



Richard A. Shnitzler

June 10, 1943 - March 19, 2024

Rick Shnitzler born in Boston, MA and longtime resident of Philadelphia, PA passed away from complications of Parkinson's on March 19, 2024 at the age of 80. Rick is predeceased by his parents Margery (Friedman) and Meyer Shnitzler. He is survived by his wife, Jan Yager, his daughter Julia Yager and her husband, Michael Aboff. From his first marriage he is survived by daughter Diana DeCubellis (Shnitzler) and her husband Brian DeCubellis, as well as grandchildren Sophia and Atticus. He is also survived by a sister, Linda Shnitzler Young.

Rick attended Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) for Architecture then transferred to the University of Washington to study City Planning. His first planning job was a year at the Greater London Council which would prove to be the source of many stories for the rest of his life. He later attended Syracuse University for graduate work in City Planning.

He pivoted professionally to exploit one of his many passions and built a business supplying original auto literature for classic American cars. He expanded his business into sourcing cars and parts for Cadillac owners globally. Rick restored his first car at 16 with his father, a rare 1932 Buick which is now in a classic car museum in St. Louis, MO.

His passions and energy to create global connections drove him to co-found

TailLight Diplomacy to link Americans and Cubans via classic American cars. He volunteered with Citizen Diplomacy International of Philadelphia and the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia to host and empower young international visitors. He also did advocacy work for the SS United States, cofounded the very first RISD alumni club, and always acted as a positive force in the neighborhood.

There are no plans for a formal gathering. In lieu of flowers donations can be made in Rick's name to Citizens Diplomacy International of Philadelphia.

Tribute Wall

KM

“ I have one more link to share: <https://www.hagley.org/research/digital-exhibits/rick-shnitzler> - it includes a short clip of our interview and recollections of Rick from his friend Z. Taylor Vinson

Kevin MARTIN - February 04, 2025 at 02:56 PM

KM

“ We have an interview with Mr Shnitzler here: https://digital.hagley.org/2013265_20131107_Shnitzler
My condolences to his friends and family. Kevin

Kevin MARTIN - February 04, 2025 at 02:48 PM

GR

“ I was so sad to learn the news of Rick’s passing. I didn’t know Rick well but I know his wife, Jan, very well over many decades of friendship. I remember thinking of Rick as a “booming “ person, with a strong presence and larger- than- life intellect and sense of humor and commitment. I remember when Jan and Rick met and their wedding celebration and their joy of welcoming their daughter, Julia. My heart goes out to Jan, Julia and Michael. I hope the memories of Rick will be a comfort always.

Gloria Rosanio - July 08, 2024 at 03:53 PM

RM

“ Rick was such a good soul. My his soul rest in eternal peace

Rasel Madaha - March 30, 2024 at 03:00 PM

SF

“ Jan & Julia.

I am so sorry for your loss. He loved you both very much.

Rick's death leaves a huge hole in our community. He was a wonderful husband, father, friend and neighbor, and a person of consequence. Internationally, nationally, and of course here in Baldwin Park. He was a founding member of The Friends of Baldwin Park.

He watched out for all of us. In cooperation with a reporter, he sat on the stoop and tallied cars that ran the stop sign on the corner and was able to report a bus driver with a bus load of children who sped through the intersection.

Best of all we shared lovely times together. We shared terrific meals, stories, and good conversation. We hung out on the stoop like proper city folk. Rick knew everyone and was always willing to help everyone out. We talked about things that mattered. Rick liked people and he enjoyed teasing us. He was a smart man who cared about others and the world. We often talked about things that mattered. We still remember the time he spotted President Obama in the neighborhood.

For me and our neighbors, Rick's legacy will live on in The Park and in our hearts and memories.

SANDRA FARRELL - March 26, 2024 at 02:36 PM

MM

“ A friend, Bob Lasus, introduced me to Rick over 3 decades ago. And ,of course, I met his lovely wife, Jan, and toddler, Julia, too. Over the years I felt we all developed a close connection and warm friendship. I had many dinners at Jan and Rick's table, enjoying Jan's conversations and great cooking and listening to Rick's stories and his fun, jovial, and sometimes teasing wit. I have many happy memories of Rick....sailing with Jan, Rick, and Julia on my sailboat.....spending a weekend in Maryland at Bob's studio opening, or just sitting in their sweet center city garden enjoying the birds and plants and chatting. Rick was always kind, fun, and welcoming. He was quite a guy and he will be sorely missed.
With love and sympathy, Mary M. Murphy

Mary M Murphy - March 25, 2024 at 09:07 PM

JR

“ Rick quickly became one of my favorite neighbors when I moved to Philly eight years ago. I'll never walk past Rick's corner without fondly remembering our frequent chats. Rick was most definitely one of a kind! He was smart, funny and a delight to know. Love and sympathy to Jan, Julia and Michael.

