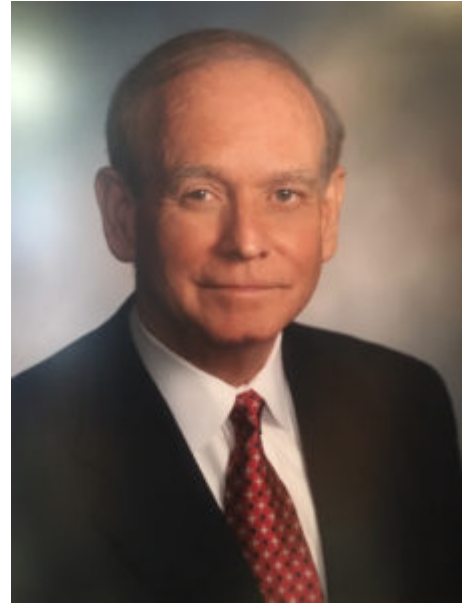


Guestbook

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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74 entries.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 09:52

Governor Ray was a governor and a man Iowans could be proud of. He will always be remembered as Iowa's Governor.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 09:51

The Honorable Robert D. Ray - Thank you for being a caring voice for so many.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 09:51

How he helped all the Iowans. He will be missed. He was a great man.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 09:49

My first memory is the Governor stopping to take a picture and thank our boy scout troop picking up trash near the Des Moines airport. I was proud to have volunteered on his campaigns. I was honored to serve on the sesquicentennial commission with him.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 09:48

I remember the summer of 1975. I was here staying with my Uncle and Aunt. My Uncle was Pastor of the Des Moines Christian Missionary Alliance Church. His church had refugees and I was able to befriend them. I ended up being in a Vietnamese wedding of a couple who came and got married in Des Moines. Ever since I have been helping refugees.



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 09:46

I was so honored to be a member of your staff and work with

the volunteer programs and with Community Betterment. It was the greatest opportunity of my life. I and my family will always be grateful. May God be with your family. Sincerely, Barbara J. Finah, Bobbie



wrote on 2018-07-17 at 09:44

TO: LuAnn Newland, You and I were "pen pals" in high school. Your dad saw me crying when I didn't get the Carpenter's autograph at the State Fair. He gave me his personal copy of their autograph & you & I became pen pals as a result. ☐ Your Dad was a wonderful, kind man - Iowa was lucky to have him!! I am now a state employee in human rights --> give me a call!



wrote on 2018-07-13 at 19:20

Governor Ray was deeply committed to doing the right thing. That commitment led him to make decisions others would not risk. As a consequence, his belief that Iowa had too few women in public positions resulted in his appointing me, a registered Independent, to the Iowa Board of Parole in 1973. I left the Board of Parole in 1978 when he appointed me to the Iowa Court of Appeals, resulting in my becoming the first female appellate judge in Iowa. I know that Governor Ray made the decision despite considerable disagreement from members of the bar. I had limited experience as a practicing lawyer, having joined the Drake Law Faculty in 1973 following my graduation from Drake Law School in 1972. His courage to take action when he believed that something should and could be done not only changed the lives of thousands of people but also leaves Iowans with first hand knowledge that heroes do live among us.



wrote on 2018-07-13 at 10:12

I was fortunate to meet Bob on February 14th, 1983. We got on the elevator at Life Investors together. I looked at him and said "You're starting your new job today. So am I !" We chatted briefly and then I smiled and asked if he was headed to New Employee Orientation too... He smiled back and said "No". I also chatted with the Rays at the McDonald's by Drake during Relays Week many years later. Special memories for me. Peace to his family.



wrote on 2018-07-12 at 19:21

I was Maid of Honor at Vicki Ray Carlson's wedding. It was very beautiful. Billie (also my Mother's name) planted violets, Vicki's favorite flower, in the backyard, as it was an outdoor summer wedding. I have humorous memories of Governor and Mrs. Ray and me helping decorate Vicki's crutches with tulle and silk flowers. She had injured her foot in a gym accident, so had to go down the aisle on beautifully decorated crutches. The memory of Governor and Mrs. Ray trying to master the glue gun are priceless. My condolences to the Ray family, may God bless all of you during this challenging time.



