

In loving memory...



Walter D. Ritchie

NOVEMBER 2, 1942 - JUNE 14, 2025

CROSSROADS BIBLE CHURCH



Biography

Walter D. Ritchie, 82, passed away on June 14, 2025, in Seattle, Washington. He was a loving and hardworking husband, father, and grandfather who cared deeply for the community and served his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, up to his last days. Walt was a man of principle and integrity who was well known for his empathy, compassion, honesty, thoroughness, and sense of humor.

Walt was born in Berkeley, California, the son of the late Alexander and Jean Ritchie. A 1965 graduate of University of California, Berkeley, he started his civil engineering career in Alaska, where he worked with the State of Alaska's aviation division in construction projects at many of Alaska's southeastern airports. While living in Cordova, Alaska, Walt met his wife of 55 years, Thelma, and they were married on August 9, 1969.

The newlyweds lived in Ketchikan, where Walt was the lead engineer on the team who built the Ketchikan Airport. The couple later settled in the Seattle area on Mercer Island, where they raised their 3 children.

For the majority of his career, Walt worked at the Port of Seattle. After holding numerous senior positions with the Port of Seattle, Walt was named Chief Engineer in 1983. Not one to seek the spotlight, Walt was known for tireless excellence and the highest standards in his work. As Chief Engineer at the Port of Seattle, Walt directed major first-of-a-kind development projects, including expansions and modernizations at multiple Port terminals and various areas of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The T-5 Terminal expansion was the largest in the US at the time and was constructed while the existing terminal continued operation. Walt supervised an annual capital improvements budget of \$100 million per year while the Port nearly doubled in cargo throughput. Walt participated in multiple congresses and committees, including serving as Commissioner and Western Regional Vice President and International Vice President for the U. S. Section of the Permanent International Association of Navigational Congresses (PIANC), Chairman of the American Society of Civil

Engineers (ASCE) Ports and Harbors Committee, and President of the SeaTac Rotary Club. He wrote and presented numerous papers to national and international audiences and his writings were featured in the ASCE's publications. Always seeking to collaborate and improve, Walt promoted Port alliances with other agencies including the City of Seattle and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. He received the Moffatt-Nichol Award for his innovative ideas and concepts in harbor and coastal engineering. Upon retirement from the Port in 1997, Walt was recognized as having planned and provided for modern and efficient facilities at the Seattle harbor and Sea-Tac, as well as having contributed to quality service and prosperity for the citizens of the Pacific Northwest. The U. S. Executive Director at the time said that the Port of Seattle is "the Port Walt built." Furthermore, Walt continued to share his engineering expertise as an independent consultant after retirement, and later worked for KPFF consulting.

An active learner, Walt loved to travel, hike, camp, and geocache. His favorite companion on all adventures was his beloved wife Thelma. As a father, he made it a priority to be home for family dinner and his children's events, despite work pressures. Walt served as coach for numerous teams on which his children played and participated in YMCA groups and Boy Scouts. Having been a scout himself, he accompanied both sons on many hikes and campouts, including 50 milers that he helped route. When asked about his greatest career achievement, in typical fashion, he diverted the chance to toot his own horn and reminisced about placing second in the Cub Scout Pine-wood Derby with one of his sons. He completed the basement of the family home better than any professional contractor, built a deck on the back of the house, and tended a beautiful yard and garden all 50 years his family owned their home. He loyally supported his grandchildren in their endeavors and sports events, and valued family over everything.

"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on the earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord."

Order of Service

PRELUDE | Winnie Tam

WELCOME AND PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Adam Richardson (son-in-law)

SONG *Who You Say I Am*

Jill Neville leading, accompanied by Winnie Tam

FAMILY REMEMBRANCES

John Ritchie (brother)

Brian Ritchie (son)

Elijah Ritchie (grandson)

Paul Richardson (grandson)

Jeff Ritchie (son)

SLIDESHOW

SONG *Way Maker*

Jill Neville leading, accompanied by Winnie Tam

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 8:18-39; Revelation 22:1-5

Heather Richardson (daughter)

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Rev. Dr. Adam Richardson

PRAYER OF COMFORT AND THANKSGIVING

HYMN *It Is Well With My Soul*

Jill Neville leading, accompanied by Winnie Tam

RECESSIONAL OF FAMILY

BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Adam Richardson

POSTLUDE | Winnie Tam