



## Dr. Richard E. Polly

May 22, 1942 - March 26, 2017

Dr. Richard E. Polly died Sunday, March 26, 2017.

Richard was born May 22, 1942, in Sioux City, Iowa. He graduated from Missouri Valley High School, Missouri Valley, Iowa. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. He received a full academic scholarship to the University of Iowa College of Medicine and graduated in 1968. He completed his internship at Parkland Hospital, Dallas, Texas. His residency in orthopedic surgery was also at Parkland Hospital and related hospitals including Baylor University, Scottish Rite Crippled Children's Hospital and the VA Hospital along with a traveling fellowship to the eight major orthopedic centers of the British Isles including the cities of London, Oxford, Wigan, Bristol, Oswestry, Mansfield, and Sheffield, all in England, with a final stop in Edinburgh, Scotland.

He served in the United States Navy as a Lieutenant Commander at the Naval Hospital in San Diego, California. As part of the teaching staff Richard was in charge of officer's and women's services. He was the sole orthopedic surgeon called up as part of a surgical team from the West Coast sent to help evacuate Saigon during the Vietnam War. While overseas Richard was on land in Guam and the Philippines and at sea on the USS Hancock and a freighter. He was awarded the National Defense Service Medal and was a member of the American Legion Post 58 in Topeka.

Richard was a member of the Shawnee County Medical Society, the Kansas Medical Society, the American Medical Society, the Mid-America Orthopaedic Association, the Mid-Central Orthopaedic Society, and fellow of the American Hand Society, the American Foot and Ankle Society, and American College of Surgeons.

He began practice in Topeka in 1975 and retired after 39 years in 2014 from Kansas Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, now a part of Stormont Vail HealthCare. He was a past president of the former Memorial Hospital of Topeka. He had a particular interest in hand and foot surgery along with general orthopedics. Richard was licensed in Kansas, Iowa, Texas, and California. In northeast Kansas he had hospital staff appointments in Wamego, Sabetha, Holton, Seneca, and Hiawatha.

He was a member of Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church, the Topeka Country Club, and a past active of the Topeka 20-30 Club.

Richard married his college sweetheart Linda Nolan in 1967. Their 50th wedding anniversary would have been June 17th of this year. She survives. Other survivors include his son Matthew (Dr. Marla Geha); daughter Shannon Polly (Garry Reeder); and three grandchildren, Quinn Madaris Polly-Reeder, Harper Nolan Polly-Reeder, and Malcolm Connor Polly. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Family will greet friends from 7 to 9 p.m. Friday at Most Pure Heart of Mary Church, 3601 SW 17th Street. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Church. Burial with military honors will follow in Mount Calvary Cemetery.

Memorial contributions are suggested to the University of Iowa Foundation to

the Dr. Richard E. Polly Memorial Scholarship or to Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church.

# Cemetery Details

## Mount Calvary Cemetery

801 SW Westchester Rd  
Topeka, KS 66606

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 31. 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM (CT)

Most Pure Heart of Mary Church  
3601 SW 17th Street  
Topeka, KS 66604

## Mass of Christian Burial

APR 1. 1:00 PM (CT)

Most Pure Heart of Mary Church  
3601 SW 17th Street  
Topeka, KS 66604

# Tribute Wall



“ Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Richard E. Polly



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**Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home** - March 29, 2017 at 03:15 PM



“ Dr. Richard E. Polly

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January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ I am so sad to hear about Rich. He made such an impression in the short time that I knew him and I am grateful to have known this kind and gentle man. He would always bring over the delicious treats that Linda baked with a big smile that reflected the pride he had in his wife's culinary skills! He also was kind enough to check out an issue I had with my hand and give me advice about how to treat it. He was such a wonderful man and my heart breaks to hear this sad news. Thinking of Linda and the rest of Rich's family at this time and sending love.

Love, Sally

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**Sally Radeloff** - April 02, 2017 at 03:42 PM

AF

“ I also enjoyed seeing Dr. Polly and his wife, Linda at church. I remember one Christmas party at their house for the members of the Medical Alliance. The house was so beautifully decorated, the food and hospitality so gracious. But it was the entertainment-doctors that organized a "band" and played so well that it was one of the best Christmas celebrations I have remembered.  
Respectfully,  
Adele Fugate

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**Adele Fugate** - April 02, 2017 at 01:06 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Dr. Richard E. Polly.



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March 31, 2017 at 06:37 PM

JS

“ Linda and family- I'm so sorry to hear of the loss of a great husband, father and grandfather. He was always and genuine, caring and great host at any of Linda's beautiful events. Prayers and hugs.

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**Joan Sutton** - March 31, 2017 at 08:56 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Richard E. Polly.