wrote on 2018-07-12 at 18:48

I worked in Governor Ray's office for 6 1/2 years. I worked for the administrative assistants that dealt with legislation. We were the ones who reviewed bills sent to the Governor for signature. With that in mind: 1. I was working late in the evening with the Governor on legislation and mail sent in about bills to be signed. It was around 10 p.m. and the Governor asked me to get a person on the phone who wrote him a letter. I pointed out that it was rather late for phone calls and he told me it was extremely important that the writer know he read his letter and responded to him. I got the person on the phone. The Governor was always concerned about Iowa citizens and their opinions. 2. When the bill to change the drinking age was in the legislature, Governor Ray had his security staff take him to a city park where the Governor got out and talked to older teenagers to ask their opinion on the bill and spent some time talking with them. I admired that he would do something like that not as a publicity stunt (very few people knew what he did) but because he cared what they thought and wanted their input. 3. When veto or item veto messages were needed, we had a 30 day time limit from when the bill was received in the office. One night we were working on a hard one that several of his administrative assistants were included in writing the VETO message. We were pushing the time limit. At one point the Governor was standing behind me watching/reading over my shoulder as I typed. I was stressed out trying to meet the deadline and his standing behind me wasn't helping. So I asked if he would please not stand and

watch me type because it made me nervous. "Sure, no problem." But one of the administrative assistants was horrified and said, "I can't believe you said that to him!" So when I finished typing, he read and signed it, I apologized. He laughed and said it was no big deal. I hustled to the Secretary of State's office also in the Capitol bldg and we got it punched in at 11:57...just in time for the midnight deadline! 4. We had one internal phone line where staff could call others. If it rang u knew it was another staff member. One day, my phone rang, I answered and the voice said, "This is Bob." I paused and said "Bob?" The voice started laughing and said, "Bob Ray." I was so embarrassed! His entire staff called him "Governor," nothing else. So I was apologizing all over the place and he was laughing and laughing! Governor Ray was the most caring politician I have ever seen. He cared about what Iowans thought and he and his staff worked both sides of the aisle to come to the best decisions for Iowans as a whole! ALL politicians today (especially Republicans) could take a bunch of lesson from Governor Robert D. Ray! ♥ I admired him so much! He will be greatly missed!!! My thoughts and prayers to his wife and family! ♥



wrote on 2018-07-12 at 18:33

Although knowing of his medical problems, I was deeply saddened by the death of our beloved Gov Ray. My heart goes out to Billie, Randi, LuAnn, and Vickie and their families. My late husband Walt met Bob Ray when they were both students at Drake and they became longtime good friends. Walt worked on all of the Governor's campaigns as well as projects during his long tenure as our governor. We enjoyed social times with the Rays, perhaps most especially a trip to Mason City where Gov was being honored during the city's Meredith Wilson festivities. Walt also enjoyed his 40+ years of Sunday morning tennis games with Gov. Both were quite competitive and neither liked losing. Gov Ray called often as Walt's health declined and the couple was so kind to me after Walt's passing. We have lost a very kind, compassionate, and highly intelligent and capable leader, a very honorable and moral man. I hope we will all carry our memories of him and his example forward.



wrote on 2018-07-12 at 18:21

What a sad day...Gov. Robert Ray was a friend of our family way back in the day when we (I) lived in Clear Lake. Bob and Billie would fly into the Mason City airport during the "Governor Ray Days" in Clear Lake. My folks had a Lincoln Continental town car that his people would use to drive him around and escort him to the big dance at the Surf Ballroom. They invited my folks as their guests to the dances. One year on our way to florida in our Motorhome, they invited us to stop by and see them them at the mansion on Terrace Hill. For them, it was "come on over, stop by..." Bob and Billie were such nice people. They invited us in, we chatted in the living room then into the kitchen. They were so down to earth. I thought all pictures were gone since most of what we had were with my folks and all those got burned up in their house fire. However, I did come across one from 1978. This is outside the Mason City airport as they arrived. Us kids must have been able to come along just to say hi, because as you can see, the adults are all dressed up for the dance. (Couldnt post picture???)



wrote on 2018-07-12 at 15:37

As a high school student in the early 1960s, I won a speech contest and a government savings bond sponsored by the Iowa Republic Women. Bob Ray, then Chairman of the Iowa Republican Party, was my genial luncheon companion that day. It was great. But his compassion for those in need was what cemented my admiration for Governor Ray. I'm forever grateful that he invited the Thai Dam to Iowa. Our family of four, with two young sons, were among the sponsors who welcomed and worked alongside Khamlo and HOUNG KHOUNLO's young family as they resettled and thrived in Storm Lake. We celebrate how they enriched our lives through the sharing of their culture and life-long friendship. Thank you, Govenor Ray for your vision of a welcoming Iowa.



wrote on 2018-07-12 at 14:56

A number of years ago, our daughter sang with the Drake University Choir; they were chosen to sing at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Our daughter, Tara, was so excited to sing there, as were her father and I! We asked some friends if they would want to join us to see their performance; they did. When

we arrived for the concert, we looked for our seats...and, behold, there was Gov. Ray with Mrs. Ray. I said "Hello," and thanked both of them for being there. He replied that he was thrilled to be there...and would not have missed it for the world. Needless to say, both of you made our day even more special than we thought it could possibly be. Thank you so very much Mrs. Ray for coming with him . I will never forget those moments!! And please know that we were always proud to have your husband as our Gov., with you and your family by his side. Blessings and prayers to all of you!!



