



Richard Franklin Colburn

February 9, 1950 - December 27, 2024

Former Maryland State Senator Richard F. Colburn passed away peacefully on Friday, December 27, 2024 at University of Maryland Shore Regional Health in Easton with his loving wife Alma and his family by his side. He was 74.

Born on February 9, 1950 to Peggy J. Colburn and Charles Franklin Colburn, Jr., Rich grew up in Oxford, MD where he made lifelong friends whom he referred to as the Oxford Boys. Following his graduation from Easton High School, Rich entered the United States Army Security Agency, serving in Germany from 1969 to 1972. He was stationed on the East/West German border during the Cold War and spied electronically on the Russians and the East Germans. He held a top security clearance and was awarded a Good Conduct Medal. He was signed up for the Army for four years, but only stayed three after U.S. Defense Department budget cuts and he got an early out shortly after earning the rank of sergeant. Upon his return to Maryland, Rich worked at the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company — or A&P, later Superfresh — in Easton as the produce manager & checker, followed by 24 years as Federalsburg Town Manager. His final career chapter before retirement was serving as a Special Assistant to Former Maryland Secretary of Agriculture, Joe Bartenfelder, for eight years.

Most notably, was Rich's long career as an elected official, first serving in the

Maryland House of Delegates followed by four terms as the Maryland State Senator representing District 37 in the Maryland General Assembly. "A Shore Senator", Rich was a fixture in Maryland politics for over two decades eventually becoming the longest serving Republican Senator in the Maryland State Senate. A devoted Eastern Shoreman and son of a waterman, Rich worked tirelessly for his constituents, what he called one of the most important assets a legislator could have – constituent service, which was his number one priority. Through his many years in Annapolis, he tried to work on both sides of the aisle to advocate for people he represented, and he always tried to put politics aside and work for what's best, not just for the people of the Eastern Shore, but the State of Maryland. Rich introduced hundreds of bills and was a strong supporter of watermen, farmers, veterans, and other natural-resources based industries. He championed many infrastructures on the Eastern Shore and throughout the region. One of his proudest achievements was his endless advocacy, a multi-decade fight, to secure \$60 million in funding to replace the Dover Bridge; a vital artery connecting Southern Caroline and Talbot Counties on the Eastern Shore. His vision of a new, safer bridge finally came to fruition in 2018. Other prized completed projects being bridges, in Vienna and Sharptown. He was a strong advocate of retention of the hospital in Easton, getting U.S. Route 50 through Easton widened to six lanes, benefits for veterans and law enforcement, the Choptank River Lighthouse, the transfer of the property rights of the Port of Cambridge, or Sailwinds property to the city, helping to bring a Hyatt to Cambridge, advocations for a healthy restoration of the Chesapeake Bay's oyster population, the implementation of the creation of School of Veterinary Medicine at UMES, and starting a process that ended with an agricultural law clinic being established at the University of Maryland to help with farmers' legal needs.

He received numerous awards for his legislative efforts including Chesapeake College Announces Pride of Peake Honoree, a Certificate of Appreciation

from the Maryland Municipal League, a Recognition Award from the Maryland Association of Counties, Social Science Award from Chesapeake College, and Outstanding Rural Health Legislator from the Maryland Rural Health Association. He served on numerous committees: Constitutional and Administrative Law Committee, Environmental Matters Committee, Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area, served as Chair of the Alcoholic Beverages subcommittee, Judicial Proceedings Committee, and Senate Chair of the Eastern Shore Delegation – just to name a few.

He worked with and maintained personal relationships with Maryland Governors including Harry Hughes, William Donald Schaefer, Paris Glendening, Bob Ehrlich, Martin O'Malley, Larry Hogan, and Wes Moore.

In his personal time Rich could be found reading newspapers, researching history and talking about all things related to his favorite pastime, Orioles baseball, which he was a diehard fan and season ticket holder. Anyone who knew Rich, knew during gametime his focus was on his favorite team from Baltimore. His #1 team was the O's and his second favorite team was whoever was playing the NY Yankees. He was a member of several informal social groups including Monday Night Bored (Board) Meetings in Easton, Jeannie's Lunch Club and the Easton High Social Club. He was also a member of formal organizations including the Maryland Rural Water Association, People for Better Housing, Maryland Rural Development Corporation, Elks Lodge, Veterans of Foreign War (VFW), the American Legion, Junior Achievement and the Salvation Army. As a lifelong member of the American Legion Post 91 (46 years), he was recently elected Commander of the Dorchester American Legion Post 91.

