



## Orlen Eugene Richards

January 28, 1934 - April 6, 2020

Orlen E Richards, age 86, passed away on Monday, April 6, 2020, at the Richland Hospital due to complications from Myasthenia Gravis, a condition he suffered from for many years, but did not let it slow him down. He was born January 28, 1934, to Alta and Clyde Richards and raised on the rural farm north of Ithaca. Orlen graduated from Ithaca High School in 1952 after receiving the State Farmer Degree from the Future Farmers of America, he promptly married his high school sweetheart, Alice Winslow.

Orlen farmed for many years on the family farm. He and Alice were recognized as the Richland County Outstanding Young Farmers in the late 60's and hosted the Richland County Holstein Twilight Meeting in the early 70's. During this time Orlen served on the Consumers Coop Board of Directors for over 15 years, the Associated Milk Producers Board of Directors, the Ithaca School District Board of Education, and for over 25 years he served on the Franklin Farmers Mutual Insurance Company Board of Directors. Beginning at the age of 16, Orlen began playing piano and organ at the Willow Valley United Methodist Church for services, he taught Sunday school and served on many committees for the church. Early in his life he also took over the Richards Insurance Agency when in 1959 his father passed away. He became the 3rd generation serving neighbors and friends through the business his Grandfather, O.E. Richards, started and that continues today.

In the late 1980's Orlen increased his time dedicated to the insurance business and took over the dual role of caregiver and tiger-wrangler of daughter Joy. For 11 years he was the primary caregiver for Joy, a role he was well suited to fill with his extensive patience and empathy for others. Since keeping Joy under control was only a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time job he took on bus driving duties at Ithaca Public Schools driving many children to the school and their sporting events. After 30 years of driving school bus he retired to a celebration typically reserved for returning championship sports teams.

Survivors include his wife and life partner Pastor Alice Richards, 1 daughter and 3 sons, Annette Louis, Ron Richards and his very special friend Debbie Mitchell, Robert (Cheryl) Richards, and Marty (Teri) Richards. 10 Grandchildren, Chris Louis, Bret (Carrie) Louis,

Aaron Richards, Courtney Richards and fiancé Kyle Hemphill, Owen (Emmy) Richards, Jenny (Brian) Waldner, Nathan (MacKenzie) Richards, Holly (Chris) Hoagland, Laurel Richards and special friend John Archiquette, Leah Richards, 5 German and Swiss Exchange Grandchildren, 14 Great Grandchildren with one on the way, brother John (Lynette) Richards, Sister-in-laws Ruth (Neal) Anderson, Mary (Jim) Connors and cousin Paul (Barb) Denman.

He was preceded in death by a daughter Joy Richards, Grandson's Gene Phillip Richards, Kyle Richards, Sister-in-law's Charolette (Tom) Williams, Carol Amelong, and close cousin Eleanor Poole.

Our Dad was a remarkable man, he brought meaning to the term "Servant Leader" before it was a term used in corporate circles to coach executive's leadership styles. He was not one to seek credit, strongly dispute philosophies of the organizations he served, or strongly debate with his children regarding their life decisions, (That was Mom's role). Dad was more one to come along side of everyone and support through actions and tasks. Everyone liked and respected him, and he liked and respected everyone he met.

A graveside committal service will be held on Sunday, August 9, 2020 at 11:30 AM at the Willow Valley Cemetery in Ithaca Township. Memorials may be given to the Ithaca school foundation and the Willow Valley United Methodist Church.

# Cemetery

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**Willow Valley Cemetery**  
County Trunk BA  
Richland Center,, WI, 53581

# Events

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**AUG 9 Graveside Service 11:30AM**

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Willow Valley Cemetery  
County Trunk BA, Richland Center,, WI, US, 53581

# Comments

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“ Condolences to the Richards family. Orlen contributed so much to the community and brightened so many lives. I have lots of fond memories of Orlen's support for 4-H, school, sports and community activities.

**Pat Durst** - May 26, 2020 at 04:39 AM

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“ I want to share how wonderful it was whenever Orlen and Alice were able to visit with my Mom Mary Rose Gallagher before she passed a few years back. Having been such a long term cousin and friend of Mary Rose, Orlen was able to relate really magical moments/ memories from their youth and along the path of their friendship. The best memories of my Mom's latter years were those when her face lit up as Orlen told normal happy times of sitting under the apple tree and reading or just talking.

Alice, Annette, Ron, Robbie, Marty, Orlen was a very special, hardworking, family-oriented and kind man with a big heart. I really appreciate all the wonderful times my brother Don and sisters Beth and Sandy got to share with you all hosting us city kids on the farm in Ithaca. I was never more proud than when Orlen would take a moment from his busy farming day to let each of us ride up with him on the tractor.

