



Richard Wallace Fortner

July 11, 1931 - August 22, 2020

Richard Wallace Fortner, Dean and Professor Emeritus, School of Management, University of Michigan-Flint.

Born to John E. and Ruby S. Fortner in Rockville, Indiana, he was the seventh of nine children. He lived his life with a love and need for information and with basic core values of simplicity, independence of action, and the importance of continuing education. He was preceded in death by his parents, three sisters, Marjorie Alice, Betty Timmons, and Mildred Pendergast, and three brothers, Otis. W., Robert T., and Carl L. Other siblings include a sister, Helen Fortner, Fairfax, Virginia; and a brother, Gerry Fortner, Carmel, Indiana. Growing up in a small town in Indiana (Rockville), he earned letters in four high school sports and after graduating as class valedictorian he earned his way through college by scholarships and part-time jobs. He completed undergraduate and graduate studies at Indiana University (IU Bloomington). He earned his B.S. degree in accounting, his M.B.A., and Doctor of Business Administration. He received the Indiana CPA's gold watch award for outstanding academic achievement and, after working with Lybrand, Ross Brothers and Montgomery and with Price Waterhouse & Company, he completed all requirements for the CPA certificate in Indiana.

He and Julia Larkins were married December 1956 and before separating in 1980, they raised a family of four wonderful children (with six grandsons): Sharon Lynn Fortner/David Anderson (Jacob, Kyle and Kevin), Winston Salem, N.C.; Kenneth R. Fortner/Sue (Jared and Adam) Clifton, Virginia;

William W. Fortner in San Juan Bautista, California; and Thomas E. Fortner/Cecile (John Tyler) in Hayward, California. He completed USAF ROTC program at IU and was commissioned 2nd Lt. in June 1953. His initial active duty assignment was as a faculty member at the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (W-P AFB), Dayton, Ohio. During his 30 year career as an Air Force procurement officer, he was a major author on several Air Force procurement and pricing manuals. He served as senior reservist in Research and Development Procurement, in the Air Force Business Research Management Center, and in the F-15 Systems Project Offices. all at W-P AFB, and in the Directorate of Contracting and Manufacturing, Air Force Systems Command (AFSC), Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland. In June 1983, he was awarded the Legion of Merit for "exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the U.S. as Mobilization Assistant, Deputy Chief of Staff, Contracting and Manufacturing, AFSC from March 1980 to July 1983". He was officially retired as Colonel from the USAF Reserve in July 1991.

His teaching and administration career in higher education began in August 1954 with AFIT (4 years); University of Rochester (U of R), New York (20 years) and University of Michigan -Flint (UM-F) for nearly 4 decades, also teaching part-time at IU, Wittenberg University, and State University of New York at Buffalo. He actively participated in helping the business schools at AFIT, U of R, and UM-F attain accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. Admitted at IU as a junior to Beta Gamma Sigma, the national business honor society, he became a charter member of chapters at three other institutions. He was a member of the boards for the Consortium for Graduate Study in Management (12 years) and the Graduate Management Admissions Council, which administers the Graduate Management Admission Test, (four years).

Dr. Fortner had a strong interest in music and the arts and many cultural activities, particularly theater. He attended and provided financial support for numerous professional, university and community theater groups; was a

member of the Shaw Festival, Canada, attending regularly for more than 25 years. He was a subscriber to BoarsHead and Meadowbrook Theaters, and a member of Performance Network and Ann Arbor Civic Theater, the Greater Flint Arts Council, a 40-year supporter of the Flint Institute of Arts, Flint Rotary and a trustee for the Flint Community Players. He loved travel and took several trips with the IU and UM alumni groups and enjoyed the many friendships made in all these activities. In his final years, he especially valued activities with his loving friend and travel companion Patricia Williams, Bloomington, Indiana. His hobbies included movie viewing and centered on gardening. He enjoyed greatly his close relationship with Braveheart III, aka Melvin, and his successor Rueger, the English Springer Spaniels with whom he spent many hours over the years since May 1998, walking together more than a thousand miles a year (three per day) for more than 10 years. They were great friends and companions.

No services will be held at this time. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The Flint Community Players in Flint, Michigan or of an organization of the donor's choice.

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory, 4155 S. Old State Road 37, Bloomington, have been entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at www.allencares.com

Tribute Wall

DY

“ I just located Rich Fortner's Obituary and wished to pay tribute to this extraordinary gentleman, friend, and neighbor.

Rich was a neighbor of our family for several years. He watched our daughters grow, and he would stop to say hello and regale them with show tunes as he strolled by.

Although our family settled in Rochester and saw Rich less frequently than before, we always touched base and caught up.

He was interesting, kind, erudite, and possessed a depth of character and soul all too infrequent in modern life. He was quick to laugh, fun, an open spirit, and a fellow lover of animals, especially our dogs.

