



## Richard Dudley Shelton

October 6, 1939 - October 13, 2019

Richard Dudley Shelton passed away on Sunday, October 13 at the age of 80. He was an exceptional individual, who always put others before himself. For those who knew him well, the word integrity summed up who he was as an individual. If one has integrity, all the other meaningful attributes fall into place: caring, selflessness, honesty, compassion, commitment, and the list goes on.

Even as Alzheimer's disease slowly ravaged his brain over the last 10 years of his life, the lucid moments were reminders of the incredible person that was Richard Shelton.

He was intelligent, caring and steadfast in his commitments to family, faith, and friends. His personal measure of success was in his ability to lift other people up. He was a mentor to many and a stranger to no one. He believed a handshake was your personal word and bond. While he technically does not fall within the birth years of "the greatest American generation," he demonstrated daily the qualities of that generation throughout his life.

He was also a consummate practical joker, which many would not suspect as he was more of a quiet leader and observer. And that persona only amplified the impact of the joke. He loved to laugh, and more importantly, he loved to make others laugh.

He was born in Lake Wales, Florida to Russell and Florence Shelton in 1939. Upon high school graduation he served in the United States Air Force until 1965. He received his bachelor's degree in Journalism and MBA from the University of Florida (#GoGators), and completed doctoral work at Florida State University (#GoNoles).

He is survived by his wife of 58 years Dawn Shelton, three daughters Lynne (Bob) Gordon, Diana (Steve) Oropallo, and Laura Shelton, and three grandchildren which were the light of his life – Jaiden, Alexandra, and Casey.

He had a very successful career in association management, working for a variety of statewide industries including general contracting, engineering and electrical cooperatives. However it was his last, and long-term job as the Executive Director of the Florida Press Association that he loved the most, a position he held for nearly 20 years.

Trained in the field of journalism, he was passionate about freedom of the press and safeguarding the fundamental rights embedded in the 1st Amendment, and he ardently lobbied on behalf of Florida publishers and the newspaper industry.

He served on the board of directors of several local and statewide organizations including Keep Florida Beautiful, the Tallahassee Society of Association Executives, the Florida Society of Association Executives, and the Tallahassee Citizens Police Academy.

Richard Shelton will be remembered by everyone he met for his wit, wisdom, generous spirit, humility, and integrity.

The family will be receiving guests for a visitation at Bevis Funeral Home of Tallahassee on Thursday, October 24, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. with a remembrance

service and celebration of his life to follow at 4:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Big Bend Hospice, the Alzheimer's Association or the charity of your choice.

Breanna Green of Bevis Funeral Home is assisting the family with their arrangements. (850-385-2193 or [www.bevisfh.com](http://www.bevisfh.com))

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **24**. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Bevis Funeral Home & Crematory  
200 John Knox Rd  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 385-2193

## Celebration of Life

OCT **24**. 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Bevis Funeral Home & Crematory  
200 John Knox Rd  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 385-2193

# Tribute Wall

TM

“ Dawn and family - I was saddened to hear of the passing of Dick. I know you will miss him tremendously but may also find comfort that he is at peace now. May his sweet love and memories always warm your heart. - Tondra Matthews, previously with the FL Press.

Tondra Matthews - October 24, 2019 at 03:19 PM

LY

Thank you Tondra. It was a great turnout yesterday...Faye, Fran, Ricky, Dean, Sam plus many wonderful FPA connections. Glad you were a part of the good ol' days!!

Lynne - October 25, 2019 at 11:15 AM

DA

“ In fond memory of our beloved brother-in-law Richard Dudley Shelton (Dick), Dick was a man of great kindness and understanding! If you were having problems, such as "Just as Living Life and Raising a Family", you were blessed to be in his presence and Dick with his kind voice just made you "feel good"! I was talking by phone with Dawn one day and I asked how Dick was doing and she said he was doing good today--he just got new hearing aids! Dick then took the phone and said " Hey Joan, I can hear the birds singing"!

Dick has departed this earth and gone to a place of Joy, Peace, and Rest

and where:

*There is no more pain!*

*The mind is clear!*

*The ears are open!*

*Dick can now and forever can "hear the birds singing"!*

*He will greatly missed!*

*Darwin and Joan Alt*

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**Darwin and Joan Alt** - October 21, 2019 at 08:28 AM

LY

*A big thank-you to you all. SO many great memories of times together, fun and family. Lynne*

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**lynne** - October 21, 2019 at 11:23 AM

TA

“ *Thoughts, Prayers and Much Love, all The Acra's purchased the Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet for the family of Richard Dudley Shelton.*



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**Thoughts, Prayers and Much Love, all The Acra's** - October 20, 2019 at 02:44 PM

