

RICHARD G. KOTARBA

July 5, 1941 - July 26, 2024



Richard G. Kotarba, 83, passed away peacefully with family by his side on July 26, 2024. He was born to Alex Walter Kotarba and Julia Frances Honeychuck Kotarba on July 5, 1941, in a small coal mining patch, known as Allison No. 1, deep in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. Beginning in 1955, he attended the Pontifical College Josephinum Seminary as a high school freshman and stayed through his first

year of college, finishing his college studies at John Carroll University, where he graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1963. Dick then attended Boston College Law School on a Presidential Scholarship, where he served as case note editor for the Law Review and was inducted to The Order of the Coif. During Law School, he married his bride, Barbara, on July 11, 1964. Dick joined the Pittsburgh-based law firm of Meyer, Unkovic & Scott LLP in 1966, was made partner in 1973, and remained with the firm for 55 years until his retirement in 2021.

Shortly after returning to Pittsburgh, Dick and Barb welcomed three children and settled in Sewickley, residing in their home for over 45 years. As a devout Catholic, he instilled values of faith and love of God, care of family, and respect for education, while imparting a deep sense of gratitude and strong work ethic to his children. From his children he expected much, and in turn, took great pride in their many accomplishments. As a doting grandfather, he loved spending time with his grandchildren and attending their various activities, educating them on their faith and quizzing them with math problems.

Dick loved the practice of law. It was challenging and rewarding. He had a successful career highlighted by resolving disputes arising out of the construction of the Convention Center, claims involving the Port Authorities subway system and the two stadiums. Most notably, he argued at the Court of International Justice in the Hague, Netherlands, before the United States-Iranian Tribunal during the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis and won a multi-million dollar award.

Accolades abounded for Dick, including named Pennsylvania Super Lawyers since its inception, and named to Best Lawyers in America from 1993 through 2021, which also named him Pittsburgh Construction Law Lawyer of the Year in 2012. Dick was a member of the prestigious American College of Real Estate Lawyers and past Chair of both the Real Estate and Construction Sections of the Allegheny County Bar Association. He assisted with the preparation of the original Hart and Willier Uniform Commercial Code Reporter-Digest and served as case note editor for the Pittsburgh Legal Journal.

In fulfillment of his faith, Dick worked tirelessly for various causes, including representing Christian Housing in developing high rises for the elderly in Pittsburgh. For a decade, he sat on the Board of Trustees at the Pontifical College Josephinum, serving one term as Chair. Dick later received the Jessing Award, which is given to the lay Alumnus of the Year. For 25 years, he also sat on LaRoche University's Board of Trustees, where he served multiple terms as Chair. In 2014, LaRoche presented Dick with an honorary doctorate of Humane Letters.

Dick felt most honored to be the 2010 Allegheny County recipient of the treasured St. Thomas More Award after the annual Red Mass presided by The Most Reverend David A. Zubik, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh. Dick never missed a teachable moment. In his acceptance speech, along with a great sense of appreciation, he took time to educate the attendees on the life and great acts of St. Thomas More.

In December 2023, as the first recipient of the Allegheny County Bar Association Construction Law Section's Lifetime Achievement Award, Dick reflected on his legacy and felt the award was a tremendously humbling and satisfying acknowledgment of his entire career, judged by his peers on his life's work.

Dick is survived by his wife Barb, whom he loved dearly throughout their 60 years of marriage; his three children: Christine (Shawn Marlovits), Greg (Lori) and Julie (Brooks) Solomon and his five grandchildren: Keaton and Ryan Kotarba and Emma, Carter, and Sarah Solomon. He was dedicated to his family, who garnered all of his love and affection, and brought purpose and joy to his life.

Dick is also survived by his brother, Bob (Debbie) and nine nieces and nephews; and was preceded in death by his parents.

Family will receive friends from 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. on Sunday, August 4th, at **COPELAND FUNERAL HOME** (702 Beaver Street, Sewickley, PA 15143). Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, August 5th at St. James Church – Divine Redeemer Parish (200 Walnut Street, Sewickley, PA 15143).

In lieu of flowers, please consider either a donation via check payable to the Pontifical College Josephinum (Richard G. Kotarba Memorial Fund in memo line,) mailed to the attention of Rick Jeric, Advancement, at 7625 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43235; or a donation via check payable to LaRoche University (Richard G. Kotarba Scholarship Fund in memo line), mailed to the attention of University Advancement at 9000 Babcock Boulevard, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15237.

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