



## Richard Goodyear Ankers

October 6, 1953 - December 31, 2020

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The world lost a true light with the passing of our beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend, Richard Goodyear Ankers. Surrounded by family and fireworks on New Year's Eve, he peacefully passed away at home surrounded by his wife and children. He joined his parents, best friends, and other family members who journeyed on before. He was 67 years old.

Known affectionately as Ricki Roo, Ricki was the life of the party. You would often find him with a guitar in hand, a smile on his face, and a song on his lips. He had a movie star smile that lit up any room. An easy-going man, his friendly countenance made everyone feel seen, welcomed, and loved. It's no wonder in his final days on earth, Ricki's home was filled with endless visitors; former colleagues, clients, co-workers, nieces, nephews, friends, neighbors, band mates, ward members, his family's pickleball crew, and so many more who considered Ricki family. That's how he treated them and that's how they saw him; a true brother who loved and served unconditionally. A brother so deserving of all the "fan mail," fundraisers, alofas (love) and well-wishes that he never asked for. Instead he wept with gratitude and appreciation as he was definitely more comfortable being on the giving side of things.

Ricki was born October 6, 1953 in Coromandel Hospital, New Zealand to Derek Raymond Ankers and Audrey Marie Tibbo. He grew up in Auckland until he moved to Hamilton to attend the Church College of New Zealand (CCNZ) from 1967 - 1972. As a Taylor dorm resident, Ricki became a part of a brotherhood that lasted throughout his life.

Growing up, Ricki learned the value and influence of women at an early age. With three older sisters - Sue, Evie, Anna, and three younger sisters - Tina, Hedy, Alana; and a much younger brother, Bruce Pennefather, Ricki spent most of his childhood surrounded by influential women. He cooked, cleaned, ironed, gardened, landscaped; and played counselor and confidant to his sisters. All these skills would come in handy later as a husband, father, and grandfather who loved to spoil his family. Ricki was a "get it done right" kind of guy and was known for working hard and never sitting still until the job was done.

Ricki always wanted to help others and a big part of that was bringing people unto Jesus Christ. He served a full-time mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the Apia Samoa Mission from 1973-1975. He was affectionately known as "Elder Aneti", which translates to Ankers in Samoan. It was also through his mission that he met a lot of his maternal Samoan cousins. Being afakasi (half samoan), Ricki didn't look Samoan with his light hair and bright blue eyes. People were often taken aback when he started speaking the language so fluently. On his mission, Ricki instantly fell in love with Samoa, the simple way of life and blended in naturally with the village lifestyle. He was very popular with the village children, whom to this day still recognize and call him by the name, Aneti. Before returning to New Zealand, Ricki was formally introduced to his eternal companion, the love of his life - LaVon Pele Schwenke. LaVon later joined Ricki in New Zealand where they were married on December 4, 1976 in Hamilton, New Zealand.

Theirs is a love and devotion that no doubt will extend into eternity.

For education and careers, Ricki and LaVon moved to Laie, Hawaii in 1976 where they attended BYU Hawaii. Ricki became the first “palagi pepelo” musician at the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC). Music was Ricki’s life passion. As a gifted musician and entertainer, he used his natural talent and charisma to uplift countless tourists who flowed through PCC, and various beaches of Hawaii.

In September 1979, Ricki and family moved to Utah to further his studies. He obtained a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Utah in 1985. He later obtained his Masters of Science 2014 from the University of Phoenix. He then returned to the University of Utah to work on his Doctorate while also working as a licensed Psychotherapist (Mental Health). Ricki had the gift to connect with so many others at different levels, and therefore, was very influential in that field. His education and natural talents extended to his Church callings and passion for his missionary work. Ricki and LaVon would serve many years as missionaries to those incarcerated at the Utah State Prison participating in the Church’s Addiction Recovery Program, and also to those learning how to be more self-reliant. Whether it was in his missionary service, clinical practice, cooking and cleaning for his wife and kids, or through the music that he played with his mates, Ricki always wanted to share his light.

Ricki loved to play sports - volleyball, golf, and basketball to name a few. He even refereed various basketball tournaments in the Salt Lake area for many years. He ran 5Ks and marathons and didn’t let cancer stop him. After a major surgery the morning of an earthquake in Utah on March 18, 2020. He walked nearly every morning for 5 miles so he could regain his strength. He was determined to get well enough to run the Great Wall of China marathon. He

was a fighter until the end.

Ricki's culture and upbringing were a big part of who he was. The fa'a samoa way to give to those in need was ingrained in him, always wanting to help with fa'alavelave's (family contributions), family reunions, weddings, and everything in between. Because of how easily he made friends, he had "family" everywhere around the world. He especially loved his nieces and nephews in New Zealand. Ricki loved to travel and he loved the beach. You could always find Dad hopping on the next flight to his next island destination.

