

**Richard Lee “Dick” Thornton**, loving husband, father, grandfather, and the founder of Marick Refrigeration, passed away on May 20, 2023 at 90 years old.

Born on March 3, 1933, in Colo, Iowa, Dick was the youngest of five siblings born to Della Dickenson and Ralph Thornton. Growing up in a close-knit family, he learned the importance of love and support from an early age. Dick cherished his siblings, Verle, Veda, Velda, and Betty, maintaining a lifelong bond of friendship with them.

During the Korean War, Richard bravely enlisted in the Navy, serving as a Seabee stationed in Guam. His dedication and commitment were unmatched.

When he returned home from the Navy, Dick met the love of his life, Marlys Ruth Anderson. Within a few months, they tied the knot and embarked on a journey of love that lasted an incredible 64 years. Dick and Marlys were blessed with four wonderful children: Mark Thornton (Jan), Dawn Thornton-Crow (Randy), Rick Thornton, and Amy Thornton-Zenner (Chad). As the years passed, their family blossomed with 9 grandchildren: Danielle, Michelle, Sara, Marlyssa, Dylan, Brian, Lindsay, Calvin, and Elle; and six great-grandchildren: Addie, Ava, Adrien, Saetia, Nash and Ford - adding more joy and laughter to their lives. Dick's love for his family was immeasurable, and he cherished every moment spent with them.

Professionally, Dick was a force to be reckoned with. He completed his training as a plumber and steamfitter and dedicated years to commercial refrigeration. He proudly served as a Plumber and Steamfitters Local Union 33 member. However, his true legacy lies in the creation of Marick Refrigeration. Alongside his sons, he built Marick into one of the largest commercial refrigeration providers in the Midwest. Their success is a testament to Dick's unwavering work ethic, determination, and the tight bond they shared as a family.

Dick's vibrant spirit extended far beyond his professional endeavors. As a frequent travel companion to his sister Betty and her husband Phil, Dick earned the playful nickname 'Pants on Fire'. He simply couldn't sit still and relax. Even on vacation, he moved at top speed. Traveling was one of his greatest passions, and he created countless cherished memories exploring new destinations with his family. On their 35th anniversary, Dick and Marlys visited Aruba and instantly fell in love with the island. For 25 consecutive years, they returned every spring and found solace and joy in the company of their children and grandchildren while basking in the beauty of Aruba. In 1997, Marlys and Dick went on to find a winter home in Las Vegas and experienced great joy sharing their home with family and friends as they passed through. Dick was a wonderful host and was always willing to give his time and attention to friends and family.

One of Dick's most endearing qualities was his ability to bring a smile to everyone's face. His infectious laughter and silly jokes lit up every room he entered. Richard Lee Thornton will forever be remembered as a kind, strong, and generous soul who profoundly impacted countless people's lives. His love and service continue to live on through his beloved family and the numerous friends he held dear to his heart.

As we say goodbye to this extraordinary man, let us celebrate the love and joy he brought into our lives. Dick, thank you for the laughter, the memories, and the legacy of love you left behind. You will be deeply missed, but your spirit will forever live on in our hearts.

Services will be held at Hamilton's on Westown Parkway, 3601 Westown Parkway in West Des Moines, IA on Friday, May 26, 2023 with visitation from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and the service at 12:00 noon. Burial will be at Colo Cemetery in Colo, IA on Saturday, May 27 at 10:00 a.m.