



Walter Lee Nichols

February 14, 1944 - June 13, 2025

Walter Lee Nichols, 81 years young, a rare leap year baby born on February 29, 1944, passed away peacefully on June 13, 2025, surrounded by those who loved him and the legacy he built through a life of courage, compassion, and purpose.

To know Walter was to know laughter, curiosity, and a streak of stubborn charm that never faded. Born once every four years (as he often joked, "I'm only 20, technically"), Walter embraced life with a youthful spirit that never aged. Whether he was sharing a wildly embellished fishing story, or offering one of his legendary life lessons that said more than words ever could-he made sure the people around him felt seen and smiled at.

Walter was born in Leland, Mississippi, the sixth child of Alfred William Nichols and Mary Louise Nichols, and a proud member of the close-knit Nichols family, led with strength and love by Big Daddy and Big Mama. From this foundation, Walter carried forward a deep sense of integrity, family, and faith that shaped every part of his journey.

The early years of his adult life were marked by service, adventure, and sacrifice. Walter served with honor in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, where his bravery and leadership earned him the Bronze Star. His military service took him around the world-he was stationed in Germany, traveled throughout Europe, and even skied the majestic Alps. It was during this time

that his first daughter was born, inspiring his decision to return to civilian life.

After completing his service, Walter made a home in Gardena, California, where he built a successful career as a contractor and carpenter. With skilled hands and a craftsman's soul, he founded a thriving cabinet business that reflected his pride, precision, and care.

His true calling, however, was in mentoring youth. As a high school football coach, swimming coach, and certified lifeguard instructor, Walter impacted countless lives. He later founded the Mary Nichols Aquatic Foundation, named for his mother, to provide inner-city youth in Los Angeles with swimming instruction, leadership development, and life-building opportunities.

Outside of work and mentoring, Walter found peace in one of his greatest passions: fishing. Whether quietly casting along the shores of Monterey, California, or venturing out on deep-sea trips, Walter found his serenity on the water. He also had a love for cooking, and his legendary barbecue gatherings were treasured events-filled with delicious food, laughter, and the joy of bringing people together.

Walter now joins his parents, Alfred and Mary Nichols, and his brothers Alfred, Fred, and Lloyd Nichols in eternal rest.

He is lovingly remembered and survived by his wife, Veronica Nichols; his children: Walter Nichols, Jr., Angelina Nichols, Michael Nichols, and Regina Nichols; his grandchildren: Michael Nichols, Jr., Chigoziri Ibechem, Tyler Nichols, and Ebony Ibechem-Clump; and his great-grandchildren: Makai Marie Daniel and Enzo Clump.

He is also survived by his cherished siblings: Lendine Hill, Violet Simon, James Nichols, and Brenda (Belinda) Figures, along with numerous nieces and nephews, many of whom lovingly called him their favorite uncle.

Memorial services will be held 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM Saturday, July 12th, 2025 at Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel, 127 E. Caldwell Ave., Visalia.

Services have been entrusted to Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel. Memorial Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto www.salseranddillard.com.

In honor of Walter's vibrant spirit and personal style, the family kindly requests that attendees wear light colors, especially tan and green, his favorite colors. Walter often said, "You teach a kid to swim, they'll never forget they're stronger than the water."

That's how he lived-with strength, generosity, and a belief in the power of people. He will be missed deeply, and remembered always.

Previous Events

Memorial

JUL 12. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (PT)

Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel
127 E. Caldwell Ave.
Visalia, CA 93277

Tribute Wall



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Walter Lee Nichols*



Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel - July 11, 2025 at 12:49 PM



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Walter Lee Nichols*



Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel - July 08, 2025 at 01:41 PM



“ *I will always love you Uncle Walter. May peace come to his family during this time as he is being remembered. My condolences to the Nichols Family from Tanya and Michael Hill.*



Tanya and Michael Hill - July 12, 2025 at 03:44 AM

CS

“ Chris Saenz purchased the Large Basket Garden for the family of Walter Lee Nichols.



Chris Saenz - July 09, 2025 at 01:16 AM

CS

“ Chris Saenz planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Walter Lee Nichols.

Chris Saenz - July 09, 2025 at 01:16 AM