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March 30, 2017 at 01:13 PM

LE

“ I worked with Dr. Polly at the Seneca Outpatient clinic for many years and greatly appreciated his orthopedic knowledge and expertise. When I had issues with my feet, I went to him by choice. We were truly blessed to have him serve our hospital and community and I will miss his presence here on earth. My deepest sympathy for your loss- may your family circle be complete again in Heaven.

*Linda Edelman*

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**Linda Edelman** - March 30, 2017 at 11:37 AM

KB

Our son, Roger's hand was crushed in an accident many years ago. He was referred to Dr. Polly for treatment. I will always remember Dr. Polly telling us he would have to operate again in a couple days to remove infection. After that surgery, he told us there was no infection, but a tendon to the thumb had come undone and if he had not opened the hand again, he would never had known why the thumb wouldn't work. We have always been grateful of Dr. Polly's expertise in giving Roger a functional hand again. Our sympathies and prayers are with your family.

*Kathy Buessing*

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**Kathy Buessing** - April 03, 2017 at 09:54 AM

MS

“ Shannon, Linda, and family: I am so sorry to hear of your loss. I hope good memories of your dad/grandpa/husband help you through this difficult time.

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**Mary Strahan** - March 30, 2017 at 09:49 AM

JS

“ Dr. Polly, What a great Man. Not only in surgery but in life.....I know he hunted Deer too as we had talked to him in the Alta Vista KS café many years ago. Dr. did both my husbands hips, 2 rotators and he and another Dr. did a shoulder he didn't think would work.- but it did..... He did Cleo's first Carpel tunnel, and he worked on me a time or two for minor things. We had great visits of his family and lots of laughter. Seeing him in both Wamego, outpatient,; and Topeka. Such a nice person in life.....spoke of his family often.. Cleo was his last patient he told us. When he retired we felt a loss...but understood.... We are very sad that your husband of 50 years, and his children and grand children lost their precious family member. Isaiah 40;31. We celebrate 55 yrs. marriage in April. He told us of his mower accident.....and so many other things and when he referred us to Dr. Mumford we felt lost, but he is a special Dr. as well. Thank you for sharing your husband with all of us. May GOD bless each one of you in your loss.....Rest in Peace Dr. Polly!!! In peace,,,,and Sympathy,,,,,, Julie, and Cleo Schultz rural Alma ,KS.

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**Julie Schultz** - March 30, 2017 at 08:23 AM

JA

“ Dr Polly was a wonderful man as well as Doctor. He fixed both of my daughters club feet. He was very kind and caring. I think he was the best with children and babies. I could have never gotten the kind of treatment I got with him here in Manhattan, Ks. He fixed my knee so I had over 15 years with it before it had to be replaced. I am really at lost for words here. I just want his family to know how much I appreciated him.  
Jan Anderson and Family

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**Jan Anderson** - March 30, 2017 at 07:57 AM

TL

“ The summer before my senior year of high school, I broke my ankle. It was July 2, 2001.

*In the the emergency room that night, I first met Dr. Polly. He explained the damage--a spiral fracture to my fibula, three ligaments torn I can't remember the name of, and dislocated my ankle. He also told me I was a high risk for Staph. infection because of surface wounds. And as such, he couldn't perform surgery. He told me I would walk with a limp for the rest of life. I was on varsity soccer and baseball, and had played sports my whole life, so this was hard to hear. He put a cast on my ankle, and then sent me home. For two weeks, I would lie on my couch depressed about the possibility of not being able to ever play sports again, or just be a normal, active person. Then my phone rang. It was Dr. Polly's nurse. She told me this long complicated tale, of how the doctor had gone to a sports medicine conference in California and presented my case to this panel of doctors, and that he had his mind changed about how to handle me. And he called his office here in Topeka with instructions. And that day I went into see his nurse, and they made a new cast with a window cut into it for air to get into my ankle so new skin could form over my scrapes, and sent me home with some antiseptic spray. And a week later I went back to his office, and Dr. Polly used some tweezers to pull a freshly formed, transparent layer of skin off my leg, and then scheduled my surgery for the next day. And the next day he fixed my ankle. Since it had been over three weeks since the accident, he had to rebreak my ankle, and then put a plate the length of the fibula break, and added eight screws, two went all the way through my leg. The plate and screws were titanium. He told me I was the first patient he'd ever used titanium implants on. The number of irregularities of my experience started to seem strange. I would see him for the next 6 months. I was on crutches the whole time. Every so often I would go in for a new cast, or x rays. And he would tell me everything just wasn't where it needed to be. And then 4 months out, he finally took off the cast, and removed the two large screws, and then had me putting weight on my leg. And then finally I was done with the crutches. After that first night I saw Dr. Polly, the reluctant on call doctor, who gave me*

