



## Richard Dickie Be-Bop Harrell Sr.

May 31, 2023

Richard C. “ Dickie Be-Bop” Harrell, Sr. passed away May 31, 2023 at the age of 82. Dickie was the only child of Mary Bernadette and Richard Henry Harrell, and he was a native of Portsmouth. His father passed away when Dickie was 4 years old. Dickie attended St. Paul's Catholic School. He taught himself to play the drums on his mother's pots and pans. He worked at a local radio station before school and at the age of 15 he had the opportunity to play drums with local talent Gene Vincent. Soon Gene's backing band The Blue Caps was formed. From age 15-17 Dickie recorded and toured with Gene Vincent and the Blue Caps. He performed with them in the movie “The Girl Can’t Help It” in 1956. After leaving the band, Dickie played in numerous local Tidewater bands and later toured with the band during several of the Blue Caps reunions in the US and Europe. He retired from the Naval Station, Norfolk, VA after 37 years of service. The Blue Caps were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, OH, April 14, 2012. They were also inducted into the Rockabilly Hall of Fame located in Nashville, TN.

Dickie is survived by his wife of 28 years and best friend of 38 years, Donna. He is also survived by his mother-in-law Jean Bristow; niece Stephanie Bristow; sister-in-law Cindy Myers; son Richard Harrell Jr., and two grandsons. He was predeceased by his son Timothy Harrell.

Dickie also leaves behind countless friends - personal, music related, and

online. He was always supportive of local artists. He will be dearly missed. Hope he is jamming with all his friends and musicians we have lost over the years. Rock on Dickie.

A memorial service will be held at 11 am Thursday, June 15, 2023, at Loving Funeral Home with visitation one hour prior to the service. The family suggests memorial contributions to the Portsmouth Humane Society in memory of Dickie.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN **15**. 10:00 AM - 10:55 AM (ET)

Loving Funeral Home Churchland Chapel  
3225 Academy Ave  
Portsmouth, VA 23703

## Memorial service

JUN **15**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Loving Funeral Home Churchland Chapel  
3225 Academy Ave  
Portsmouth, VA 23703

# Tribute Wall

PS

“ *My condolences to Dickie’s family. I knew Dickie when I was a little girl. My dad was Eddie Smith and they played in a band together in the ‘70s. Rest in peace, Dickie. I hope you and daddy are jamming in the heavens. Penny Smith*

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**Penny Smith** - July 22, 2023 at 08:02 PM

TR

“ *Always be remembered as a drumming legend, the very best. Rest easy*

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**Trudie** - June 17, 2023 at 02:26 PM

MK

“ *What a sweet, sweet man. I am so glad I got to know Dickie over the years. I was lucky enough to get to see Dickie and his Blue Cap pals be inducted into The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio back in 2012. Always a happy soul, I wish I was more like him. Much love and prayers to Donna and the rest of their family and friends. <https://www.rockhall.com/inductees/blue-caps>*

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**Miss Holley King** - June 17, 2023 at 01:29 PM

CM

“ Sending our love and prayers with you. We will forever remember and miss Dickie. He was truly one of a kind. Leaving behind nothing short of a legacy, we will never forget his love and dedication to rock n roll! Influencing so many ranging from the greatest stars right on down the line to the grandchildren of his fellow band mates, treating us all with the worlds greatest gift- love & kindness. His stories were the priceless kind you just couldn't get enough of just like his music, wanting to listen on replay & his infectious laugh would have us holding back tears. I feel so lucky to have known you & even more blessed to call you family. His memory will live on through generations to come rockin to the rhythm of his beat. Dickie was the drummer of the blue caps and dear friend of my grandfather Gene Vincent. May their spirits fly high in heaven as we be bop around the clock til we meet again. Thank you Dickie for your guidance, support & your kinship. We love you.

Chantilly & Mak - June 15, 2023 at 11:46 AM

DD

“ Dickie was a great friend over the years, always supportive, always upbeat. I will miss him when he called and said "Hey man!" in that distinctive Tidewater accent. Not only was he a great drummer with Gene Vincent and the Blue Caps, he was a great human being. I considered him a good friend, and I think a million other people felt the same way.

Deke Dickerson - June 14, 2023 at 12:20 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Richard Dickie Be-Bop Harrell Sr..



June 13, 2023 at 12:31 PM

SV

“ *First interviewed Dickie in the 1990s for a newspaper article on Gene Vincent and the Blue Caps, which then turned into a book; we remained friends ever since. Dickie, ever generous with his time and memories, even did some book signings with me, along with the late Tommy Facenda. I was thrilled when he and the Caps were (so deservedly) inducted into the RRHoF at last. I will miss picking up the phone and hearing "Hey, sugar, hope I'm not bothering you..." One of the kindest, most humble and lovable human beings I've had the honor of knowing. Rock on, my beautiful friend. 🎸❤️ Loads of love to you, Donna. ❤️*

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**Susan VanHecke** - June 11, 2023 at 11:26 AM

BG

*Rest in peace, Dickie. The Sheriff's daughter, Betti.*

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**Betti Glynn** - June 13, 2023 at 10:53 AM

EM

“ Back in the very early '90s, I was asked to book & promote a west coast tour - to reunite the original "Gene Vincent's BLUE CAPS". As a fan, I was happy to do so. There was a big Rockabilly & Retro 'scene', especially on the West Coast. I brought the guys west and booked them into the 'hottest' clubs at the time to play to the new, young generation of 'cool cats' - because this was definitely NOT an 'oldies show'. The BLUE CAPS ROCKED !

