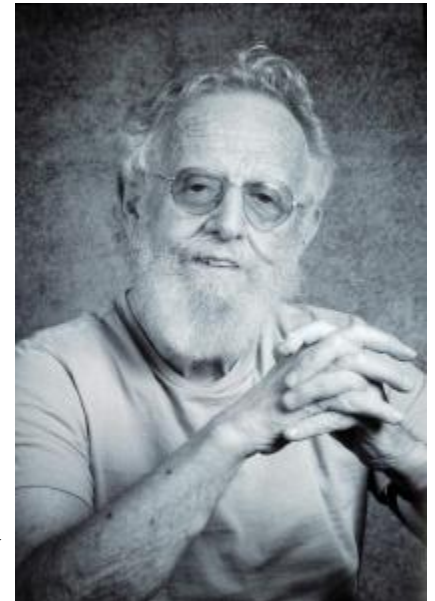


Richard Russell

Gillespie | Monday, April 17 2023

Richard (Russ/Rick) Allen Russell aged 76 died at home in Monticello, IL on Monday April 17, 2023. He was born in Greenfield, MA on September 3, 1946 - the 7th of 8 children born to Muriel and William Russell. His father died the year he turned age 3 leaving his mother to raise 8 children alone. He moved to Indian Rocks Beach FL at age 14 with his mother and 2 siblings and graduated from Largo High School in 1964. He joined the Air Force (1964-1968) and served his country in Vietnam. He met Angie Raynor of Gillespie in Tampa FL while attending USF. He and Angie married in 1974, had son Colin in 1975 in FL and moved to Gillespie in 1976. Russ worked as a vocational evaluator/developmental specialist for Illinois Valley Rehabilitation Center and Angie went to nursing school. He researched, designed, drew plans for and built a 2600 sq ft super-insulated, passive solar home. Hiring only excavation and framing he did everything else himself with family and friends assistance over a 15 month period while working full-time. In a nod to his New England roots the home style was of a modified salt-box design. Son Andrew was welcomed into this home in 1984. Russ obtained his MBA in 1988 and taught economics part-time evenings at area community colleges while working as a small business consultant for SIUE. He was a founding member of Gillespie's Partnership for Educational Excellence, helped start Gillespie's first youth soccer league and was a soccer coach. Russ supported the Special Olympics and was a lifetime advocate for the developmentally disabled. He was named director of UIUC's Small Business Development Center and the family moved to Monticello IL in 1994. An avid reader from a young age he enjoyed sharing book suggestions and reading interests. He obtained a Masters in Library Science at UIUC and worked for a time as a reference librarian in Coral Springs FL. Russ continued home improvement projects until his health declined with his last project (2020) redesigning the kitchen in their Monticello, IL home. He enjoyed genealogy and a favorite trip was to New England and Nova



Scotia CA to do family research. He loved sharing his family history with all who would listen and the grandchildren were generally agreeable albeit captive audiences. It worked - grandson Ben has enthusiastically taken on the Russell family historian role and will carry on the tradition! As a New Englander, the Boston RedSox were his favorite baseball team but he also supported the St. Louis Cardinals and enjoyed trips to Busch Stadium. It wasn't hard for the family diehard Cards fans to accept his Red Sox allegiance.... after all they played in different leagues. That changed during the 2013 World Series when the Red Sox — well if you're a baseball fan you know the end of that story! Russ kept up with local, national and international news until he couldn't and always insisted he had to have a newspaper or more to read every day. He nearly didn't go on a cruise in 2014 because he couldn't have a daily newspaper during 7 days at sea!! He was persuaded to go upon learning the cruise line offered a lending library....in reality only 1 bookcase of books, alas that was his first and LAST cruise. As per his wishes his body has been donated to Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. He leaves behind to mourn his loss, Wife Angie, sons, Colin (Tammy) Cortland, IL, and Andrew (Danielle) Champaign, IL. Six grandchildren - Ben (18) David (16), and Abbie (12), of Cortland, IL and Bob (16), Madison (11) and Ainsley (2) of Champaign, IL, parents-in-law Leo and Eva Raynor, Sister-in-law Maleah Raynor, Brothers Dave (Terry) of Cumberland Falls, ME, Norman (Sharon) of Ashfield, MA, sisters Ann (Dave) of Orlando, FL, and Muriel of Colraine, MA. Locally he leaves behind nephews Christopher, Austin and Blake Raynor, and niece Lacey Raynor. He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Jim, Bill, Tom, and brother-in-law Bill Raynor. A memorial service will be held at the First United Methodist Church in Gillespie on Friday April 21, 2022 at 2pm with visitation at 12:30pm. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Gillespie Partnership for Educational Excellence CUSD #7 or the Gillespie Public Library. Kravanya Funeral Home is in charge.