

https://lancasteronline.com/obituaries/c-richard-beam/article_7e926bea-b8cd-5afd-9208-1dcae4788c5f.html

C. Richard Beam

Staff Writer

Jan 28, 2018



C. Richard Beam

Charles Richard Beam passed away peacefully on January 26, 2018, at Hospice and Community Care, Mt. Joy, PA, with his beloved wife, Dorothy, at his side.

He was born on February 15, 1925, to Charles Leroy and Marcella Slabach Beam in die Rot Kuh, Red Run, Brecknock Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He was the eighth generation Pennsylvania Dutch

immigrant. His ancestors helped to establish Muddy Creek Reformed and Lutheran Church in 1732 in Swartzville near Denver, PA.

The family moved to Ephrata where Richard was raised and attended the excellent schools. He graduated as valedictorian in 1943 from high school and was drafted into the United States Army.

He qualified for engineering in the Army Specialized Training Program at Louisiana State University before being transported to Europe. He served in the 99th Infantry Division, 393rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion Headquarters Company. He took part in the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. When Richard's superiors saw in his records that he had two years of high school German, he was assigned to the 2nd Battalion Headquarters Company. Years later, Richard often recounted that his German language skills saved his life so that he could pursue his passion of the Pennsylvania Dutch language and co-edit *The Comprehensive Pennsylvania German Dictionary* with Jenifer Trout. In March 1945, the 99th Infantry Division crossed the Rhine River bridge at Remagen before the bridge collapsed a few days later. Richard was discharged from the United States Army as First Lieutenant in 1946.

He enrolled in 1946 at Franklin & Marshall College and majored in German, but also studied French and Russian as well. Professors J. William Frey, Alfred Shoemaker and Don Yoder were teaching at F&M at the time and their enthusiasm for Pennsylvania Dutch rubbed off on Richard.

In 1949, a fellowship from the Germanistic Society of America enabled Beam to study for a year at the University of Marburg in Germany. At the Sprachatlas in Marburg, which has been a center for the study of German dialects, he got to know Professors Walter Mitzka and Bernhard Martin.

In 1952 and 1953, Richard studied at the University of Vienna and attended lectures by Austria's leading dialectologist, Professor Eberhard Kranzmeyer. This training in Marburg and Vienna prepared Beam for his commitment to research Pennsylvania German and write a dictionary of the language. Beam was a dramatic tenor and had voice lessons with Tino Patiera of the Dresden Opera. His favorite operas were by Richard Wagner.

After teaching German in schools in Denver, Pennsylvania; Gloucester City,

New Jersey, and in the Milton Hershey School, Beam enrolled as a graduate German student in the German Department of the Pennsylvania State University. During the summer of 1957, Beam was awarded the Master of Arts degree in German from the German Summer School of Middlebury College in Vermont. In 1961, Beam joined the Department of Foreign Languages of Millersville State College as Associate Professor of German, having completed all of the course work for the Ph.D. degree in German at Penn State.

At Penn State Beam studied with Dr. Albert Franklin Buffington, co-author of The Pennsylvania German Grammar. Beam began work on The Comprehensive Pennsylvania German Dictionary, twelve volumes, which he co-edited with Jennifer L. Trout from 2004 to 2012.

On July 11, 1964, C. Richard Beam and Dorothy Pozniko were married in Youngstown, Ohio. They lived in Marburg, Germany from 1967 to 1970 where Beam was Director of the Millersville State College Junior Year Abroad in Marburg. He established the program in 1963. In 2013, the program celebrated its 50th anniversary. In 1970, Beam authored an Abridged Pennsylvania German Dictionary, which was published by the Heimatstelle Pfalz in Kaiserslautern, Germany. Just before Beam went to Germany in 1967, he was elected to the board of directors of Historic Schaefferstown, Inc. In 1971, Beam was named the editor of the Schaefferstown Bulletin, which was later renamed the "Historic Schaefferstown Record."

During the 1960s to 2001, Beam carried out dialect research in various parts of Pennsylvania, in New York state, in Virginia, in West Virginia, in Ohio, in Indiana, in Iowa, in Missouri, and in Canada.