Jan Roberts - March 25, 2024 at 06:52 PM

WG

“ I am so sad to hear of Rick’s passing and send my love and condolences to Jan and Julia. I met Rick almost 60 years ago at the University of Washington. We became good friends – I was born in rural Idaho and he in sophisticated Boston. We were classmates at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning. Those two years were the basis of a friendship that endured. He was my first exposure to East Coast culture. As I look at the trajectory of my life, Rick played a huge role. After graduation I came east to graduate school – largely because of his influence. We drove across the country together on my way to Cornell. His father lent me money to help pay for school. After two years in the Peace Corps, I picked Boston as the place to begin my career, again largely because of Rick. I’ve been here ever since and have had so much good fortune. Distance meant our being together was episodic and always too brief, but I treasure the time together and our phone calls and emails. When a loved one departs it leaves a huge void. I join you and your friends and family in the grief that that void brings.

William D Giezentanner - March 25, 2024 at 11:14 AM

DD

“ My dad and I are sorry to hear this sad news. Rick was one of a kind and he and my dad were kindred spirits. TailLight Diplomacy was a wonderful way to act locally and globally at the same time. I’m grateful to Rick for working so hard on the project and also it’s documentation, making sure my dad was aware and in agreement with how things wrapped up, even as they each struggled with health complications. Who knows what project they’ll get into one day in heaven.. 🌸

Debby Dowlin - March 25, 2024 at 01:34 AM

SJ

“ We are an immigrant family. Rick, Jan and Julia has made us feel so welcomed and loved in Philadelphia since we first met in Spring 2013. Rick invited us to his home when my first child was about 15 days old. He drove us to see Pennsylvania woods, helped our family finding our first car, mentored me when I was looking for my first job, and invited us to his family for Thanksgivings and Christmas. Throughout our years of friendship, Rick and his family has also invited my visiting mother from China, aunt, uncle, and cousin from New Zealand to his home in different times. My boys always giggle when we talk about Rick because Rick always prepared paper plates proposing for whipped cream fight with them. Rick is one of the kind- funny, kind, generous and knowledgeable! We are so lucky to have known him and so grateful for the friendship. - Snow, Guoli, Leo and Daniel

Snow Jiang - March 25, 2024 at 12:51 AM

CA

“ Sending big hugs to you and Julia. Being a little younger the memories I have of Rick are those created by my dad. After spending the afternoon at the family picnic at Karen's house he would talk the whole way home about the conversations he had with Rick. Dad had a couple of old cars he had restored and he would talk to Rick about them. He often said he wished we lived closer so he could have spent more time with him. Me too!

Carolyn and Steve Welton

Carolyn - March 24, 2024 at 11:12 AM

JY

“ Rick was in Philly and the Yager clan was in Michigan. Distance played a factor in developing deep seated relationships. However, he and Jan always made it their mission to come to St. Clair, Michigan and celebrate our family’s Labor Day reunion at Jan’s sister Karen and brother in law Tim’s lovely home.

It was there that many of us got to know Rick....a Rick we would never forget.

I, personally, found Rick so insightful, so knowledgeable about just about anything, so unpretentious, so willing to teach and share his inner thoughts, and above all else..... so kind! To this day, I can see Rick in the kitchen at Karen’s house cornered by my 4 brothers and myself joking with Rick, picking his brain on any topic that came up, trying to make our point or points stand out and then Rick would speak. It was weird because we would all shut up and listen to Rick as if he were the boy Jesus speaking in the Temple and we were the tax collectors.Lol. His knowledge bank was amazing and he so wanted to share it with us. Rick was one of those guys you shook your head at and thanked your lucky stars for having known him....even if it was a little piece.