Famous Rich Colburn sentiments: Hug me like you mean it, Thanks for Coming, introducing himself as Rich, Rich Colburn, and lastly... his only beer of choice was a Michelob Ultra with a glass of ice.

Beloved father to Johanna, Rich became a grandfather to the light of his life Saylor, enjoying his new role as Pop Pop. Married to Alma for over 20 years, Rich was happiest when his Orioles were winning, and Alma was by his side.

Rich is survived by his wife Alma Colburn, daughter Johanna Hamilton (Bobby), his granddaughter Saylor, his sister Marie (John Hoffman), and countless cousins and friends. He was preceded in death by his father and beloved mother.

A visitation will be held on Thursday, January 2nd, 2025, from 10am until 12noon at Open Bible Church, 1619 Race Street, Cambridge, MD 21613. A memorial service will immediately follow at the church beginning at 12noon. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Rich's memory may be made to Open Bible Church 1619 Race Street, Cambridge, MD 21613.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 2. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (est)

Open Bible Church
1619 Race Street
Cambridge, MD 21613

Memorial Celebration

JAN 2. 12:00 PM (est)

Open Bible Church
1619 Race Street
Cambridge, MD 21613

Tribute Wall



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn* ”



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - January 02, 2025 at 04:08 PM

DR

RISP Senator Colburn!

Doris A Robinson - February 28, 2025 at 07:33 PM

DS

“ *Dawn Smith lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn* ”



Dawn Smith - January 05, 2025 at 01:57 PM

DS

“ *I would pass Mr Colburn daily as he went jogging down Liberty Rd in Federalsburg MD. He always, always waved every single time I'd ride by, no matter how many times either. Some days were more than others, then he would laugh. He was a good man, and I had a lot of respect for him. Thank you, for all that you'd done for Md's Eastern Shore. RIP Sir.....* ”

Dawn Smith - January 05, 2025 at 01:55 PM

TK

“ *Tim And Velvet Kirk lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn*



Tim and Velvet Kirk - January 03, 2025 at 06:47 PM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.*



January 02, 2025 at 01:41 PM

LS

“ *Lori Schmidt & Son Nick (Hopkins Sales) planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard Franklin Colburn.*

Lori Schmidt & Son Nick (Hopkins Sales) - January 02, 2025 at 12:27 PM

LS

“ *Lori Schmidt & Son Nick (Hopkins Sales) purchased the Garden Accent - "Someone you love..." for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.*



Lori Schmidt & Son Nick (Hopkins Sales) - January 02, 2025 at 12:27 PM

LS

“ We are so sorry for the loss of a friend and a supporter of the Eastern Shore. My son Nick went to SSPP with his daughter and he was a supporter of our local Boy Scout Troop #165 in Denton. We still remember when he was there for Nick's Eagle Scout presentation. He was a great representative for the Eastern Shore of Maryland and a nice person. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family. Sincerely, Lori Schmidt and staff of Hopkins Sales, Easton, MD.

lori schmidt - January 02, 2025 at 12:20 PM

NA

“ I'll cherish the memory of him riding his bike past the house, always with a friendly hello and a big smile. A wonderful neighbor, always ready to lend a hand, with the unwavering support of Alma. My deepest condolences to Alma and the family.

Nathalie - January 02, 2025 at 07:58 AM

NG

“ Nathalie G. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard Franklin Colburn.

Nathalie G. - January 02, 2025 at 05:18 AM

JS

“ June Bringman Shortall lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn



June Bringman Shortall - January 01, 2025 at 08:54 PM

RH

“ Robert Leroy Hobbs, Jr lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn



robert leroy hobbs,Jr - January 01, 2025 at 07:17 PM

LH

“ Larry and Yumi Hogan purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.



