



Richard A Sabella

November 26, 1943 - January 20, 2026

Richard Alfred Sabella, a man of deep faith and character, passed away peacefully on January 20, 2026. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Ellen; his four children Christian (Jenny), Elise, Kathryn (Nicholas), and Michael; and his sister Janice (Richard). He was also blessed with four granddaughters: Chloe, Chiara, Jolene, and Liliana. He was predeceased by his brothers Gerard (Jeanne) and Kevin (Carolyn), and his parents Catherine and Alfred.

Richard was born in 1943 in the Bronx, New York and moved to Paramus, New Jersey later in his childhood. He suffered his first heartbreak in 1957, when the Brooklyn Dodgers relocated to Los Angeles, but his Bronx roots made him a Yankees fan for the rest of his life.

Richard attended Fordham University, earning his bachelor's degree in History. He served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps during the Vietnam War, and was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and Army Commendation Medal. He returned to Fordham University after his service and earned his doctoral degree in Education. He became a school administrator in New Jersey, and later served as Superintendent of the Ridgefield, New Jersey school district for nearly two decades. He made an enormous impact in that role, in particular by creating a successful magnet program for special education. That work bore its most personal fruit when his older daughter Elise graduated from the program with

a high school degree in 2001. His other three children all graduated from the University of Notre Dame, and Richard credited the Holy Mother for all of his family's success, as well as for any wins his beloved Fighting Irish had on the football field.

A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, Richard helped to raise his family in Oradell, New Jersey, and continued to care for his daughter Elise until the end of his life. He was a faithful churchgoer, and a fixture at daily mass at Assumption Church in Emerson during his retirement. He spent his free time gardening, and watching and listening to classic movies and stories.

Before his passing, Richard expressed deep gratitude for a life filled with God's providence, and faith in his eternal life.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday, January 28 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Volk Leber Funeral Home in Oradell, New Jersey.

A funeral mass will be held on Thursday, January 29 at 9:30 a.m. at Assumption Church in Emerson, New Jersey, followed by burial at George Washington Memorial Park in Paramus, New Jersey.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that any donations be made in Richard's honor to Blood Cancer United.

Cemetery Details

George Washington Memorial Park

234 Paramus Road
Paramus, NJ 07652

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 28. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Volk Leber Funeral Home
268 Kinderkamack Road
Oradell, NJ 07649
info@volkleber.com
<http://volkleberfuneralhome.com>

Mass of Christian Burial

JAN 29. 9:30 AM (ET)

Church of the Assumption
29 Jefferson Street
Emerson, NJ 07630

Tribute Wall

NM

“ *Nell Murphy lit a candle in memory of Richard Sabella*



Nell Murphy - January 27 at 03:39 PM

MB

“ *I'm truly sorry to hear about the passing of Dr. Sabella. He was an incredible person who always went out of his way to support my volleyball team, even though we never put a banner on the wall. His encouragement and kindness were rare and meant so much to us.*

Maddy Brown - January 22 at 06:34 PM