

Richard Lee Smith was born on December 27, 1944, in Morris, Minnesota, the son of Leland and Joyce (Anderson) Smith. He grew up in the Hancock community, graduated from Hancock High School in 1962 and from the University of Minnesota Morris. Rick taught school in Ortonville and then moved to Willmar in 1969 to teach mathematics at Willmar Technical College, later Ridgewater College. On June 11, 1965, Rick was united in marriage to Candy Blasing. They made their home in Hancock and Ortonville before moving to Willmar.

Rick was known for his humor and love of life. He was an active member of Vinje Church in Willmar and sang in the choir for 56 years. He enjoyed having coffee and bicycling with friends, music, dancing, reading and especially attending his grandchildren's activities. He was a true Minnesota sports fan even when they frustrated him. He was also the cook in the family; his specialty was anything meat and potatoes, followed by a late-night snack of popcorn or ice cream. To stay fit, he walked 2.5 miles daily, most often on the Glacial Ridge Trail.

After 54 years of marriage, Candy passed away. Six years ago, Rick reconnected with a former co-worker, Pat Jacobs. They became close friends and enjoyed travel – going to Europe and New York City, and on Caribbean and Alaskan cruises.

Rick is survived by his children, Lee (Janet) Smith of Salt Lake City, Utah and Wendy Merila of Albertville; grandchildren, Wyatt and Garrett Smith, Brooke (Teague) Bogenholm, Boston and Brody Merila, Adam Astor, Amanda (Kyle) Sullivan-Astor, Ashley (fiancé Nate Lutmer) Astor, and great grandchildren, Brynn and Beckett Sullivan-Astor. Also surviving are his sister, Georgia Maska of Morris; brother, Gary (Elna) Smith of Hancock; sisters-in-law, Jacki Burmeister of North St. Paul and Bonita Smith of Morris and partner, Pat Jacobs of Willmar.

Rick was preceded in death by his wife, Candy; parents, Leland and Joyce; brother, Darrell Smith; and brothers-in-law, Eddie Maska and Steve Burmeister.

Celebrating the Life of



Rick Smith

1944 — 2025

In Loving Memory Of

Richard Lee “Rick” Smith

December 27, 1944

Morris, Minnesota

October 13, 2025

Willmar, Minnesota

The time has come
for me to leave this life.

I have fought the good fight.

I have finished the race.

I have kept the faith.

Now there is in store for me
the crown of righteousness
which the LORD, the righteous judge,
will award to me on that day.

-Paul's Second Letter to Timothy

Peterson Brothers Funeral Home
“Celebrating A Life Remembered”

Celebration of Life Service

Thursday, October 27, 2025 - 11:00 a.m.

Vinje Lutheran Church

Willmar, Minnesota

Officiating

Pastor Dane Skilbred

Music

Organist: Tim Burns

Vinje Requiem Choir

Rick's Beloved Grandchildren

Interment

Fairview Cemetery

Willmar, Minnesota