Richard Archer graduated from AHS in 1949. He attended Amarillo College and then graduated from The University of Texas in Austin with a degree in chemistry. Dr. Archer's medical training was at Southwestern Medical School in Dallas with an internal medicine residency and a fellowship in pulmonary medicine at Parkland Hospital. He has been his medical school's Alumni Association president for many years.

In 1970 Dr. Archer was elected to a six year term on the Amarillo School Board. He supported programs of equal opportunity for all students and employees. Although some of these policies may have been resisted at the time, they are now accepted as commonplace. In 1975 he was awarded the Human Relations Award by the Amarillo Classroom Teachers Association “for his devotion to reducing discrimination of all types in the public schools.” From 1976 to 1977 he served as president of Northwest Texas Hospital when the bond issue for the new hospital passed. In 1970 he established the REBA Fund at Northwest Texas Hospital to recognize outstanding employees and to provide scholarships, lectureships, and programs for improvement of opportunities for employees. More recently he developed the Amarillo Educational Foundation to promote minority participation in medical education.

He and his wife Ruth Evelyn Boehning Archer have eight children who attended Amarillo Public Schools.