May you rest in peace Rick

John & Lynda Yager

John & Lynda Yager - March 24, 2024 at 11:00 AM

MS

“ Rick will not be sitting on his stoop on our corner ever again but I don’t have to believe it. He taught us all what it meant to be a good neighbor.

Mel Seligsohn - March 24, 2024 at 10:09 AM

SF

Standing or sitting, Rick ruled that corner! "So willing to teach" -yes- and always quick with a clever, sometimes obscure, joke and ready smile. This is how I will remember and never forget our good neighbor from "the block".

Peace and strength to you Jan Julia Michael

Susan Freeland - March 24, 2024 at 04:30 PM

FF

I was Rick's next door neighbor for over twenty years. He was a character that I will never forget. Always quick with a joke and a smile. I learned a lot from him. Particularly about old cars and zoning laws. He was very knowledgeable in those areas and others as well. I will miss those many hours sitting on the stoop and talking about almost anything. Hope to meet up with you again someday.

Frank Feingold

frank feingold - March 24, 2024 at 09:01 PM

MF

When we moved to Philadelphia in 1998 Rick was a "lion" who fought for the neighbors rights to live in a clean and safe environment. Over the years he mellowed and became a favorite of the small children as well as their parents. Despite physical issues, Rick never lost his quirky sense of humor. He was definitely one of a kind and one I'm happy to have known.

Mary Feingold - March 25, 2024 at 08:38 AM

TG

Rick was a very smart man who had a good answer and also, added a little humor to it that made you laugh. Rick loved his family, Jan and Julia and were very close. Rick loved keeping his neighborhood clean and safe. When we would visit Philly he introduced us to the WaWa store on the block. We always had to go there and buy Ding Dongs or something, anything. Bless you Rick . Brother-in-law Tim Galvin

Timothy Galvin - March 25, 2024 at 12:06 PM

CA

I am so very sorry to hear of Rick's passing and send love and condolences to Jan, Julia, Diana, and Linda and all others who mourn him. I am one of Rick's Friedman first cousins. I have not seen Rick in many, many years but have wonderful memories of extended family times together when we were children, especially Auntie Betty's Christmas parties. May Rick's memory be a blessing to you, always.
Carol Friedman Anderson

carol anderson - March 27, 2024 at 05:48 AM

RL

Rick appeared on the porch of the group house in West Philly looking for a place to live over 35 years ago. Darn! We were at RISD at the same time. Well, he was in Architecture and I was in Sculpture. Over the years, many of his endeavors were tangential to my interests. He had a contract to do research for I-95 between Philadelphia and Wilmington. I traveled that road many times. He worked with a group to save the SS United States, a design icon of the 50's. As a child on family trips to NYC on the West Side Highway on a great day, I would see the HMS Queen Mary, HMS Queen Elizabeth and the SS United States. I knew that the ship had been partly financed by the government and could be converted to a troop ship. My sailing trip to Cuba overlapped Rick's Tail Light Diplomacy and I photographed a 1950's Chevy in peachy condition which became part of his portfolio.

Rick gave my son Adam advice. 'Don't have partners. Change accountants. Seek opportunities eagerly and believe in what you're doing.' Adam wrote to me, "We (Adam's band, Urban Fall) played his daughter's sweet 16 party. He was a larger than life human in many ways and I always liked him a lot."

Rick was the innovator for the RISD Club. It was a fine gesture for the school and through this endeavor he found Jan, his true love. I was glad that he mustered the energy to be at the wedding of daughter Julia to Michael.

I will miss Rick as a friend and for his good council.

Robert Lasus - March 31, 2024 at 03:08 PM

SP

Rick was the quintessential mayor of Hamilton Street – a quirky yet lovable presence always ready to share a joke or a compliment. I only knew him once retired, but I imagine a similar network of familiarity and friendship, throughout his life. He was the devoted husband of one of my closest friends, and for that I'm grateful.

In the spirit of Rick's unending & relentlessly silly dad jokes, sharing more here, in his memory. We miss you Rick!

*Why are frogs happy?
The eat whatever bugs them.*

*What's the difference between a poorly dress man on a tricycle, and one on a bicycle?
Attire.*

*Why did the dog pee on the tree?
Because it was offended by its bark.*

*What do you call a fish wearing a bowtie?
Sofishticated.*

*What did the ocean say to the beach?
Nothing, it just waved.*

Sue Patterson - November 03, 2024 at 01:46 PM