



Richard Alan Jenkins

April 7, 1945 - May 26, 2026

Richard Alan “Punky” Jenkins, age 81, a resident of Buffalo, Missouri, passed away peacefully on May 26, 2026.

Richard was born on April 7, 1945, in Oceanside, California.

Richard was preceded in death by his wife of 51 years, Rebecca Lynn (Patterson) Jenkins; his parents, Henry and Marjorie Jenkins; and his siblings, James “Hogg,” David, Gerald “Butch,” Michael, Diane, Gail “Boo,” and Sally.

Richard is survived by his three children, Jody (Brian) Butler, Heather (Andrew) Curtis, and Matthew (Laura) Jenkins; as well as his siblings, Nancy Lejune, Carol Delyea, Pattie Dunayevich, and Dennis Jenkins.

Richard was a proud papa and grandpa to six beautiful grandchildren: Richard Gudreau; Hayden, Abigail, and Landen Curtis; and Mateo and Layla Jenkins.

Richard was a native of Vista, California, and a member of the Vista High School Class of 1963. He was a dedicated Eagle Scout and chose to serve his country by enlisting in the U.S. Army. He served overseas with the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, during the Vietnam War from 1964 to 1966.

He was honorably awarded a Purple Heart for his service and wore his Combat Wounded Veteran hat with pride. After Vietnam, Richard used his GI Bill to learn the trade of auto body work at South Bay Trade School.

Vistans remember him racing and building hot rods, working as a skilled bodyman at Patrick Flynn’s, waving from his tow truck in every Christmas parade, collecting license plates, and being someone who always had their back. In 1987, he was awarded Vista Citizen of the Month for his quick

thinking in saving a Vista sheriff's life.

He courageously braved and defeated throat cancer in the 1990s. While it took his voice box and changed the sound of his voice, it never weakened his spirit. He picked up his new microphone and used it, because cancer wasn't going to silence him. He still had jokes and stories to tell, as well as birthday calls to make to all of his siblings.

His biggest achievement was his children. Of all the titles he had in his life, his favorite was "Dad."

He showed his kids what hard work earned: how to show up and be somebody, push through hard times, drive a car, sneak a snack, be "resourceful," and, if you are going to be a quitter, be a good one!

To his children, Richard was their hero, protector, and the funniest person they ever knew.

A favorite story to tell was about the time a door-to-door salesman tried to sell him encyclopedias. Richard replied, "No thanks... I have three kids who know everything."

In his later years, Richard became a long-haul truck driver. To pass the time while being away from home, and possessing a gift with words, he wrote his loved ones meaningful letters that still bring comfort today.

"When climbing a mountain, sometimes the peak is not where you find the beauty. Find the view that brings you the most joy and happiness."

Richard will be remembered by all who knew and loved him.