



## Richard T. "Rick" Vella

April 17, 1958 - November 26, 2008

Mr. Richard T. "Rick" Vella, age 50, of Utica, went to be with the Lord on Wednesday, November 26, 2008 at the Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare Center with his loving family by his side.

Born in Utica on April 17, 1958, Richard is the son of Francis "Frank" Vella and the late Eleanor "Ellie" E. (Shrodi) Vella. He was raised and educated locally and was a 1976 graduate of Utica Free Academy. He pursued collegiate studies at M.V.C.C. and Le Moyne College where he earned a degree in Accounting. On July 15, 1989 he married the former Karen Goodnow with whom he shared 19 years in a loving and blessed union. Rick was employed by the Lutheran Care Ministries as the chief financial officer, starting out as an accountant and finance comptroller. He was devoted to the residents and staff of the Lutheran Care family for 27 years. He also enjoyed working various positions at the Pin-o-Rama Bowling Center in addition to his daily job responsibilities. But his family was the first and foremost priority in Rick's life. As the eldest child, Rick brought much "comfort and peace" to any situation because of his caring and compassionate nature, offering the biggest heart and the most calming embrace. A true teddy bear at heart, he meant the world to everyone who knew him. He was loyal and devoted to his friends who were a part of his extended family. Rick served as a coach for South Utica Little League and Girls Softball teams, supporting his children in all their activities. He also volunteered as a bingo caller at Notre Dame High School over the years. He was an avid bowler, a sports

enthusiast, and a music lover. He especially looked forward to the yearly trip to the Finger Lakes Region. He was a member of the American Legion Fort Schuyler Post #1290, the VFW Malsan-Jones Post 7393, and the Knights of Columbus. He was dedicated in his spiritual beliefs and devoted to his faith. He was a parishioner of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, and oftentimes he attended services with his wife at the Messiah United Church of Christ in Washington Mills.

Richard is survived by his wife, Karen; his daughter, Samantha Vella; his son, Nicholas Vella; and his father, Frank Vella of Utica. Survivors also include his sister and brother-in-law, Francine E. and John Julian of New Hartford; his brothers and sisters-in-law, Paul A. and Christine Vella, and Denis Vella and Rebecca Talerico, all of Utica; many nieces and nephews whom he treated as though they were his own children; loving aunts and uncles, Louise Shrodi, Lawrence and Theresa Shrodi, Gloria Shrodi, Josephine Vella, Lottie Koziol, and many other aunts and uncles too numerous to mention; his cousins; his father-in-law, Edward Goodnow; in-laws, Janet and Michael Halpin, Kevin and Alberta Goodnow, Mark Goodnow, and Craig and Laureen Goodnow. Rick also leaves many dear and cherished friends, with special mention of Steve, Tim, Tom, and Bob. He was predeceased by his mother-in-law, Clarice Goodnow; his nephew, Mickey Halpin; his paternal grandparents, Sam and Mary Vella; maternal grandparents, John and Emily Shrodi; uncles, Jack Shrodi and Thomas Vella; and his aunt, Benedetta Crosby.

The family extends sincere appreciation to Pat Pitcher, the staff and the Board of Directors of Lutheran Care; Dr. Charles Eldredge, and the nurses and staff of the Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare Center for their compassion and care.

Visitation will be held Friday from 4:00-8:00 at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. In lieu of flowers, those wishing to do so may consider donations in Richard's honor to the family, or to Lutheran Homes Foundation; envelopes will be available at the funeral home. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend Rick's funeral service which will commence on Saturday morning at 11:00 at the Church of Our Lady

of Lourdes where his Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Eannace Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Richard T. "Rick" Vella*



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**Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.** - November 26, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ *With sincere participation...*

*We are friends from Josephine Vella.  
Puurs, Belgium, Europe.##imported-begin##Jean-Pierre Casteels  
and family##imported-end##*

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December 20, 2008 at 05:54 AM



“ Karen and family,

*I am so very sorry to hear of Rick's passing.*

*My best memories of Rick are from working with him in the computer room at the Lutheran Home. When I started working there, Kathy Palmer asked me if I would mind listening to the loud music that "the guys" in the computer room played while they worked. Little did I know that I would be listening to Rick play "Don't worry, Be Happy" over and over again for days at a time! He was kind enough to get a bunch of his friends together and help move my daughters and myself from my house in Frankfort to Clinton because he knew I was alone and needed help.*

