

# 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.



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.



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 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, Governor 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 different 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."



wrote on 2018-07-11 at 17:40

Beside every accomplished man is a special woman, Billie Lee. You two were a great team. My prayers are for strength for you in these difficult days. A 1946 graduate of Roosevelt High School



wrote on 2018-07-11 at 15:54

Deepest condolences to the family, Robert was an extraordinary man and I owe him my gratitude for bringing my Taidam community and parents to the state of Iowa. My life would not exist here if it wasn't him, just shows a little love and compassion goes far. We will never forget his name, and I promise I will spend my life honoring him and telling the story of how he brought us refugees to America. He is truly our godfather, and we are heartbroken he is gone.



wrote on 2018-07-11 at 09:52

During a Drake luncheon I was sitting at the same table as the Governor when he was president of Drake. I was wearing a unique label pin that celebrated the diversity of people working together. He was quite interested as he was struck by

it's uniqueness. I shared my pin with him as he was his always grateful and thankful self.



wrote on 2018-07-11 at 09:42

Governor Ray was a respected leader and effective ambassador for the State of Iowa. When I moved to Iowa in 1977, I quickly came to admire Governor Ray for his accomplishments and the collaborative way in which he achieved them. What a great first impression for a newcomer transplanted from the Show Me State. I've been proud to call Iowa my home since then. Thank you Governor Ray!



wrote on 2018-07-11 at 08:42

In 2001, I was serving as Associate Pastor at First Baptist Church of Des Moines. Our senior pastor was on vacation and so I officiated my very first "solo" funeral for Dr. C.L. Smith, a long time professor at Drake University. A day or two after the funeral, I received a very gracious phone call from Gov. Ray expressing his appreciation for the comforting words I shared to honor Dr. Smith's memory . He was so encouraging and it meant so much to me as a young pastor to receive that call. It is a reminder to me that a little effort, a passing encounter, can make a huge and lasting impact on the people around us. I am grateful for his service and legacy. God bless your family with rich memories, comfort, strength and assurance for the days ahead. Most Sincerely, Rev. Janell Bloem, Pastor First Baptist Church, Boone, IA



wrote on 2018-07-10 at 22:28

My son Tucker, first met the governor in 2006 at a political function, Tucker was 11, and was hooked on politics. In 2012, when Tucker earned his Eagle Scout, I took a longshot, dug out the photo of Tuck and the governor, put it , along with an invitation to the Eagle Scout party, and sent it off to the governor's home address. The governor called me shortly after that, and said he would be there. He was, it was wonderful. By now, Tucker is 16, and full on political. Tuck jumped at the chance to talk to the governor about politics. One thing I clearly remember, Governor Ray said he preferred being a mayor over governor, he loved working with the people more. After the party, Tucker sent a nice thank you note to the governor,

along with an updated photo of the two of them. He in turn, sent Tucker a wonderful letter back, it's one of my son's prized possession's. Through the years, Tucker has run into the governor several times, (and updated pictures of the two ) he is still in awe of the man, and pained that he has passed. I will forever be grateful of the influence Bob Ray had on my son, now a 1st year law student at Drake.



wrote on 2018-07-10 at 21:06

Even with the many accolades that have been shared about Governor Ray's this week, it hasn't begun to scratch the surface of what an amazing man and statesman he was. Governor Ray's was the finest example of governing with honor, humility, and respect for all people. But first and foremost, he always kept his sense of humor. I had asked him for his guidance on a public service project that I was working on. He had to call me with some information early one morning due to his demanding schedule. When the phone rang, my young son got to the phone first. He had just learned about 'Stranger Danger' in school. As I came around the corner, I heard my son tell the person calling "I don't know you. You're a stranger." and hung up the phone. I saw the caller ID and my heart sank. It read 'Wellmark'. When I called Governor Ray back to apologize, he just laughed it off. He said that in his years in politics, he'd been hung up on before.



