

PEARSON

Richard Elton Pearson, 71, passed away on October 8, 2009. He was born in El Paso January 30, 1938, the oldest son and second child of Elton and Juliet Amador Pearson. He grew up in White Spur, in



El Paso's Upper Valley, and attended St. Patrick's School, Zach White, and El Paso High School. After graduation in 1956, Richard joined the U.S. Air Force, and served in Japan. In 1960, he returned, married his high school sweetheart, Marguerite (Maggie) Loya, and began a family. Richard's father had been a stereotyper for the El Paso Times, and Richard went to work for the paper. Seeing the scars on his father's arms from molten lead used to set type at the Times, he knew that he needed to pursue an education. With his wife and two small children to support, Richard enrolled in night classes at Texas Western College, landed an advertising sales job at the newspaper, and worked hard to get ahead. In 1967, Richard moved over to KELP TV, a television station that had been "off the air as much as it had been on, but it was exciting," said Richard. He earned his degree from UTEP, and stayed with the company as it found its footing. By 1986, three years after he became the general manager, it was the most popular and profitable station in town. Richard understood the power of mass media to influence change and became known for his energetic opinion pieces on issues that ran the gamut—always with the best intentions, largely with the best results for the community he loved.

By this time, Richard had four children, and a fifth in Simon Oliver—the Cabbage Patch Kid who accompanied him in his editorials on the air. Richard and Simon Oliver were recruited in 1991 to what was then the worst-rated station in town, KTSM Television and Radio, which had been left in a bequest to the El Paso Community Foundation. He began building again, and made it the #1 station again.

In 1992, Maggie, Richard's wife of 31 years, died of emphysema. He established a scholarship fund at the

Foundation in her honor and organized an annual golf tournament to support it. In 14 years, "Maggie's Tourney" raised more than \$300,000 in scholarships for students in the arts and journalism at UTEP and NMSU.

In 1994 he married Karen Daniels, who was a manager of the radio stations at KTSM. Karen and Richard were the first family of broadcasting in El Paso, and Richard worked hard to take his profession to greater heights of ethics and professionalism, as a member of the NBC Affiliates Board and the Texas Association of Broadcasters.

Richard Pearson was decorated twice with the American Advertising Federation Silver Medal Award. He was named El Paso High School's and UTEP's Outstanding Alum, and, on October 9, 2009 he ended his battle with Parkinson's disease and became El Paso's outstanding ex. Nothing mattered more to him than his beloved family and hometown, and his commitment to service is his greatest legacy to his children and others he inspired.

Richard Pearson was preceded in death by his wife, Marguerite Loya Pearson, and is survived by his sisters Patricia Teitsch and Mary Ella Ramirez; his brother Tony Pearson; his wife, Karen Daniels Pearson; Mark Pearson, son; Robin Pearson, daughter, and her husband, Romik Chatterjee; Kim Pearson, daughter; Kristy Daniels Huddleston, daughter, and her husband, Scott Huddleston; and Eric Pearson, son and his wife, Charlotte O'Rourke Pearson—and of course, Simon Oliver. He had six grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at 2pm Friday, October 16, 2009 at the Plaza Theatre, 125 W. Mills. His family requests that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the El Paso Community Foundation, PO Box 272, El Paso, TX 79943 / www.epcf.org.

Services entrusted to Martin Funeral Home West, 128 N. Resler Dr., El Paso, TX 79912.