*this grave news, the information gradually leaked to my friends, and family, and inevitably I heard stories about this guy. How, "I've heard terrible things," "this person had a bad experience," "he has a bad bedside manner," and so on.*

*I say all that to say this, the first time I met Dr. Polly, in the middle of the night in July, he told me I would walk with a limp for the rest of my life. The last time I saw him in the capacity as a patient, six months later, I walked out of his office. Without a limp. And went on living. That's a hell of a thing.*

*I've told this story to other people, even other orthopedic surgeons I've encountered, and almost no one believes me. They say, "Oh, a doctor would never do that," referring to the medical conference and calling from there about a change of plans. And, "I've never heard of anyone using titanium in the ankle. Steel goes in the ankle." And, to be honest, maybe it is hard to believe. But it happened. I was there. I used to wonder about, I don't know, maybe my case was different. Maybe he saved something special for me. But I doubt it. I bet there are a hundred or a thousand stories similar to mine. Because he was a force for good.*

*Occasionally I would pass through Westboro, and by that big house of his, and see him out in the yard, or walking down the street, and consider stopping and telling him who I was, and wondered if he would remember. But I never did, partly because I imagined that happened all the time. Partly because I was scared. So I'll say it now to his family.*

*Thanks.*

*Thomas, the one with the titanium*

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**Thomas Lockard** - March 30, 2017 at 03:13 AM

JH

*As an orthopedic nurse you always knew where you stood with Dr. Polly, and you always knew your patients were in excellent hands. Rest well Sir.*

Julia Hecht - March 30, 2017 at 06:43 AM

MW

“ *Dr. Polly was there for our family when our teenage son was involved in an accident, he is able to walk today because of him. Prayers for his family at this difficult time.*

*Marilyn Wallace*

Marilyn Wallace - March 29, 2017 at 09:09 PM

AK

“ *In September 2005, I was very pregnant with my second child. The day before my scheduled induction, I happened to be scheduled to work a very long day in the St. Francis operating room with Dr. Polly. The entire day he was so kind and concerned about my well being. The day after I gave birth, Dr. Polly came to the hospital after church to deliver the sweetest baby gift for our new daughter. My husband really enjoyed meeting him and we laughed when he called me a "trooper". I will always remember his kindness. My thoughts and prayers are with the entire Polly family during this difficult time. He will truly be missed. Andrea Knapp*

Andrea Knapp - March 29, 2017 at 09:04 PM

VS

“ *Dr. Prolly put my sister back together after a horrific car accident. He was a kind doctor that treated our family with respect and dignity. Our family sends you our condolences, thoughts, and prayers during this time. 🙏*

Virginia Soppe - March 29, 2017 at 07:21 PM

RW

“ *The world has lost a wonderful doctor and a true servant of mankind. Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire Polly family, all of whom have contributed to making our world a better place.*

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**Randol and Bonnie Walker** - March 29, 2017 at 05:19 PM

LW

“ *I've known Dr. Polly for many years and hunted with him in Argentina*

*and South Dakota.*

*I have very high respect for Dr. Polly.*

*My thoughts and prayers are with you at this time.*

*LaVon Wenger  
Sabetha, Kansas*

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**LaVon Wenger** - March 29, 2017 at 04:02 PM

JJ

“ *Our thoughts and prayers to Linda and family. Rich was indeed a very fine man. I never heard of his medical role in the evacuation of Saigon, a heroic assignment. And now he can see all the Iowa games....home and away....and never have to buy a ticket!!!!*

*Jon & Lynda Janes*

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**jon janes** - March 29, 2017 at 03:24 PM

SW

“ I am so devastated to hear of the death of my good friend and respected colleague who had a kind giving heart and unending generosity in his heart.  
Steve Watkins

Steven Watkins - March 29, 2017 at 12:55 PM

CG

“ Dr. Polly always had a bemused smile on his face when Linda was planning elaborate feasts and wonderfully warm events. All of us from the KMAJ Days of Hooker Manns and Gallagher adored Linda and Richard. You are both in our hearts.

Chris Gallagher - March 29, 2017 at 08:15 AM

HS

“ Linda and Family, my sincere condolences on the loss of Richard. We are all thinking about you during this sad time.

Henry Spangler - March 29, 2017 at 07:20 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Helen Crow - March 29, 2017 at 03:03 AM



Too sad for words.

Helen Crow - March 29, 2017 at 03:24 AM

DR

“ *Dr. Richard Polly was held in high esteem by his colleagues, employees, his patients, & many in the Nursing & Medical Profession. I was honored to be an employee in the Nursing Profession of Kansas Orthopedics & Sports Medicine & to be able to work with and learn from Dr. Polly.*  
*Deanna Roudybush*

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**Deanna Roudybush** - March 28, 2017 at 08:36 PM