Most of all, thank you again for sharing Orlen with my Mom who appreciated more than you know the memories he shared in his kind thoughtful way as she just remembered smiled at Orlen.

Our condolences in your loss. We hope to see you all in August.

Best,

Dave and Mary Beth Arnold

**Dave Arnold** - May 03, 2020 at 09:34 PM

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“ To Alice and your whole family .I am heartbroken for your loss . I really like your dad.every time he came to the Sextonville post office we ate cookies together and I gave Alice one to .He always was so nice to me really going to miss him.He always will be in my heart.

**Jacqueline Petteplace** - April 12, 2020 at 05:02 PM

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“ To Alice and your whole family. At a time when hugs are needed so much know we are wrapping our arms around you from afar. So sorry for this loss to the entire community. Your in our hearts and prayers. God Bless. Barb & Burf Mayfield

**Barb Mayfield** - April 10, 2020 at 10:49 AM

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“ Alice, Annette, Marty, Rob and Ron, and to all of your family, We are heartbroken for your loss. Orlen was such a special Man! There are kathousands of wonderful memories as he was always there in so many ways! I remember outbidding him on a quart jar of canned pickles at the "Lord's Acre Sale" for \$23 dollars once! He got one and I got the other! We always mentioned that when we saw each other!! I know God is saying to him...."Job well done, good and faithful servant!" Love you guys! Our prayers are with you always!

**Ron and Shawn (Emerson) Hess** - April 10, 2020 at 04:42 AM

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“ Dave & Anita Walker lit a candle in memory of Orlen Eugene Richards



**Dave & Anita Walker** - April 09, 2020 at 03:56 PM

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“ Phyllis Skarda lit a candle in memory of Orlen Eugene Richards



**Phyllis Skarda** - April 08, 2020 at 06:05 PM

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“ Annette-Marty-Rob-Ron and Alice: We're so sorry to hear of the passing of your Dad and husband...Geesh, Dads are just always suppose to be there with a smile, a hug and just the right words. His years of guidance to your families I'm sure will always be remembered!! He was a 'go-getter done' kind of guy and a familiar face of Ithaca. We send our thoughts, HUGS and prayers to all of you and your families at this time of sorrow.

**Shelley and Larry Ferguson** - April 08, 2020 at 01:40 PM

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“ Orlen was a wonderful support to my ministry at Willow Valley. He loved his church and would do anything to support it. His dedication especially to Joy, but also to others in his family made him a true model for fatherhood and what is means to be a Christian in today's world. He will be truly missed. Jeanne Jones

**Jeanne Jones** - April 08, 2020 at 01:23 PM

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“ Our condolences to Alice and the rest of the family. Most of my memories of Orlen in recent years were when he would come to play piano at the Ash Creek Church for Sunday services. He always had a smile and a friendly word. He always told me that he was happy to be with us. We will miss him. He was truly a nice guy. Allen & Avis Unbehaun

**Allen & Avis Unbehaun** - April 08, 2020 at 12:56 PM

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“ To Rob and the entire Richards Family we send our heartfelt condolences to you all.Sincerely,Rod and Sherry Klingaman

**Sherry Klinaman** - April 08, 2020 at 11:33 AM

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“ Always a kind man with a great big smile. Sorry to hear of the loss of Orlen Glen and Deb Niemeyer

**deb niemeyer** - April 08, 2020 at 09:09 AM

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“ Orlen was there when I first joined Rob's youth group in Junior High. He and Alice hosted many prayer meetings and Bible studies and helped so many young people stay on track! He was instrumental in guiding and mentoring my children and so many others. He will be as sorely missed as he was sincerely loved.

**Tess Guinther** - April 07, 2020 at 08:02 PM

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“ I remember Orlen from school days...and later for his involvement in the Ithaca Fair and parade. A really first class guy...they dont make many like him...so sad to see him pass on but he will be in Heaven...

**Don Willis** - April 07, 2020 at 07:54 PM

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“ Praise God for Orlen. God bless his family and all those who loved Orlen. I respect and appreciate all he did for our community.

**John Schmitz** - April 07, 2020 at 06:44 PM

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“ We feel so fortunate to have known Orlen. He was the best bus driver our kids could ask for! Proof of his love, patience, and kindness, so many members of his family have been irreplaceable in our family's lives. To Alice, Rob, Annette, Jen, and all of the others, we are so sorry for your loss. To lose such a wonderful person in this time of social-distancing is extra painful, we hope to be able to gather and remember this wonderful man before long. May your hearts be light with the many wonderful memories Orlen will always be a part of for so many of us.