Larry and Yumi Hogan - January 01, 2025 at 11:57 AM

AN

“ In memory of the late Sen Richard F Colburn Thoughts/prayers, condolences & sympathy to the Colburn family and friends



anonymous - January 01, 2025 at 10:31 AM

AN

“ Anonymous lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn



anonymous - January 01, 2025 at 10:30 AM

PD

“ *P.L. Lahoria, Nico & Divya purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.*



P.L. Lahoria, Nico & Divya - January 01, 2025 at 04:13 AM

LH

“ *Lynda H.Palmatary lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn*



Lynda H.Palmatary - December 31, 2024 at 11:43 PM

CP

“ *With Rich you never felt left out. He had the amazing capacity to “show up” every where and anywhere. Our son has shared a friendship with Johanna since their childhood and we are holding the family in the light during this time.*

Constance W Pullen - December 31, 2024 at 01:32 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.*



December 31, 2024 at 12:46 PM



“ *Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.*



December 31, 2024 at 12:13 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard Franklin Colburn.

December 31, 2024 at 12:13 PM



“ *Love, Jan and Gene purchased the Your Light Shines for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.*



Love, Jan and Gene - December 31, 2024 at 12:01 PM



“ *Love, Jan and Gene planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard Franklin Colburn.*

Love, Jan and Gene - December 31, 2024 at 12:01 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.



December 31, 2024 at 11:04 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard Franklin Colburn.

December 31, 2024 at 11:04 AM



“ John & Laurie Cannon purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.



John & Laurie Cannon - December 31, 2024 at 11:03 AM

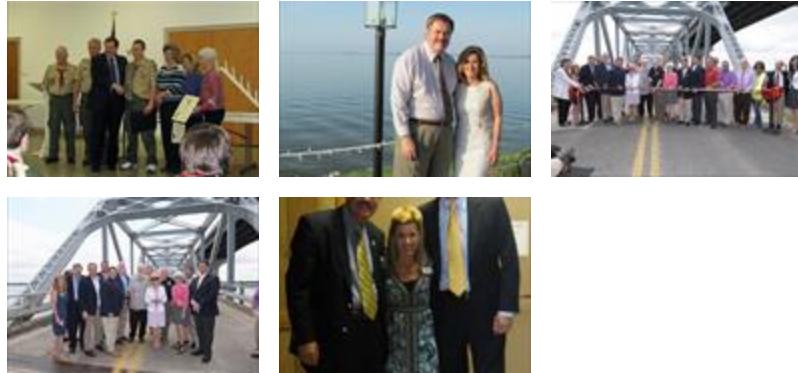


“ John & Laurie Cannon planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard Franklin Colburn.

John & Laurie Cannon - December 31, 2024 at 11:03 AM

LP

“ 12 files added to the album *Laura*



Laura Everngam Price - December 31, 2024 at 10:24 AM

LP

So many wonderful memories of Rich. He never missed an event and was a true dedicated public servant. Sharing photos from over the years, including the beloved Dover Bridge. Will miss you Senator!

Laura Everngam Price - December 31, 2024 at 10:26 AM

RD

“ *Thank you for your service to this State and local communities. Good job! Rest in peace. Condolences to the family.*



Roland & Elaine Dell - December 31, 2024 at 10:00 AM

RH

“ I will always cherish the memories that we shared during my years as Health Officer for Dorchester County. Whether it was solving a constituent's concern or talking baseball and our beloved Orioles. I am proud to call you my friend and will miss you! To Alma and the family please know that Rich led a good life and the citizens of the Eastern Shore are the recipients of the better life as the result of his tireless advocacy and commitment to service. Alma and family please cherish the memories and may God Bless and keep you. RIP my friend.



Roger Harrell - December 31, 2024 at 09:46 AM

PC

“ So sorry for your loss. Keeping you all in our thoughts & prayers. 🙏
We will miss seeing you in Church.
RIP Senator Rich Colbourn, until we meet again.



Phil & Donna Cecil - December 31, 2024 at 09:04 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.



