

# Richard M. "Dick" Franz



July 10, 1915 - February 12, 2017

***"The challenge to each of us is to become kind and compassionate to those around us."***

On April 29, a "celebration of life" was held for our dear departed friend Dick Franz. Many WEAL members, friends and family were present. Others marched at the Climate Change March in Washington, D.C., an action which he'd heartily approve.

Richard M. Franz, "Dick" died on February 12, 2017 at the age of 101. Despite great personal loss, he lived an extraordinary life that continues to positively impact the lives of others.

He was born in Milwaukee, graduated from North Division High School, and later from Milwaukee State Teachers College majoring in Art and English. Dick was a proud veteran of the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Army Corps Mapping Unit during World War II. At age 100, he boarded an Honor Flight to the World War II memorial in Washington, D.C.

He married Maxine Hipkoe in 1944 and they had two children, Erich and Emily. All three preceded him in death as well as his only sibling, Edwin.

After Emily died in a tragic car accident in her early 20s, Dick and Maxine started three local chapters of the Compassionate Friends to help bereaved parents cope with the loss of a child. They also established the Emily Franz Scholarship Fund to grant college scholarships to graduating seniors of Shullsburg, Wisconsin, where Emily had taught fourth grade.

Dick and Maxine helped start the New Berlin Ecology Association that was an early promoter of household recycling in Waukesha County. In 1978, he co-founded the Waukesha County Environmental Action League (WEAL), still going strong at nearly 40 years of age.

Dick generously supported many causes and organizations about which he was passionate: Environmental Defense Fund, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Peace Learning Center, Planned Parenthood, Plowshare, SHARP Literacy, Urban Ecology Center, Waukesha County Land Conservancy, WEAL, Waukesha Public Library, and Women's Center of Waukesha.

Dick was an avid reader of non-fiction, typically reading several books at once. He was always ready to engage friends in energetic discussions about the books and other topics. He wrote frequent "Letters to the Editor" published in the Waukesha Freeman and the Milwaukee Journal advocating for innovative ideas to create a better community and world.

Throughout his life, Dick opposed war, nuclear testing, and the House Un-American Activities Committee. He marched for peace, for civil and women's rights, for social justice. Dick and Maxine were active in the United Nations Association, Waukesha Chapter. They were awarded the YWCA's Peacemaker Award in 1997. In 2015, Dick was honored with Plowshare Center's Peacebuilder award for his commitment to social justice, peace and environmental sustainability.

An avid bicyclist, Dick regularly biked 60 - 80 miles several times a week in retirement, even riding from New Berlin to Retzer Nature Center for WEAL meetings. For his 100th birthday, he canoed the Milwaukee River.

He will be greatly missed by all of us in WEAL and the many people whose lives he touched in the most profound ways.