Ricki's travel partner, and partner through everything, was the light of his life, his beautiful wife, LaVon. His eyes seemed to sparkle when she was nearby and he often remarked that she was always the most beautiful person in the room. They were always together. In fact, for 28 years, they spent their evenings working together as ushers at the arena in Salt Lake City. They were mainstays at the Utah Jazz games. You could sometimes catch a glimpse of this good-looking duo on the sidelines during NBA games broadcast on TV. Ricki's personable nature endeared him to NBA players, celebrities, Church leaders, and anyone else who got to know him during his Guest Services time at the arena, and also while driving limosines at the Sundance Film Festival. But, the most important person in his life, his number one fan, was always his dear wife, LaVon. She tenderly cared for him as cancer ravaged his body. In his final days, hers was the face he looked for on the side of his bed, the hand he often reached for to hold, and his final goodbye before passing to the other side. A love that will last "forevers", is what Ricki would say about his love for LaVon.

Through their union, they are the forever parents of Richard Earle, Neilani Saini, Ariane Sina, and Alana Marlene (Isaiah), his devoted children who cared for him to the very end. He will be a forever Grandpa to Aliyah, Yummy, Tangi, Rikki, Tevesi, Nakai, Irie, Zion, Reign, Atarah, soon to be born, Baby

Roo (named in honor of her dear Grandpa) and Great-grandfather to Kaleb & Kyrin. He was the best Dad anyone could ask for. A true hero who was fun, always present for important events, a Dad with a sense of humor and an incredible intuition to make every child and grandchild feel special and loved.

We believe Ricki is finally at peace, and in no more pain. If there is a band in heaven, he is no doubt playing in it, surrounded by his best friends, parents, in-laws, Arthur and Saini Atoa Schwenke, siblings, and other loved ones who have passed on before him. He is likely most excited to finally meet and hold his great-granddaughter Kaia Selah-Saini.

The family would like to thank all of the angels who have lifted them during this difficult time. Words are inadequate to share our thanks for the countless acts of love, kindness, and service. To the doctors, nurses and caregivers who have been a part of our warrior Ricki's journey - thank you for all that you do. As heartbroken as we are to lose our hero, a man we saw as invincible, we are grateful for the time we had with him, especially on Christmas, to celebrate the Light of the world with the light of our world, Ricki Ankers.

All are invited to join virtually in a celebration of Rick's life on Saturday, January 9, 2021. Family service: 11:00 a.m.

Bishop's service: 1:30 p.m.

Location: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chapel, 12101 South 700 West in Draper, Utah.

Following the memorial services, Ricki will be laid to rest at Crescent Cemetery in Sandy, Utah (11105 S. State Street). All of the services will be streamed via Zoom. Those attending in person will be asked to wear a mask and to follow social distancing guidelines to keep our friends and family safe

and healthy.

As said by his granddaughter Atarah and what became his motto in the last several months of his life, "I happy." Ricki had a testimony of God as his Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ as his Savior. His faith and love for them fueled everything he did. Ricki sought to be happy every day, even when his mountains seemed insurmountable. His megawatt smile, positive outlook on life, and sparkling eyes is how many will remember him. Even in his final days, as visitors came to pay their respects, he muscled through the pain and put a smile on his face. He made it hard to see how much he was suffering because his smile always looked so good. "I happy!" That's how he lived. That's how we'll strive to honor his memory. Be happy and live each day to the fullest.

Until that bright and beautiful day of eternal happiness when we are together again, we love you forever and evers, Dad. Manuia lau malaga!

# Cemetery Details

## Crescent Sandy Cemetery

11105 S State St  
Sandy, UT

# Previous Events

## Family Program

JAN 9. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (MT)

Draper Riverview Stake Center  
12101 S 700 W  
Draper, UT

## Bishops Service

JAN 9. 1:30 PM - 2:50 PM (MT)

Draper Riverview Stake Center  
12101 S 700 W  
Draper, UT

# Tribute Wall



“ *Serenity Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Richard Goodyear Ankers* ”



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**Serenity Funeral Home** - January 09, 2021 at 12:14 PM



“ *Neilani lit a candle in memory of Richard Goodyear Ankers* ”



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**Neilani** - December 11, 2025 at 10:52 PM



*I miss you Dad*

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**Neilani** - December 11, 2025 at 10:52 PM



“ *Richard Goodyear Ankers* ”

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October 05, 2023 at 07:49 PM

CN

“ Claude Nelson lit a candle in memory of Richard Goodyear Ankers



Claude Nelson - February 14, 2022 at 03:34 PM

Brian Bintz

“ Lavon and Rick,

*I am so sorry for your loss. Rick was such a nice person. He had such an infectious smile. I will always remember both of you working at the arena with me. One day at the arena, I told him I was going to Hawaii. He gave me a bunch of suggestions on places to see and places to eat. He is going to be a great loss, but on the other hand I consider myself lucky to have known him. Hugs and prayers to you..*