In the fall of 1975, Sylvester Miller, editor of the Sugarcreek, Ohio Budget, a weekly newspaper, which reaches Old Order families in America, invited Beam to write a weekly Dutch column, which was dubbed "Es Pennsilfaanisch Deitsch Eck." On March 23, 1977, at the invitation of James Weaver, publisher of Die Botshaft, a bi-weekly newspaper primarily for the Old Order communities, Beam wrote a second dialect column under the name "Es Pennsilfaanisch Deitsch Eck." Between January 14, 1976 and September 24, 1980, Beam wrote a dialect column for the Middletown,

Pennsylvania Press and Journal. With the advent of the ECK in the Ephrata Shopping News in 1980, Beam discontinued the column in the Press and Journal.

From May 1971 to June 1988, C. Richard Beam and Ernest Waldo Bechtel conducted a weekly dialect radio program on WLBR, Lebanon, PA, called "Die Alde Kummraade." Beam continued the program after Bechtel's death until June 2013, a total of 42 years. Beam adopted as his pen name "Es Bischli-Gnippli" (Little Clod Hopper), which he fondly used in his columns.

In 1986, C. Richard Beam was promoted to full Professor at Millersville University. In 1986, he established the Center for Pennsylvania German Studies at Millersville University for the study of the Pennsylvania German culture in America. The nucleus of the Center's collections are dialect tapes, 40 books on the language published by the Center, notably the twelve volumes of The Comprehensive Pennsylvania German Dictionary, which he co-edited with Jennifer L. Trout, quarterly journals of the Center, and material resulting from six decades of scholarly research. C. Richard Beam was proud of his Pennsylvania German heritage and was dedicated to the study of the language and culture.

C. Richard Beam established a lecture series at Franklin & Marshall College on Pennsylvania German in memory of Beam's professor J. William Frey, from 1998 to 2013. In 2015, Beam received the Annual Citation from Franklin & Marshall College for distinguished professional achievement.

As a founding member of the Society for German American Studies, Beam served as treasurer for ten years and received the Society's award for distinguished service. The SGAS published a Festschrift in honor of C. Richard Beam's 80th birthday. The book, Preserving Heritage: A Festschrift for C. Richard Beam, was co-edited by Beam's former students, Dr. Leroy Hopkins and Dr. Josh Brown.

Beam was a member of several historical societies with connections to the Pennsylvania Dutch culture: the Deutsch-Pennsylvanischer Arbeitskreis, the Historical Society of the Cocalico Valley, Historic Schaefferstown, Goschenhoppen Historians, the Lebanon Historical Society, the Lancaster Historical Society, and the Schwenkfelder Museum. He also was a life

member of the Names Society and was a founding member of the Museum of the American Frontier in Staunton, Virginia.

Professor Beam was called Herr Beam by his German majors at Millersville University. He was a dynamic and demanding teacher - - a friendly, optimistic, and energetic personality on and off campus. He liked people of all ages. He especially liked to converse in his beloved Pennsylvania German language to new acquaintances. He was a born teacher.

In addition to his wife of 53 years, Dorothy, he is survived by his co-editor, Jennifer L. Trout, his sister-in-law, Doris Beam, his nephew Scott Beam (Cathy), step-sister, Martha W. Trupe, cousins Laraine Beam Leithmann (David), Phyllis Beam Zehner (John), James Beam (Jane), Joann Beam Gehr (Sam), Kathy Slabach Roseman (Ronald), Dean Slabach (Martha), extended family members, colleagues, former students, and friends. He was predeceased by his parents, a brother, John Lamar, and a cousin, Virginia Slabach Wolf.

The funeral will take place on Thursday, February 1, 2018 at the Muddy Creek Lutheran Church, 11 S. Muddy Creek Road, Denver, PA 17517. Visitation with the family will begin at 10:00 a.m. followed by the service at 11:00 a.m. Burial will take place in the adjoining historic Muddy Creek Cemetery.

Floral and/or memorial contributions can be made to Muddy Creek Lutheran Church Organ Fund, 11 S. Muddy Creek Road, Denver, PA 17517 or to the Center for Pennsylvania German Studies German Research Fund, Millersville University, PO Box 1002 Millersville, PA 17551.

Funeral arrangements by Gravenor Home For Funerals, Ephrata, PA.

To offer online condolences please visit gravenorhomeforfunerals.com

**Plant a tree in memory of C.
Beam
A living tribute »**