

RICHARD JOHN SIMON, SR., 81, passed away on July 4, 2026, at Altru Hospital in Grand Forks, North Dakota, surrounded by his family.

Richard was born on July 8, 1944, in Teaneck, New Jersey, to Robert and Mary (Devlin) Simon. He grew up in Bergenfield, New Jersey, and graduated from Bergenfield High School in 1962. Following high school, he attended the RCA Institute of Technology in New York City before enlisting in the United States Air Force.

While stationed at Grand Forks Air Force Base, Richard met and fell in love with Ilona Mae Selthun. After several years of dating, they were married on October 15, 1966, at St. Michael's Church in Grand Forks. The couple spent part of their first year of marriage in New Jersey before returning to Grand Forks, where their son, Rick, was born the following September.

Richard worked as an electrician for approximately 30 years, earning his Master Electrician license during his career. He was a dedicated member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) for 52 years and proudly served as Post Commander from July 2025 through June 2026.

Richard enjoyed fishing, hunting, and target shooting. He shared his knowledge and passion for the outdoors as a concealed carry and hunter education instructor for many years. Above all, he cherished time spent with his family, especially his grandchildren and, more recently, his great-grandchildren. Even as his mobility declined in later years, he would still get down on the floor to play with them.

One of Richard's favorite projects was the pond he built in the family's backyard, where he raised many large Japanese ornamental Koi fish. Each year, the fish needed to be moved indoors for the winter, a task his grandson, Beau, especially enjoyed helping with. For many years, Richard and Ilona hosted an annual Fourth of July gathering at their home, where family members would come together to celebrate and enjoy fireworks. These gatherings became treasured family traditions and some of Richard's favorite memories.

Christmas was another season that showcased Richard's creativity and sense of humor. Family members eagerly anticipated his elaborate holiday decorations and his yearly "surprise" gift-wrapping creations, as he rotated the honor of being the featured recipient. Richard was also a talented carpenter and woodworker. He designed and built many beautiful pieces, including dining room tables, dressers, display cabinets, side tables, a bar, and a cradle in which his granddaughter, Natalie, spent her first three months. These handcrafted treasures will remain cherished reminders of his skill, creativity, and love for his family.

Richard is survived by his beloved wife, Ilona, of nearly 60 years; his son, Rick (Julie) Simon; grandson, Beau (Taylor) Simon; granddaughter, Natalie (Joe) Martin; great-granddaughters, Eve and Lillian Martin; sister-in-law, MaryKay Hanson; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert Sr. and Mary Simon, and his brother, Robert Simon Jr.



IN LOVING MEMORY



God saw he was getting tired
And a cure was not to be,
So He put His arms around him
And whispered, "Come with Me."
With tearful eyes we watched him suffer
And saw him fade away,
Although we loved him dearly
We could not make him stay.
A golden heart stopped beating
Hard working hands to rest,
God broke our hearts to prove to us
He only takes the best.

The family wishes to express their appreciation for
your thoughts and prayers. Please join them
for lunch following the Mass.

RICHARD JOHN SIMON SR.

JULY 8, 1944



JULY 4, 2026

MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

Monday ▪ July 13, 2026 ▪ 10:00am

St. Michael's Catholic Church

Grand Forks, North Dakota

PRESIDING

Fr. Aberle

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

"How Great Thou Art" ▪ "Be Not Afraid"

"Here I am Lord" ▪ "On Eagle's Wings"

Soloist: Angela Schmaltz

Organist: Kristine Middleton

PALLBEARERS

Beau Simon ▪ Joe Martin ▪ John Hanson

Ben Kliner ▪ Alex Hanson

Jacob Kliner ▪ Josh Kliner

MILITARY HONORS

United States Air Force

American Legion Post: 157 ▪ VFW Post: 3817

BURIAL

Memorial Park Cemetery North

Grand Forks, North Dakota



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