



## John "Dick" Richardson Ayres

July 22, 1927 - January 18, 2020

John Richardson (Dick) Ayres passed peacefully into the presence of our Lord on January 18, 2020, surrounded by his loving family. Services will be held at Grace Church on Jackson Street on Monday, January 20 at 2 pm with visitation afterwards.

Mr. Ayres was born July 22, 1927, in Natchez, MS, the youngest child of Laura Davis and Richardson Ayres. He grew up in Alexandria, Louisiana, graduated from Bolton High School, and attended Virginia Military Institute, later graduating from Georgia Tech with a degree in industrial engineering. He served in the Merchant Marines during WWII and in the Army during the Korean War. On Valentine's Day 1951, he married his love, Jo Anne Trammell, with whom he was blessed to spend the next 69 years. During their early years together, he was building the oil distribution business which would later become Petron. He loved dealing with customers in central and south Louisiana on oil rigs, shrimp boats and in convenience stores. Petron has worn many hats since that time, diversifying into trucking, hazmat cleanup, construction and real estate, providing employment for many people as it has grown.

Mr. Ayres served as an elder in the Presbyterian Church and taught Sunday School in both First Presbyterian and Grace Church for over 60 years. He was involved in the prison ministry at Oakdale Federal Detention Center and Beauregard Prison. In his later years, he began teaching a course on Christian ethics and etiquette to high school seniors at Grace Christian School with the goal of helping young people become responsible citizens and faithful followers of Christ. He also helped manage and preserve Roseland, the family's beloved tree farm plantation on the grounds of his ancestral home outside of Natchez, MS.

A friendship with Mr. Ayres quickly revealed how much he loved the Lord with all his heart. His joy in the Lord overflowed in a constant stream of story-telling and laughter and happiness. He took tremendous pleasure in helping others find their way and fulfill their potential, whether in their vocations, relationships or spiritual lives. Because of this desire, he became a mentor and role model to many. Most of all, he wanted everyone he knew to

be right with Jesus and was not shy to remind them that that was the most important thing.

He was preceded in death by his infant daughter and his grandson Andrew Hilleke along with his two sisters, Anna Ayres Packer and Josephine Ayres Haxton. He is survived by his wife, Jo Anne, his son Steve Ayres (Pam), daughters Anne Ayres (Kent Cox), Laura Ayres Hilleke (Jim), and Leigh Ayres Lucas, his sister Archer Ayres Posthewaite, his 10 grandchildren, Richardson Ayres, Loye Ayres, Charles Ayres, Katie Ayres, Thomas Hilleke (Emily), Sarah Hilleke Richey (Jarrod), David Hilleke (Michelle), Anne Hilleke, Robert Lucas, and Meri Lucas Eldridge (Weston), as well as his 15 great grandchildren and his many nieces and nephews.

The family wishes to express gratitude to All Saints Hospice and Lagniappe Home Care as well as Charles Pratt for his cheerful support during Mr. Ayres' final months.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests contributions to Grace Christian School.



# Comments

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“ Mr. Dick Ayres was such a sweet man, I was one of the lucky seniors from Grace to have been in his etiquette class. Sad to hear of his passing, thinking of his family in this difficult time.

**Amanda Sadler** - January 24, 2020 at 01:25 AM

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“ Care and Compassion Spray was purchased for the family of John "Dick" Richardson Ayres.



January 20, 2020 at 11:10 AM

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“ We were so sorry to hear about Dick. Joe and I are in North Carolina with my dad. I'm sorry to say that we will not be there to attend services. We loved Dick!

**Lynne and Joe** - January 19, 2020 at 06:22 PM

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“ Dick was a beloved elder at Grace who had the the right mixture of truth, grace and compassion for my situation when I needed real friends and guidance. I can hear his southern voice of reason in my head now. Joanne and Leigh Ann, heaven will be that much sweeter now. He was a precious father and husband because of his first love.

**Luci Gandy** - January 19, 2020 at 05:00 PM

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“ Oh, he was such a sweet, wonderful man! Prayers to all of you. May his memory forever be a blessing.

**Robin Caplan** - January 19, 2020 at 04:48 PM

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“ I will miss Mr Ayres. I was so blessed to know him. He definitely livened up the room when he entered. Many prayers to the Ayres family.

**Brandi Thiels** - January 20, 2020 at 07:26 AM

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“ Dick meant a great deal to me and my whole family. His love for God, his dedication to drawing others to Jesus and his commitment to living out his faith in business and every day activities set a powerful example for us all. I am grateful for the many years that Mike and I attended Bible studies led by Dick, to have him teach my children in high school, to be shepherded by him as an elder, and to have been able to seek and receive his advice in business. His legacy of faith and genuine concern for people and this community lives on in his precious wife JoAnne and in his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren whom he loved very much.

**Leann Murphy** - January 19, 2020 at 10:51 AM

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“ Mr. Ayers was a very special man to many including myself. He always spoke, always smiled and always left with you feeling like a better person. My prayers and thoughts are with you all. Hard to believe it was 19 years ago that I left Petron. Love and Prayers from Janna (Batson) Antilley

**Janna Antilley** - January 19, 2020 at 12:53 AM

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“ I just wanted Steve and Pam to know that I am praying for y'all as you grieve. I'm not sure I ever met your father but I know he was a good man. Hold on to the wonderful memories  
Nippy and Frances Blair

**nippy blair** - January 18, 2020 at 11:06 PM

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“ Mr Ayres was a a true southern gentleman who was such an inspiration to me. He taught me that you can be a success in business but also remain true to your principles,faith and family. He was a great man who will be missed ..

**blake chatelain** - January 18, 2020 at 10:37 PM

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“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of John "Dick" Richardson Ayres.



January 18, 2020 at 10:13 PM

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“ We will never forget studying the book of James for almost 4 years. If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask the Father who gives liberally....  
What a joy it was to set in his class. What a joy he must be having as he is in the Presence of the Lord.  
Blessings to his family,  
David and Twila Hines  
Edmond, OK

**Twila & David Hines** - January 18, 2020 at 07:48 PM



“ Such a e were wonderful Christian gentleman . Always shared his heart with those of us that taught at Grace Christian and many students he taught too. Prayers for his precious family that mean so much to me

**Liz Lindsay** - January 18, 2020 at 09:38 PM