LG

“ *This photo is the perfect way in which I remember Dick, his smile, his clever wit, his genuine warmth, that twinkle of his personality shining through. In remembrance of him, I will make a donation to Big Bend Hospice. With love, Ludy*

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**LUDWIKA A GOODSON** - October 19, 2019 at 08:37 PM

LY

*Thank you sweet Ludy for the perfect tribute, great memories together and the donation.....a wonderful organization. Lynne*

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**lynne** - October 21, 2019 at 11:30 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Richard Dudley Shelton.*



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October 17, 2019 at 06:16 PM

LP

“ It is difficult for me to remember a time when Dick and his family were not in our lives. For 53 years they have wrapped their arms around us and settled permanently in our hearts. While my heart is breaking for the loss of this dear friend, I would not have him suffer longer. The grief is palpable, the shared tears with Dawn, Lynne, Diana, Laura, Jaiden, Alex and Casey are real and painful, yet myriad joyful memories rush in: Dick with giggling little girls in the Diamond Village playground Gator Growl escapades and football; feeding ducks and picnics; Disney World; more shared family visits than I can count; watching kids play dress-up, meals around your Tallahassee table; lakeside cookouts in Orlando, crazy road adventures; cross country visits to Texas and Florida for weddings; bedside tears for our precious Lisa; understanding hugs, words silent and spoken, comfort given, support constant, joy spread; laughter immeasurable; friendship unconditional. Dick Shelton, you and your family freely shared it all, and I treasure it all; my only regret is that those 53 years flew by in the blink of an eye. I hope you realize how much you are loved, how much you have inspired, how much you will be missed. Until we meet again, your Texas family sends love filled with gratitude for your life and your example to all of us. May God continue to bless you and the legacy you leave.

Always, Lyra

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**Lyra B. Pointer** - October 17, 2019 at 02:46 PM

LG

Sweet Auntie Lyra, your words are so touching and SO appreciated. I feel your warm embrace physically and emotionally, Love always.  
Lynne

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**Lynne Gordon** - October 17, 2019 at 10:27 PM



“ *Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Richard Dudley Shelton.*



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October 17, 2019 at 02:11 PM

“ *The words I write will not do justice to the impact that Dick had on my life - personally and professionally. He was my first boss, but he was much more. He taught me about leadership and demonstrated that it comes in many forms. He taught me about integrity and encouraged me to stand by my values even when it made things difficult for me - and even when it caused friction between us. He taught me about servant leadership and how to be flexible while still being strong and focused. He taught me that anything short of giving your all is just not acceptable. He also taught me about appreciation. In the nearly nine years I served the Florida Press Association every single day when I left the office he thanked me. It was not a small gesture - it was a genuine sign of his appreciation for my work and it was very meaningful to me, as a young woman just beginning my career. Dick taught me all of these things and so, so, so much more, not by lecturing me or giving me things to read - no, that wasn't his style at all. Nearly everything I learned, he taught me by his quiet demonstration.*

*Everyone who worked with him knew Dick to be very focused and committed. He would talk to himself, something that I came to find really endearing. Every morning I would hear him say, "O.k., let's get to it." or something similar, after he organized his files and his legal pad and pencil (yes, he likely kept the legal pad people in business and I've never seen someone outside of grade school be more committed to the use of pencils). In the wee early years of working together I would hear him say that from where I sat at my desk just outside of his office and I thought he was talking to me and I would actually answer, "Ok, yes sir, I'm ready." He probably never even heard me, he was usually that focused.*

*Besides my admiration for his work ethic, I also admired him as a husband and a father. Nearly every day he would share something about Dawn, Laura, Diana or Lynne. He and my father were nearly the same age, and I have 2 sisters as well so I thought I understood some of his world. My father, also named Richard, always said that God grants a special gift to the fathers of daughters. Certainly, Dick*

*was aware of that gift because he often told me how proud he was of his daughters.*

*I do not have enough words to express my admiration, adoration and gratitude for him. I owe much of my success to him. Those are not just words. He encouraged me and (quietly :- ) believed in me at times when I was too young and too inexperienced to know what possibilities were available to me. He helped to shape my professional and personal philosophies which have guided me throughout the past 25 years.*

*My heart hurts. The world was a better place with him in it and he will be missed. Dawn, Lynne, Diana and Laura - I am so sorry for the pain you must be feeling. I hope you can find some measure of peace knowing that I, and so many others, are carrying some of that sorrow as well.*

*With deepest sympathy,  
Ricki Witt Braswell*

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**Ricki Witt Braswell** - October 17, 2019 at 12:31 PM

LG

*Thank you Ricki for such a warm, heartfelt, tear cleansing tribute.....just beautiful. Lynne*

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**Lynne Gordon** - October 17, 2019 at 10:23 PM