

Guestbook

It is with a heavy heart that we share that Robert D. Ray passed away July 8, 2018. Governor Ray proudly served as Iowa's 38th governor and, later in his career, as the 11th president of Drake University, from April 1998 to May 1999. He received his B.A. in business from Drake in 1952, and his juris doctorate from Drake Law School in 1954.



Governor Ray is survived by his beloved wife, Billie, three daughters and eight grandchildren.

Do you have a story to share about Governor Ray? We'd love to hear it.

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Guestbook list navigation1234→All

74 entries.



Norton Grim from Vancouver wrote on 2021-09-06 at 18:32

On August 29, 1971, I piloted a hot air balloon with Governor Ray as a passenger. He was fascinated with ballooning and supported the annual hot air balloon championships in Indianola. He was an intelligent and kind person and will be missed by the ballooning community. Norton Grim



Tanya Payne Padget from Ottumwa wrote on 2020-11-19 at 11:45

Governor Ray, I was just going through some of my keepsakes and there in front of me was the letter you had written to me on January 31, 1974. Our family home had been lost to a gas explosion and I somehow found my baby sister through all the rubble and saved us both before another gas explosion completely destroyed our home. All of our Christmas presents were destroyed everything gone. I was the oldest of six children and by some small miracle everyone was gone except my sister and I. I was 17 at the time. Our town helped us and was so generous. I felt so blessed but still was down and depressed remembering all that we lost and especially what a teenage girl at the time lost. Then your letter came in the mail telling me how proud you were of me and can't tell you what that meant to me. You gave me power to believe in myself and with that I knew I could do anything. Thank you Governor Ray from the bottom of my heart. I wish I could have met you. I'm sorry I'm just finding out about your passing. But there is no doubt you are in a better place with your wife in heaven doing what you do best making everyone feel that they matter. God bless you and again thank you.



Beverly Mclinden wrote on 2020-09-29 at 09:36

I was in my 20's when the Tai Dam came to Des Moines. I worked with a couple of families to help assimilate them - especially the women and children. They were warm, appreciative people. At one point I was asked to show them how to make a cake. So I purchased measuring cups and spoons, the cake pan, and supplies. I even drew a measurement picture chart that they could reference on their own as needed in the future. For the cake, I purchased a Betty Crocker mix and pre-made frosting. There was quite the language barrier, so simplicity seemed best. They were very happy with the results. Then I was asked to teach them how to play the piano. When a small 2.5 octave keyboard was pulled out from under a sofa, lessons began. Again, it was difficult to communicate, but we had fun. A few months later the women pushed the keyboard aside and began teaching me some of their native songs, which was much more enjoyable for everyone. I have no idea what we were singing. Often at night I would get phone calls. One of the most interesting one concerned a frantic Tai Dam mother explaining that a bad curse had been put on her family by someone in California and she feared that everyone she loved would be killed. The mother was frantic, crying and very scared. She was looking for an American way to combat this, but Western reasoning wasn't working over the phone. When I arrived at the house, I put a Bible in the center of the living room and joined hands with everyone present and prayed for the power of God to prevail. Yep...it was a bit dramatic, but eventually everyone calmed down. Over time, the calls for help lessened. The children started school and did very well, and the families began attending a nearby church where a Tai minister was on staff and they grew into that community.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 13:11

My first introduction to Bob Ray was back in the '50's when he was in law school at Drake and was also a district manager for the Des Moines Register and Tribune. I was a young dude that delivered papers and saw him often when I paid my bill. I last saw him after he became governor. He made a visit to the school where I was teaching and I was able to speak briefly with him.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 13:10

Billie, Randi, LuAnn and Vicky, where should I start. I was actually in awe with the Governor. Even when we were doing fun things - ?? ride to Miami in '72 or 82 Rose Bown Road trip. I so appreciate the opportunity to share w/you all. He's right up w/my dad as Christ-like folks.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 13:08