*My thoughts and prayers are with you, Samantha and Nick during this difficult time.*

*Mary White##imported-begin##Mary J. White##imported-end##*

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December 11, 2008 at 03:06 PM



“ As President and CEO of LutheranCare I would like to thank Karen, Samantha, Frank, Paul, Dennis, Francine and all of the family members that attended LutheranCare's Memorial Service for Rick yesterday. It meant very much to us to have the support of the family for as we said our goodbyes to Rick. Rick will be deeply missed by us. He gave so much of himself to this organization in the twenty seven years that he worked with us. We wish that it could have been longer. Rick will always be held in high esteem.##imported-begin##Patricia V. Pitcher##imported-end##

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December 10, 2008 at 01:26 PM



“ Karen , we just heard about Rick and wanted you to know we were thinking of you all. All our prayers and sympathy Helen (Bert's cousin)##imported-begin##Helen and Larry Snow##imported-end##

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December 08, 2008 at 09:00 PM



“ I used to work at the Lutheran home in the 1980's . I played softball with Rick . He was a nice guy and a fun guy to have on the team. My sincerest Condolances.##imported-begin##Mark Morris##imported-end##

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December 05, 2008 at 06:04 PM



“ Dear Dennis,  
My thoughts and prayers are wtih you and your family...May your strength for one another guide you ....  
PEACE to you my friend,,,,,Lisa##imported-begin##Lisa George##imported-end##

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December 04, 2008 at 01:46 PM



“ Karen Samantha & Nick we were all sadden to hear of you're lose . Rick was a real sweetheart .Please accept our deepest sympathy.You are all in our thoughts & prayers##imported-begin##Bud & Robin Kress##imported-end##

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December 04, 2008 at 10:41 AM



“ Denis, Frank, and family,

*My heartfelt sympathy to all of you. Take care of each other. I love and miss you, Susan##imported-begin##Susan Welsh and family##imported-end##*

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December 03, 2008 at 09:14 PM



“ *I loved working with Rick when I was at the Lutheran Home. It was a wonderful feeling to know that he was the director of finance and he truly understood all the ins and outs of long term care financing. He was a wonderful friend for so many people. God bless those who loved him.##imported-begin##pi gentile##imported-end##*

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December 03, 2008 at 07:54 PM



“ *I am shocked and deeply saddened by Rick's passing. my deepest sympathies to your entire family. i never really know what to say in these situations, but lean on each other and pray for strength. sincerely, Rich Peenstra##imported-begin##Rich Peenstra##imported-end##*

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December 03, 2008 at 10:00 AM



“ *The Vella Family , my prays are with you and Rick. Just remembering Rick putting up with our craziness as an older brother made him a Saint. We didnt realize it at the time what kind of a person he would turn out to be. God Bless Mr. Vella.##imported-begin##Matthew Hobika##imported-end##*

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December 03, 2008 at 09:45 AM



“ Rick was a very kind-hearted and down to earth man. He will be greatly missed. Our prayers and thoughts are with his family.##imported-begin##Theresa Burchill &Garry Dubach##imported-end##

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December 02, 2008 at 09:51 AM



“ We lost a real gentleman.....rest in peace , Rick##imported-begin##Andy Weimer##imported-end##

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December 01, 2008 at 09:37 PM



“ Dear Karen and family, Marilyn and I were saddened to learn of Rick's passing. Working with Rick for so many years at Lutheran Care Ministries was a blessing and with his knowledge of the organization he was a blessing to Lutheran Care. He assisted this ministry to continue through both the difficult and the good times. It was a joy to witness the love he shared with you, the children, and his entire extended family. I will miss seeing him when next we are in Clinton. May you all know God's special Peace that truly passes all understanding, especially in these days. You are in our prayers.##imported-begin##Pastor William and Marilyn Preuss##imported-end##

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December 01, 2008 at 08:50 PM



“ Dear Vella Family,

*We are so sorry to hear of your tragic loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.*

*The Faculty and Staff of Notre Dame High School##imported-begin##Mrs. Carla Nemecek##imported-end##*

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December 01, 2008 at 06:49 PM



“ Sorry to hear of Rick's passing. He will be missed! Peace and Blessings to his family and friends!##imported-begin##Mr. and Mrs. Walter G. Jones##imported-end##

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December 01, 2008 at 05:30 PM



“ Denis and family,

*My deepest condolences for your loss. It has obviously been a tough time recently for the Vella family.*

