan as well as Leyton, Orry,

Harper, and Averil Thiel, his sister Denise "Sissy" (Chuck) Hazlett [children Nicole, Chuck, & Jason], brother Mark (Kim) Waltee [children Autumn & Drew], sister Ellen Barry's children [Summer, Veronica, & Kayla], brother Dennis Waltee [son Christopher], sister-in-law Kim LaBreche [daughter Aleesha], as well as numerous great-nieces/nephews.

The family would like to thank everyone for their overwhelming love and support during this difficult time. We will say our goodbyes to Rick on March 9th, 2024 at 11:00 AM at Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home with a luncheon to follow at the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church Hall.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAR 9. 11:00 AM (MT)

Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home  
1800 Florence Ave  
Butte, MT 59701  
(406) 723-3221  
<https://wayrynen-richards.com/>

# Tribute Wall

RL

“ Condolences from another Richard Lee LaBreche, from Detroit, currently in GA. My best wishes to his family and friends.

Richard LaBreche - October 30, 2024 at 01:53 PM

MK

“ I am so sorry Eileen and Carli and everyone who knew him. This is a terrible loss to the world. What a guy. What a guy.

Maleesha Kovnesky - February 21, 2024 at 12:45 PM

democracy  
vs  
hypocrisy

“ Such a beautiful and sincere soul. A true icon to all the special traits that are Butte, America. A very precious friend to so very many, and helped make all of our worlds brighter! Rest in peace dear friend...



Sheldon Burt - February 20, 2024 at 11:53 PM

DM

“ Dear Eileen & Family, I was so sad to hear this and want you to know I'm thinking about you & sending many Prayers & Big Hugs! 🙏👉😭 Rick was one of the Best, such a hard worker and a huge heart! Take care I know your Heart is broken and I feel so bad for you.💔XXXOOO's R.I.P. Ricco Love Diane & Family

Diane McLaughlin - February 19, 2024 at 06:22 PM

JM

“ Sincere sympathy to all of Rick's family. He was a great guy and definitely true to Butte. Rest in peace 'Happy Plumber!'”

Jeff Miller - February 18, 2024 at 09:38 AM

SC

“ *It's been a pleasure working side by side with one of the hardest working man I've ever known!! Going to miss you.*

shawn Cameron - February 16, 2024 at 10:33 PM

RR

“ *Our condolence to the Family Randy Rodoni& Family*

Randy Rodoni - February 16, 2024 at 06:25 PM



“ *2 files added to the album Memories Album*



Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home - February 16, 2024 at 04:41 PM