



Richard "Rich" O'Brien

July 12, 1954 - October 2, 2023

Richard 'Rich' E. O'Brien passed away at his home near Afton, Oklahoma on October 2, 2023 at the age of 69. Rich was born in Anderson, Missouri on July 12, 1954, one of 10 children born to Tom and Gracie (Armstrong) O'Brien. He graduated from McDonald County High School in Anderson and then attended Texas Christian University in Ft Worth, majoring in Western American History.

Rich began playing the guitar when he was 6 years old. He was an artist of extraordinary versatility. His mother Gracie was a Carter Family style guitar player herself and fostered his love of music. His ability to use the entire fretboard of the guitar was a gift from his brother Paul, whom Rich once described as 'the best guitar player in the family.'

Leaving home with less than ten dollars in his pocket and a vague promise of a prison guard job, Rich headed for Texas. There, he quickly fit in with the local music scene, playing with the likes of Red Steagall and touring with other country stars such as Moe Bandy, Gene Watson and Ray Price.

He was inducted into the Western Swing Society's Hall of Fame, and his song writing won him the Wrangler Award 14 times from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. He was also recognized by the Academy Awards of Western Music. Over the span of his music career, he received numerous distinguished recognitions and awards.

Rich might have been best described as a great American guitarist. His playing spanned a variety of influences, from swing and jazz, to Tejano, traditional, and classical. Rich quickly found that Western music's blend of traditional American folk and swing styles and Old West subject matter fit his style of playing and love of history. It proved to be the genre in which he would make his biggest mark. His talents twice led to White House performances for former President George Bush. He was a notable force in Western music.

Not only was Rich a talented musician and producer, he was a kind man that touched many lives with his shining personality and sincere interest in people. He was witty, intelligent with a sweet soul who impacted every person that he came in contact with. He will be dearly missed but his legacy will live on in the rich musical history that he had left behind.

Rich was preceded in death by his parents, five brothers, Jim, Pat, John, Paul and Jerry, and one sister, Francis. Left to cherish his memory are siblings, Ruby Hansen of Albert Lean, Minnesota, Michael 'Mick' (Carol) of Cleburne, Texas, and Janice Roberts of Grove, Oklahoma; as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and acquaintances from all over the country.

A Celebration of Rich's life will be held at 1 pm on Monday, October 16, 2023, at Bible Baptist Church, 28050 S. 630 Rd, Grove, OK.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

OCT **16**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Bible Baptist Church
28050 S. 630 Rd
Grove, OK 74344
(918) 786-3466

Tribute Wall



“ Nichols Funeral & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Richard "Rich" O'Brien



Nichols-Stephens Funeral & Cremation Services - October 15, 2023 at 06:25 PM

JF

“ Rich was one fine guitarist. I and my deceased friend and partner Dennis Grigsby, Worked with him providing sound for 21 years at the Cowboy museum. Always a good word form Rich. John Ford

John Ford - November 12, 2023 at 03:10 PM

LM

“ Rich was always so kind to us when we saw him - enjoyed a little time playing music with him too - he was awesome!!!! Scott and Leigh Ann Matthews, Muskogee OK

Leigh Ann Matthews - October 16, 2023 at 10:51 AM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.



October 15, 2023 at 06:10 PM

MA

“ *Richie, though you're no longer with us, your spirit of the old west thru your music touched many hearts and will forever be cherished. Happy Trails, amigo! Sending heartfelt condolences to all the family.*

Marilyn - October 15, 2023 at 02:39 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.*



October 13, 2023 at 12:39 PM



“ *We would only walk with you as far as the garden ...*

Ad astra per aspera, Richard.

c&g



Chris O'Connell - October 13, 2023 at 05:03 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.*



October 12, 2023 at 01:40 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.

October 12, 2023 at 01:40 PM



“ *Richard was my best friend for sixty-four years since he stole and ate my paste in school. I will miss our talks. My wife Chris and I send prayers to the family.*
Jim Putman

Jim Putman - October 12, 2023 at 11:41 AM



“ *Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.*



October 11, 2023 at 09:04 PM



“ Love's Journey was purchased for the family of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.



October 11, 2023 at 08:06 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.



October 11, 2023 at 05:28 PM



“ Dixie M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.

Dixie M. - October 11, 2023 at 05:27 PM



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.



October 11, 2023 at 02:53 PM



“ Vaya con dios, Badger. May you and all who knew you find peace.

BGM - October 09, 2023 at 02:48 PM



“ Richard was one of the smartest, most talented and BIG hearted person in the world. I was blessed to have known him.

Linda Henderson

linda henderson - October 09, 2023 at 10:55 AM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.



October 07, 2023 at 01:06 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard "Rich" O'Brien.

October 07, 2023 at 01:06 PM