wrote on 2018-07-12 at 14:45

Governor Ray is a special person in many lives. My life changed when he took a chance on a young person and appointed me to the Iowa Board of Regents. I have no idea why he made the decision, but it changed the direction of my life. For many years, I continued to serve government both in Iowa and at the Federal level with a presidential appointment. Without his trust in my abilities, I would not have taken the chances and had the many opportunity I have valued. He had amazing leadership skills and brought out the best in people. I bought a card that said "Celebrating a beautiful life " and I wanted to let you know he made a difference in peoples lives, especially mine.



wrote on 2018-07-12 at 13:30

It was a pleasure to work for Iowa State Government under Victor Preisser and fellow Drake MBA alumnus, Patrick Cavanaugh during Governor Robert Ray's Administration. As a positive reflection upon the Governor and his philosophy, we reduced costs and improved efficiencies in the State's largest agency in order to improve the delivery of services to the people of Iowa in a cost-efficient manner. My condolences to the Ray family, to Drake University, and to the people of Iowa.



wrote on 2018-07-12 at 10:19

Billie Ray was a Camp Fire leader and the girls attended Camp Hantesa. I wrote a book on Camp Hantesa from 1919-2013. I would like to send a copy to Billie Ray but need an address. In 1969 there is a picture of Gov. Ray signing the

proclamation for Camp Fire. The picture includes Billie and 2 of the girls. Also I remember when Gov. Ray could not pick up Randi from camp so the High Way Patrol car came to camp to get Randi. The other campers were so excited as were myself and other staff. Also Gov. Ray hosted Larry Spencer and myself for a basketball game. Larry was the longest Iowa POW. It was shortest after Larry was released. I had worked with the Navy to bring Larry up to date with the current and past things. Larry and I grew up in Earlham, Iowa. Larry is now married and lives in Wesley Acres West in West Des Moines. I retired from Camp Hantesa in 2005. I now live at 1414 Oriole Road, Boone, 50036.



wrote on 2018-07-12 at 08:12

The Governor may never quite have realized that my stepfather met my mother at a party a mutual friend threw for him around their pool, but in that way Bob helped "trigger" my entire family having now ended up here in Iowa. Later I came to know Bob, Billie and Randy - first getting to know Bob due to early work I was doing in the state around helping Iowan's youth develop healthy character - a very early precursor to Character Counts; and I will never forget Bob requesting to have breakfast with me once to discuss my evaluation of Character Counts, one of the many wonderful initiatives he was involved with. (I remember the breakfast chiefly because I could see first hand how beloved he was: we went to what was then "Poppin Fresh" on Ingersoll, and it literally took us 20 minutes to walk from the front door to our table because with every single step he took to try to follow the hostess, people from all over the restaurant would come up to him and ask to speak with him for "just a minute"!) One legend I feel very worth relating in today's day and age is the legend of the "Bob Ray frown"; it was said that the Governor never had to really get angry in meetings or raise his voice; but that instead he had this knack of merely frowning in such a way as to let any displeasure known - simply frowning deeper if he was especially concerned, and once in a meeting I got to witness this working its magic on meeting participants who were getting off track. Its a technique we could all learn from in today's "hyperbolic" day and age. But my favorite story involved when the Governor attended the free Shakespeare

Festival provided annually by my non-profit shortly after having had a round of major surgery, which I'd understood had involved his head. Of course we seated Billie and he in "VIP" seats close to the stage, so given that our show that year involved some especially wild and wacky stage antics involving a big beach ball (don't ask!), I watched in horror as the giant ball suddenly was hit accidentally and went careening out of control, whacking the Governor quite quite firmly - and yes, right there in his head! Good Lord, I thought, we've probably just re-started the bleeding - and during intermission I immediately drove the golf cart down to rescue him. But when I approached he said "Robin, I hope that isn't for me- I sure am not leaving; I am having WAY too much FUN!" What a privilege for our state, city and region to have had such terrific leadership from such a genuinely special, special person.



wrote on 2018-07-11 at 21:59

Our state and our country are the poorer for the loss of this man of fine character. The stories of his welcoming of the Southeast Asian refugees can be told over and over again and never get old. The resulting diversity of our citizens makes us all richer. We need leaders like Governor Ray today more than ever before. Governor Ray was steadfast in serving his constituents. A favorite memory is when he was able to get the restitution owed two Iowa families whose homes had been destroyed by military aircraft crashes. Governor Ray grounded the Iowa Air Guard until the U.S. military paid up. Did I mention that we need leaders like Governor Ray today more than ever before? Remember Marilyn Maye's special Governor Ray version of "Step to the Rear"? Governor Ray was asked to lead our state's sesquicentennial celebration in 1996. After all the planning was done and the celebration was underway, I remember walking up to the Capital Building with my parents and finding ourselves personally greeted by our beloved former governor! May God welcome Robert D. Ray with a hearty "Well done, good and faithful servant."

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