I visited Rich during his stay in assisted living, regrettably our last encounter. He will forever be in our hearts as a cherished friend and neighbor. We miss you!

David & Maureen, Kaitlin & Kelsey Young

David & Maureen Young - November 25, 2024 at 06:21 PM

ED

“ I would come to know Rich in his later years as he would visit my office to discuss travel, theatre, and life. He could recite poetry with such ease and sing a tune to elevate the moment. I called him my favorite Hoosier which delighted him and his eyes would sparkle. His zest for life and sharing stories was inspirational. May he rest in eternal peace.

Eva Drafta - July 08, 2021 at 09:09 AM

GS

“ I had the privilege of working with Richard for 30 years. I considered him a friend and a mentor. He was a brilliant and kind man through and through. RIP my friend.

george slackta - October 26, 2020 at 08:12 AM

KG

“ Richard and his siblings and his parents, John and Ruby, were our backyard neighbors in Rockville, IN. The family always had a huge garden 2 lots away. Richard and his brothers had to carry the water in buckets to water the vegetables. Richard would put me on his shoulders then pick up two large buckets of water and we would go water. We would race back to the house and get more water. I was preschool and early elementary during that time. They also had one of the lots full of irises. At that time Richard's dad said they had one of every variety. Richard was very kind to me. My sympathy to all of his survivors. Kay Foltz Gish, Henderson, KY

Kay Gish - September 17, 2020 at 03:46 PM

KM

“ While I know it to be true, it is almost impossible to believe that Rich retired from UM-Flint in 1997. It is hard to believe because, during those 20 years AFTER 1997, Rich continued to be an incredible presence on our campus, supporting and celebrating our students’ efforts and achievements. How many Commencements did he attend during his retirement? Almost all of them. How many productions by our Theatre Department did he attend? Again, virtually all of them. Rich’s commitment to UM-Flint and its students never retired.

I was fortunate that Rich’s office was located directly across from mine for many of his retirement years. He was in that office almost every day. So every day, I had the benefit of chatting with Rich about all these activities and interests that Rich was engaged in. He was a fascinating man and simply fun to listen to.

I appreciate all that Rich has done for UM-Flint and its students, staff, and faculty and will miss him very much.

Keith Moreland

Keith Moreland - August 31, 2020 at 09:40 AM

CG

“ Rich was a fellow Rotarian and I loved talking to him. In addition he was a professor of mine when he first came to UM Flint, he was attending a small fund raiser at the Whiting Auditorium when I last saw him. An amazing man and I offer my sincere condolences to his family. Cheryl Gifford, Tucson

Cheryl Gifford - August 30, 2020 at 09:41 PM

JM

“ John joined the UM-Flint School of Management at the same time as Rich in 1980. Rich served as dean of the School of Management for 12 years, which makes him the longest serving Dean of the school. Among his many contributions to SOM, Rich was primarily responsible for implementing the highly successful MBA program.

Rich was a wonderful person with a great personality and quick wit. He was very thoughtful of others. Rich was a good friend to both of us. We offer condolences to his family and to his friend, Pat Williams. We will both miss him.

John and Pat Marquardt.

John D Marquardt - August 28, 2020 at 03:40 PM

MS

“ Rich was kind, considerate, and showed genuine interest in others. Our conversations always included an update on the next musical or theatre performance he would be attending, a quick check on the status of my health, and various topics of mutual interest. I trust Rich has secured his membership to what I imagine is a perpetual theatre season in the great beyond. Go Blue!

*Mary Jo Sekelsky
University of Michigan-Flint*

Mary Jo Sekelsky - August 28, 2020 at 12:06 PM

DM

“ My heartfelt sorrow for the family of my friend and fellow professor and dean, Dr. Richard Fortner.

Dr. Rod McGraw - August 28, 2020 at 11:07 AM

CG

“ Richard was a staunch supporter of the Department of Theatre and Dance at UMF. I could always count on him to come by my office and let me know how he liked - or didn't like! - our latest production. We would share our experiences at the Shaw. I wish I had known he was an avid gardener. We could have shared that passion, as well. Condolences to all who loved him.

Carolyn M. Gillespie - August 28, 2020 at 10:56 AM

SH

“ What a very nice man he was. I am proud to have been a UM-F student, graduating from the School of Management during his tenure. Thank you, Dean Fortner, for working so hard for Flint and UM-F, the arts and cultural center. It was a pleasure. God speed. Condolences to your family and to all those whose lives you have touched.

Sandra Bennett Holloway - August 26, 2020 at 04:33 PM

MJ

“ Rich welcomed us warmly to the Flint area and shared cultural events and introduced to to Meadowbrook Theater of which we are season ticket holders. A great lover of the arts as are Scott and I. We offer deep condolences to his family.

Mary T Johnson - August 25, 2020 at 08:43 AM