*They showed how GREAT Rock n Roll & Rockabilly is.*

*That is when I first met Dickie Harrell - the 'glue' that kept it all alive - and I should say: "KRAZY GLUE". These guys were WILD & Fabulous.*

*It is the Most FUN that I personally have ever had with musicians.*

*I stayed in touch with Dickie, for more than 30 years now, I will miss him greatly, especially his humor & his warmth, and always responding to my silly emails.*

*I'll cherish my memories.*



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eddie morris - June 10, 2023 at 07:14 PM

TS

“ I first met Dickie in Vegas. I was an amateur Kazooist and wouldn't you know it. Dickie was too! He was always interested in my radio show and we kept in touch through my stint in the Navy and Merchant Marine. Always a positive force. His encouragement has always prepared me for important things, and now with my cartooning. Hope you enjoy this cartoon of Dickie Be-Bop Harrell. I know he did.



Tyler Davis Sciatica\_Squad\_the\_cartoon - June 08, 2023 at 12:16 PM

JJ

Dickie I remember telling you the first time we spoke that I didn't like making new friends because they die on me. You told me not to worry you were not going anywhere. You lied but our memories will live on. Love talking with you and having you on my show on WMEX many times. Donna told me it brought joy to you. I really wish we could have met but from now on you are my brother from another mother and we have more to talk about when I get there. I always loved how you always said say Hi to Mrs. Jay at the end of our conversations. God Bless you my friend. Donna be strong.

Jimmy Jay - June 09, 2023 at 01:01 PM

BK

I knew Dickie from his earliest days at St Paul's elementary and always was in awe of hi as he rose up in he world of Rockabilly and Rock'n Roll. He showe warmth and compassion to all of his friends. His brand of kindness will be missed by his many friends in PORTsmouth as well as in the music world.  
May he find peace and rest eternal.

Bernie Kirsch - June 12, 2023 at 11:16 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard Dickie Be-Bop Harrell Sr..

June 08, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Richard Dickie Be-Bop Harrell Sr..



June 08, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ Dickie was a Portsmouth original character... a musician and music lover he knew and communicated with those of his era.

*He was a friend to many and will be profoundly missed.*

*He should be remembered for his kindness to all.*

*May he rest in eternal peace.*

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**Bernie Kirsch** - June 08, 2023 at 11:47 AM



“ Dickie sure was a great friend. Mike and I r so grateful to have met you. Memories we had playing bingo and going to the lodge. My son Brandon will keep those drum sticks with him for the rest of his life!! Rest in peace Dickie!! Rock on!! 🎸

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**Cindy and Mike Carter** - June 07, 2023 at 07:52 PM

RW

“ *My Friend Dickie ! A life well lived !  
He truly possessed and shared his many great qualities not only as a musician, but as a human being ! He was a better friend to most and shared his friendship with a phone call, a text message, a post on Facebook and in person with his “Hey Man, how are you doing ?  
Hows your wife , How’s your dog !  
You always made it personal Dickie !  
Thank you my friend 🙏*

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**Rick Williams** - June 07, 2023 at 06:38 PM

VS

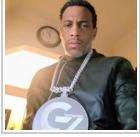
“ *Dickie was a wonderful man along with Donna they were a couple that you could love. We always had a lot of fun together. Sharing buying for the Thanksgiving baskets for the underprivileged for the Moose. He was a great drummer him and his drum sticks. Always enjoyed listening to him. We will remember his as a funny caring man. He loved his beautiful wife will be lost without of him. I think we all will ended the Facebook post from him. Love you wonderful man will miss you in so many ways. Rest in Peace my friend. God has received a beautiful angel. 🙏🙏🙏🙏❤️*

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**virginia smith** - June 07, 2023 at 06:37 PM



“ *Dickie could always bring a smile to my face and laughter to my heart with a thousand funny jokes. Dickie never met a stranger. Everyone who knew him loved him. He will be sorely missed. Donna may all of your many wonderful memories of Dickie bring you comfort and peace. Rest in peace Dickie*

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**Christine Salerno Wilson** - June 07, 2023 at 05:45 PM



“ Thank you Richard for being Dickie and allowing me to be myself while I got to know you for the GOD given light you are. You are forever and always with us ❤️. Love you and I thank GOD for your being. Your new life has begun and much deserved with GOD.  
LOVE YOU MICHAEL D'ANGELO GRAY

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**Michael Gray** - June 07, 2023 at 05:32 PM

LG

*Dicky Harrell was a very good and close friend of many more years than I can remember, and I will truly miss his humor, and the rasing from him on our ways of playing drums in several different styles and bands together and separately. Rest Peacefully and hold on to JESUS'S hand my friend, I will FOREVER keep you in my heart, Your friend, Lonnie Godfrey*

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**Lonnie Godfrey** - June 08, 2023 at 11:40 AM

HH

*I knew Dickie and his Mother very well we all lived in Dale Homes, Portsmouth, VA. Dickey and many of my friends grew up together in Dale Homes! Dickie always loved Music especially the Drums and he was very good playing the Drums! Rest in Peace Harry (Brownie) Hughes*

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**Harry Hughes** - June 14, 2023 at 12:44 PM