*Of course, I have fond memories of Rick putting up with our childhood antics. He was always the "big" brother to us all.*

*Love,*

*Michael and Tanya##imported-begin##MICHAEL AND TANYA VITI##imported-end##*

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December 01, 2008 at 09:41 AM



“ i was so sorry to Here of Rick's passing. I work for Rick while i work for Roger in Central Supply. Mr Vella was very nice to work for he always had a smile and there if you needed to talk to him, always around. Again i am so sorry for your loss. Michelle Smith###imported-begin##michelle smith###imported-end##

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December 01, 2008 at 08:44 AM



“ Vella Family - We are so, so sad to hear of this! Please know that our hearts are breaking for you all !###imported-begin##Chris (Cougan) and Larry Schram###imported-end##

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November 30, 2008 at 07:36 PM



“ Dear Mr. V., Karen, Samantha, Nick, Paul, Denis, Francine and families, I was completely shocked and devastated when I read the Sunday paper today. Words can not express my sympathies for the sadness that you are all feeling right now. I know how tight you all are and I know that Rick was the rock that you all leaned on for strength and guidance. He was a beautiful, kind and loving person that will not be forgotten. Remember that he lives on in each and every one of you. Please know that my thoughts and prayers are with all of you.  
Love, Valerie###imported-begin##Valerie (Kovacs)  
Rosato###imported-end##

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November 30, 2008 at 11:07 AM



“ Dear Karen, Samantha and Nick,  
Please accept my deepest sympathies.  
I will always have fond memories of Rick.  
Hall of Fame game, visits to your home, family gatherings that I was  
lucky to be at.  
What is there to say at these times?  
What a great guy!  
Love,  
Nate###imported-begin###Nate Golden###imported-end##

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November 30, 2008 at 10:18 AM



“ Karen, Samantha, and Nicholas,  
Please accept my deepest sympathy. The obituary was exactly  
right, everyone loved Rick.  
Karen, I have no words, but you know how I feel.  
You are all in my prayers.  
Pam###imported-begin###Pam Quackenbush###imported-end##

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November 30, 2008 at 12:14 AM



“ It was a pleasure to get to know such a kind a man. I will always  
remember no matter how sick he was he was always pleasant and  
grateful. Such a kind man who seemed to have a huge heart. I was  
glad to have gotten to know him even it was during his illness. My  
sympathy to Karen & family my thoughts are with you - cherish the  
many memories and know he is at peace now . Take  
Care###imported-begin###Stacy Helmer LPN@ Dr Eldredges office  
###imported-end##

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November 29, 2008 at 10:26 PM



“ Karen:

*You know that I am here for you day or night. May God Bless you and your children. I pray for your family and will continue to do so. Remember to continue to love and honor him by continuing his and your legacy..through family, friends and love. May God Bless you and cradle you in his loving arms. May Rick be your angel from above, free of pain...charish what you had with him, so many others never had that with anyone...truely you together have been blessed.##imported-begin##Helene Foe & Family##imported-end##*

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November 29, 2008 at 08:19 PM



“ Karen, Samantha, and Nick, I am so sorry for your loss. Rick was a special person, and I enjoyed working for him at LH. He was always a patient, kind, understanding, and giving person, and just a fun guy. You are all in my thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.##imported-begin##Linda Hill##imported-end##

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November 29, 2008 at 05:05 PM



“ Karen & family'

*I was so shocked when Paul called on Thanksgiving. I didn't know what to say.*

*My prayers are with you in your time of sorrow, I know the pain you are going through. Rick was a wonderful man and friend. If you should need a friend we are here. He will always have a place in our memory.*

*sincerely,*

*Tammy , Paul and family##imported-begin##tammybottini##imported-end##*

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November 29, 2008 at 03:27 PM



“ Dear Karen and Family,

*It was such a shock for me to see Rick's obituary in the newspaper. As you probably remember, I worked at the Lutheran Home with Rick before you were married and we worked in the cellar at the home. Rick was always a kind person and always a gentleman. You will all be in my thoughts and prayers.##imported-begin##Josephine Murray##imported-end##*

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November 29, 2008 at 02:04 PM



“ Rick-

*You were one of my best friends when we were classmates at Hughes School. I remember the Friday nights you, Jerry Slover, and myself would play pitch until the wee hours of the morning on my front porch. God, we used to tick my mother off because we were constantly laughing!!*