**Gia** - April 07, 2020 at 11:51 AM

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“ So sorry for your loss. Thoughts and prayers to his family and friends.

**Jamie Pauls** - April 07, 2020 at 08:25 AM

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“ Carrie will miss him alot and so will I he was a wonderful man.

**Melanie Johnson** - April 06, 2020 at 10:49 PM

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“ Orlen was such a special person. Quietly observing everything but not missing anything.. I don't think we ever saw him without a smile on his face. When I think about how many young lives he touched in the community, I am awed. We will miss him very much. Our love to the whole family. Thinking of you all.

John and Cheryl

**Cheryl McNurlin** - April 06, 2020 at 10:37 PM

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“ My sympathy to the Richards family. I knew Orlen from childhood when his parents played in the community band with my mother Elizabeth Sippy Spangler. Since my mother's family was from the Ithaca area we kept close ties to the community. Music was our common denominator. I'm sure his good works in the community will be remembered for many years. Shirley Steiner

**Shirley Steiner** - April 06, 2020 at 09:57 PM

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“ Orlen was a wonderful man and a blessing to those who knew him. His memory will never leave us many prayers for his family and friends during this time of sorrow

**peggy vinik (miller)** - April 06, 2020 at 09:47 PM

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“ So sorry for your loss. Although we only knew Orlen since becoming part of the Ithaca Community, his memory will live on. He was always someone to look up to and try to emulate.

**Helen and Pat Magee** - April 06, 2020 at 09:40 PM

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“ We are so sorry to hear of your loss. Orlen was such a great community member. He will be greatly missed by so many. Sending love and prayers to your entire family.



**Sherry and Larry Nelson** - April 06, 2020 at 09:25 PM

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“ So sorry for your loss. He was a great man who will be deeply missed.



**June Gilbertson** - April 06, 2020 at 08:39 PM

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“ Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. May God surround you with His loving arms and give you peace.

**Glee Moore** - April 06, 2020 at 08:38 PM

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“ We are so very sorry to hear of Orlen's passing. He was a fixture in the Ithaca community and will be so missed.  
Sending our love and prayers to Alice and the whole Richards family!

**Robin and Steve** - April 06, 2020 at 08:36 PM

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“ My deepest sympathy to the Richards family! Orlen was such a pillar of the Ithaca community and always greeted everyone with a smile. I hope your hearts are filled with wonderful memories that help you thru this difficult time.  
May he rest in peace!

**Rhonda (Miklian) Hamilton** - April 06, 2020 at 08:14 PM

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“ So very sorry to hear of Orlen's passing. He was such a wonderful man to so many. His faith was so strong which he shared with many. How he loved all the kids at Ithaca. My dad loved working with him at Ithaca. Prayers to the family in this difficult time. Heaven has gained another amazing angel.

**Linda Peterson** - April 06, 2020 at 08:10 PM

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“ Our deepest sympathy to the Richards family. Rick & Jean Fruit

**Jean Barreau Fruit** - April 06, 2020 at 07:49 PM

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“ I am very saddened to hear about Orlen's passing. He always had a smile on his face everytime I saw him. Heaven has another angel. My condolences to the entire family.

**Chris Storer** - April 06, 2020 at 07:48 PM

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“ Orlen was a one-of-a-kind fellow, a pillar of our community. He will be sorely missed. Many condolences to the family.

**Elizabeth Fleischer** - April 06, 2020 at 07:41 PM

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“ Mr. Richards was an awesome person. I remember him and Mrs. Richards driving all the way to my house in Richland Center and picking me up so I could attend Marty's football games. Mr. Richards always had a smile and was funny like his son. Sending all my love and hugs to everyone in the family. God certainly gained an angel and Joy can see dad again. Love, Becky Gerdes

**Becky Gerdes** - April 06, 2020 at 07:24 PM

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“ Becky Gerdes lit a candle in memory of Orlen Eugene Richards



**Becky Gerdes** - April 06, 2020 at 07:21 PM

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“ Orlen shared the beautiful roses he raised. My desk at work was a recipient more than once. Our sympathy Dick and Mary Hauser.

**Mary Hauser** - April 06, 2020 at 07:04 PM

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“ Hugs and prayers to the Richards family Orlen was a friend to anyone he met His smile brought happiness to everyone He will truly be missed by all that knew him

**Virginia Wiedenfeld** - April 06, 2020 at 06:54 PM