*Brian Bintz*

Brian Bintz - January 09, 2021 at 02:23 PM



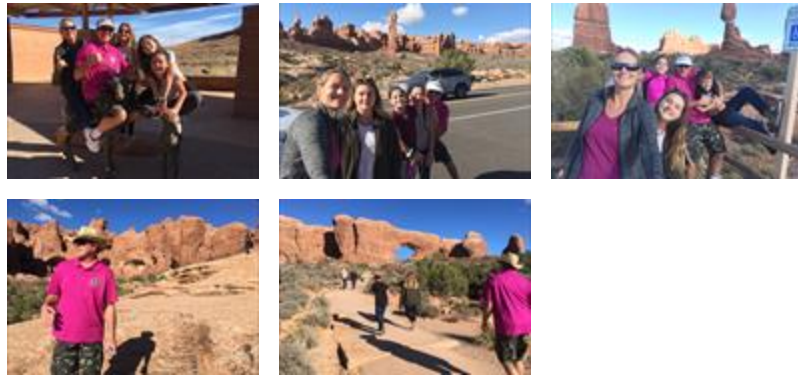
“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Summer Dwyer - January 08, 2021 at 11:51 PM



“ 29 files added to the tribute wall



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Summer Dwyer - January 08, 2021 at 11:49 PM

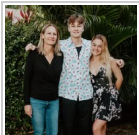


“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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Summer Dwyer - January 08, 2021 at 11:43 PM



“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



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Summer Dwyer - January 08, 2021 at 11:27 PM

AM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Angie Meredith** - January 08, 2021 at 05:33 PM

AM

*We were fortunate enough to have Rick and Lavonnie accompany us to this celebration in Shreveport, LA. So many wonderful memories with our dearest friends.*

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**Angie Meredith** - January 08, 2021 at 05:36 PM

AM

“ *Angie Meredith lit a candle in memory of Richard Goodyear Ankers*



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**Angie Meredith** - January 08, 2021 at 05:26 PM

JU

“ Golf outing with Ricki Ankers at Turtle Bay Golf Resort Kahuku HI  
2019 CCWS reunion. RIL Ricki



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Jeffrey P Utupo - January 08, 2021 at 03:25 PM

“ First met Ricki at the Turtle Bay golf course during our CCWS School reunion in Hawaii 2019. That morning we played with Leti Hunt, Dennis Utupo, Tofilau Gata Gatoloai from NZ, Bishop Pula and Chief Sielu Avea. I did not know Ricki played golf too but was surprised to see him that early morning and glad to finally met him. I knew who he was but never met him in person. We ended up in a fivesome group with Dennis, Leti, Gata and Ricki. Thinking he was a palagi and did not know how to speak Samoan, and the next minute on the 1st tee Ricki is talking to us in Samoan, and I bust up laughing but also impressed that a Palagi can speak Samoan lol. We enjoyed our golf round and by the time we got to the back nine both Leti and I have lost all our golf balls (12 each) that came with our rental bags we hired from the pro shop lol. We played so bad keep hitting the balls into the swamp lol. Luckily Ricki had brought an extra box of balls and he jokingly gave me and Leti a sleeve each to finish our round, he saved the day for us. After the golf round, we were invited by Bishop Pula and Chief Sielu for lunch at the Huli Huli chicken place in Kahuku for lunch. So all of us including Ricki accepted the invitation for lunch. Towards the end of the lunch I was whispering to Tofilau Gata if he could represent our guest group to convey our thanks to Bishop Pula and Chief Sielu for the lunch and their hospitality, and next minute Ricki who was sitting on the far end of the table just stood up and gave thanks (*fai le lauga faafetai lol*), and I was so impressed and laughing at the same time. Ricki had read my mind of what needs to happen. We left lunch laughing about it with how Ricki just did that for us, but also very impressed with his understanding of our Samoan culture of *faaaloalo*. *E le galo* that fun experience with Ricki and am glad to have just that one day golf outing with him. Infact we were talking with Ricki during the round about setting up a golf tournament at our next School reunion in Samoa. We hope if that happens in Samoa we may just have a honorary trophy for Ricki.



*All the best with Ricki's celebration of life and services. Manuia le*

*malaga a le uso Ricki Ankers. I know he will be sorely missed.*

*Faamaise le agaga ole Alii ia Lavon ma le aiga faanoanoa.*

*Jeff Utupo (CCWS Class81)*

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**Jeffrey P Utupo** - January 08, 2021 at 02:59 PM

TS

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



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**Tiani Shoemaker** - January 04, 2021 at 11:50 PM

TS

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Tiani Shoemaker** - January 04, 2021 at 11:46 PM



DB

*Extending heartfelt sympathy and aroha from Geoff and Dolly-Wihongi-Baker. We were serving a mission in Temple View, Hamilton 2012-14 when an earth shattering call came that our Son-in-Law Saofai (Smurf) Sautia had been tragically killed. We immediately flew back to Sandy and were overwhelmed by the feeling of compassion and love extended to our family by friends, neighbors, strangers and the Samoan Community spearheaded by Ricki. Hours of shedding tears, strumming his guitar, appeasing Smurfs overzealous family in a kindly, not pushy loving way - he literally was the spokesman for our family which we will always be eternally grateful for. We know Smurf was one on the other side welcoming him with open arms, even though much too soon. God bless and keep your family safe, spouse, siblings, children and grandchildren*

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**Dolly Baker** - January 08, 2021 at 06:31 PM