December 31, 2024 at 08:59 AM

PH

“ *Senator Colburn and I share many memories. My favorite is he helped me write a bill to protect the widow or widower that has a Veteran License plate. They can keep the plate after the death of a Veteran.*

Patricia Henson - December 31, 2024 at 08:25 AM

VJ

“ *Vicky And Bart Johnson lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn*



Vicky and Bart Johnson - December 31, 2024 at 07:32 AM

MM

“ *Many memories with Senator Colburn in and around Annapolis as well as business events throughout the Eastern Shore! Everyone knew that Rich loved the Shore and loved Alma and the family
Even more! Sending my sincere condolences from the Miller Family with prayers to all!*



Melanie Miller

Melanie Miller - December 30, 2024 at 08:49 PM

MM

“ Many memories with Senator Colburn in and around Annapolis as well as business events throughout the Eastern Shore! Everyone knew that Rich loved the Shore and loved Alma and the family

Even more! Sending my sincere condolences from the Miller Family with prayers to all!

Melanie Miller

MDA- Fiscal Services Department



Melanie Miller - December 30, 2024 at 08:48 PM

KP

“ Rich, was a funny guy! Sending my sincere condolences and prayers to the family~

MDA- Fiscal Services Department

Kim Parker - December 30, 2024 at 08:32 PM

SC

“ Steve and Val Connelly planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard Franklin Colburn.

Steve and Val Connelly - December 30, 2024 at 08:13 PM

SC

“ Steve and Val Connelly purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.



Steve and Val Connelly - December 30, 2024 at 08:13 PM

GB

“ Gary Ball lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn



Gary Ball - December 30, 2024 at 07:34 PM

BT

“ Betsy Dulin Truitt lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn



Betsy Dulin Truitt - December 30, 2024 at 07:15 PM

SH

“ Sonja Hanssen-Carter lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn



Sonja Hanssen-Carter - December 30, 2024 at 06:29 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.



December 30, 2024 at 06:24 PM



“ *Tim & Laura Bishop lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn*



Tim & Laura Bishop - December 30, 2024 at 04:06 PM



Tim and I are so very sorry to hear of your passing. We always enjoyed coming to events you and Alma would be attending. Then also all the memories of A&P and Super Fresh and lets not forget our hometown Oxford. May you RIP and God Bless Alma, Marie, Johanna, Saylor and the rest of your family and friends.

Tim & Laura Bishop - December 30, 2024 at 04:11 PM

LN

“ *Libby Nagel lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn*



Libby Nagel - December 30, 2024 at 03:57 PM

OS

“ *Olivia Scuderi purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.*



Olivia Scuderi - December 30, 2024 at 03:44 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Richard Franklin Colburn.*



December 30, 2024 at 03:14 PM



“ *Hugh & Joanne Smith lit a candle in memory of Richard Franklin Colburn*



Hugh & Joanne Smith - December 30, 2024 at 02:55 PM



“ *So many connections to Rich-he waited on my mom and I each week at the A&P store, we took some classes together at Chesapeake College, he would stop into our family store Speddens Marine in Cambridge more often than any other elected official demonstrating his true concern for the Watermen's issues. He said he grew up seeing the hardships they face as his dad and many other family members were out there, in all kinds of weather trying to make a living. Then when I retired from home health and hospice at the health department and became a realtor, I have the honor of working with his wife at Long and Foster. They were such a devoted couple, but I just want to thank him for being such a tireless advocate for the watermen. I hope you think of him the next time you eat a crab or oyster because it doesn't get to the table without a lot of hard work and Rich truly honored that!*

Beverly (Spedden) & Phil Era - December 30, 2024 at 01:55 PM

KC

“ Too many memories to share of good times with Rich. He will be dearly missed. Thinking of his 'girls'...Alma, Johanna and Saylor.

Karen A Callahan - December 30, 2024 at 01:49 PM

SJ

“ RIP Senator you will be missed by all !!!



Sol James - December 30, 2024 at 01:48 PM

BM

“ Prayers sent....



Billy & Linda Marshall - December 30, 2024 at 01:42 PM

AF

Thank you!

Alma Fitzgerald - January 04, 2025 at 11:35 AM

DT

“ Anytime I was around rich, he wanted to talk about alma. What she was like growing up,ect. He loved her very much.

Deborah lusby teague - December 30, 2024 at 01:29 PM

BW

Rich never hesitated to engage my hubby, JR Wooters, in conversation about softball! He never hesitated to recognize his friends by their first name or "nickname!" Thank You for your dedication to the citizens of the Eastern Shore!

Bonnie Wooters - December 30, 2024 at 08:54 PM