*Although we lost touch over the years, I always considered you a dear friend....and you always will be.*

*God bless you Rick. Have a seat waiting for me at the card table!!*

*Love,*

*Bill Ellenwood##imported-begin##Bill Ellenwood##imported-end##*

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November 29, 2008 at 12:46 PM



“ Karen, Samantha, and Nick we heard the news today from friends back in Utica. Rick was a kind hearted, go with flow kind of guy. I enjoyed coaching with him in SULL and minor league. He taught me a lot about baseball and our frequent talks on the field will be cherished. We wish you and the Vella family all the best at this difficult time in your lives. May you rest in peace, my friend.##imported-begin##Barry & Laurie Depot##imported-end##

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November 29, 2008 at 10:36 AM



“ Karen, Samantha and Nick-

*Words cannot express the deep sorrow we all feel.*

*I met Rick almost 15 years ago when he hired me to work for him at Lutheran Care. I know what I will write expresses what his entire staff feels about him.*

*He was a kind, warm, gentle man of immense character*

*He was a loving, caring man*

*He was compassionate and understanding*

*He was a man with great pride in every aspect of his life*

*He was a man with great faith*

*He was a fantastic leader*

*He was a teacher and a mentor*

*He was patient and calm*

*He was ethical and knowledgeable*

*He was insightful*

*He was an amazing listener*

*He was extremely family oriented and understood that family came first and that things happen and sometimes life had to come before work*

*He always reasoned*

*He granted us a lot of leeway and let us be ourselves and understood the differences in each and every one of his staff*

*He was positive and optimistic*

*We knew what he expected of us and we tried never to let him down*

*Whatever life threw at him, he dealt with it with diligence and perseverance*

*His family was light of his life*

*He was deeply respected and loved in our office and will be dearly missed. Through all of our lives the good and the bad he - was our friend.##imported-begin##Lauri Tamburrino##imported-end##*

November 29, 2008 at 06:45 AM



“ I first met Rick when we were teenagers working at the Pin-o-Rama bowling alley back in 1975. We formed a strong friendship that grew over the years as we became suitemates at LeMoyne College and teammates on the Whitestown Vets softball team. What I appreciated about Rick most was his unique and engaging personality, his candor and his ability to “tell it like it is”. Rick was someone who would go the extra mile for a friend, and I never knew him to be without a cheerful smile or a kind word. His smile and his trademark cigar is what I will remember most. Although we didn’t get the opportunity to see each other much in the years after we graduated and got married, I still considered Rick a dear friend. God bless you Rick, and may God bring peace to you and your wonderful family.###imported-begin##Donald Campanaro###imported-end##

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November 28, 2008 at 08:32 PM



“ Paul, I’m sorry about your brother. My brother Joe told me. I have not seen your brother in years, but like the song goes-he’s forever young now. I remember him as being to nice, in a world that can be pretty tough. Hang in their, you will see him again. Life is changed not ended. Love never ends. god bless, Mike , Joe Patterson’s. Have a nice holiday anyway-keep smiling after the tears...###imported-begin##Mike Patterson###imported-end##

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November 28, 2008 at 05:17 PM



“ *Mr. Vella and family,  
I will keep all of you in my prayers. Rick was a wonderful person  
and an awesome friend! My fondest memory was spending my 18th  
birthday with him. He will be truly missed!*  
*Donna###imported-begin##Donna Servello Blenis###imported-end##*

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November 28, 2008 at 04:51 PM



“ *There are no words to express the sorrow I feel. Rick will be truly  
missed, his deep laugh, engaging smile and warm heart will forever  
remain in my heart. There are many good memories I will hold near  
and dear. Gone, but not forgotten... Rest in Peace Rick, and God  
Bless Karen, Samantha, Nick and the Vella family at this difficult  
time.###imported-begin##Debra Bullis###imported-end##*

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November 28, 2008 at 07:44 AM



“ *Richard,  
We met as each others competition well over 30 years ago. You  
were the #1 bowler for UFA I was the same for Proctor. After that we  
became teammates and friends. We've had alot of great times  
together over the years. How about when we let the girls in our  
football pool and they beat us! Two years in a row!!  
I never met a guy as dedicated to his work, friends, and most of all  
his family as you Rick. You will be greatly missed. Rest in pease my  
friend. God Bless you.*

*Nick & Lois Mariano###imported-begin##Nick & Lois  
Mariano###imported-end##*

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November 28, 2008 at 07:43 AM