It was an honor for me to of known Governor Ray. We shared many laughs and coffee during my time of employment with Melvin Synhorst. He was the best. May God bless you.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 13:07

Governor Ray: what a humble man! I attended a political party at the Ray house several years ago and were in their basement. I was so impressed the basement pillars were covered with family pictures (not a single picture of his travels or political events.) I could tell where his heart was.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 13:05

There are so many memories that come rushing back to me - from parties for Victoria at Terrace Hill, Roosevelt swimming and diving, RVCC with Randi and LuAnn children - Bob & Billie gracing the stands at baseball and hockey games where John, Jeff and Greg played. Just last weekend I shared a story I had found "Give me back my bones'" about the repatriation. My dad loved the story. Gramma Jane enjoyed Billie, Bob and all the kids and grand kids through the years. Thank you all for gracing our city and state with kindness, empathy and quality to live by and aspire too! Greta Jensen says "LuAnn was the best librarian ever!"



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 13:02

In 2001, traveling to Ireland with Bob and Billie. All the photos Bob took and developed in 8x10's and brought over to our house after the trip. Bob, along with Billie, are the "best of the best". What an honor to have know Bob. God Bless his family.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 13:00

Over the years I have been honored with a number of Public Service awards. I have always been especially proud of the Drake Levitt Award that then President Ray presented me, and was especially moved by the very kind words the Governor wrote commending my civil rights work for the NAACP. I hold him and his public service in the highest regard.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 12:59

Governor Ray will always be in our heart. He's our Hero over the state of Iowa to ThaiDam people. Given my families opportunities and freedom. He's the greatest hero and one following fathers. He will always be loved by South Asian forever.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 12:56

I first knew of Governor Ray when his assistant - Mr. Smith interviewed me for a position in the State Library when I was just out of library school. I have had a long career with the State Library - since 1972 and am now privileged to be working in the Capitol Law Library. I have always admired Mr. Ray's leadership and his humbleness as a politician. He was a great man and will always be remembered as one of Iowa's greatest leaders! How luck we are to have had him in Iowa!



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 12:54

My dad, Ernie Jungman worked under Governor Ray at Terrace Hill. He thought very highly of Governor and Mrs. Ray, as well as I have (although on not so personal level). The Governor and Mrs. Ray honored us by coming to my wedding and dad's funeral. I am deeply sorry for your loss. He was such a great man!



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 12:52

Governor Ray changed my life twice. First, when he hired my mother Bobbie Finch to serve as the state volunteer coordinator on his staff in 1981. The second time was a beautiful letter of recommendation for me to attend Drake Law School. he was a great governor and an even better man.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 12:51

We did not get the chance to meet him in person, but we grew

up being told about how Governor Ray helped our families come to Iowa and to the United States. Thank you for taking a chance on us Asian refugees.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 12:49

The person who set the standard for the kind of Iowan I wanted and needed to be. Thanks to his kindness of heart and time when I was a senate page, my path for life was determined. All of us are proud to have been Iowans under his cue and guidance. Your family is blessed to have him as part of your life. Know that he lives on in all of us.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 12:47

Governor Ray was an Iowa Treasure! He treated everyone with respect and dignity! I was only 19 years old when I became a state employee in 1972 and I remember fondly what a man of virtue and character Governor was to all of us! I ow so much to him! I love you Governor Ray and I can never repay you for being one great boss! Today's politicians could learn from your legendary example. God bless!



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 11:01

There are so many wonderful sesquicentennial memories! The festivals - celebrations - your home, board work. It was great to share with you!



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 11:00

Our Beloved Hero! You are the TaiDam "Ray" of hope and freedom! We will never forget what you have done for our people. Because of you we have a better life. Thank you. You will be forever in our hearts!



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 09:53

The Watson Family - Bill, Randi, John and Michael - Thinking of you during this difficult time. Prayers and Hugs.

Guestbook list navigation1234→All