wrote on 2018-07-10 at 18:52

He was a great governor of Iowa he was a very good man and one of the best governor of the state of Iowa. Sorry for his loss to his family and the great state of. Iowa Ellen Meier



wrote on 2018-07-10 at 17:50

Bob Ray, along with Mary Louise Smith, shaped my life as a young adult and Republican. Their values , hard work and patriotism had a huge impact. I will never forget venting about some political situation and particularly going after one individual on the opposing side when the Governor said, "And Diane they say the nicest things about you!" It was his way of saying to be aware that there are two sides to every issue and you need to understand the other side. It was also his way of saying that we shouldn't take differences too

personally. Wish his spirit would enlighten the country today. He was a great gift to Iowa and to all who worked with him.



wrote on 2018-07-10 at 16:55

Governor Ray was a remarkable and caring human being and statesman. He truly represented the best of the "Greatest Generation" and this Great State, that we call Iowa. You left all of us a wonderful legacy.



wrote on 2018-07-10 at 14:02

As a little girl, my dad introduced me to Mr. Ray at the Cedar Valley Engine Show near Charles City, Iowa. He was very kind. My dad had met him at a business conference in Des Moines, and he wanted me to meet Mr. Ray. I will be praying for the Ray family.



wrote on 2018-07-10 at 12:53

Governor Ray was such a wonderful role model to all. I had the honor of working for him for two years, and he was the epitome of class. I have fond memories of my years there . He is someone who will never be forgotten and holds a special place in our hearts. Iowa was lucky to have him as their leader!



wrote on 2018-07-10 at 10:30

I personally owe this man a deep gratitude for having the faith in me and giving me a start in a 26 year radio career. Though we hadn't spoken in person for years, I thought of him often for his genuine caring , generous spirit and willingness to communicate to anyone at anytime. Even at 4AM for an ice cream cone as long as Billie gave her blessing!



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 21:52

Gov Ray is a great mentor and role model for the minority and international students. He spoke at the 2008 Iowa Youth Leadership International graduation ceremony and presented the graduation certificates to the leadership program students from China, India, and Iowa. Gov Ray will be never forgot for his inspirational spirit, passion and love!



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 21:00

My biggest account a few years back was Century Theatres at

Jordan Creek. It was a grand opening celebration. Governor Ray (retired of course) and his wife Billie were there. Myself , a friend , Governor Ray and his wife Billie happened to be the first ones waiting outside the theater. They started a conversation with me, the conversation actually lasted quite some time. Never met a more down to earth friendly couple. So genuine and kind. It's no wonder he was such a good governor. It's because he was a great man. Billie you were pretty awesome too. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 19:17

As one of the handful of Troopers who had the honor and privilege to serve on the Governor's Security Detail I accompanied Governor Ray to Atlantic City New Jersey to attend the National Governor's Conference in 1981. One evening all the Governor's were dining at a restaurant at the top of the Empire State Building. I took up a position outside of the dining room along with all the other security officers from the various states in attendance. Governor Ray emerged and told me to come inside and have a seat at his table for dinner. I replied that I didn't think that security officers were supposed to be allowed inside with the Governor's and other dignitaries. Gover Ray replied "I don't care I want you to eat and it doesn't look like you're getting any food out here. We have room at my table so come inside". I had a seat with him at the table and the Governor introduced me to the others seated as "My Trooper".



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 17:56

I was a senior at Monticello High School when lawmakers were trying to pass a law to change the drinking age from 18 to 19. I wrote a letter to Governor Ray to express my opinion. One day at school, I was called to the office. I was nervous because I was never sent to the office and didn't know why I was going there. To my surprise, the secretary told me I had a phone call from Governor Ray. He thanked me for writing him and told me to continue my interest with what lawmakers are working on. He explained why he wanted this law to pass. Even though the drinking age was changed to 19 shortly after that phone call, I still admired Governor Ray. That he would take

the time to call a 17-year-old that couldn't vote yet was pretty impressive to me. I also appreciated his interest in education. Too bad current Republicans don't have the same values as Governor Ray. He cared about people no matter who they were. He was a classy guy.



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 17:29

It was my honor and pleasure to work beside Governor Ray when I was on the council in West Des Moines. He was a mentor with many accolades for what was being done in our community and he always made me feel like I was the most important person of the day. I loved his one hour meeting agendas and his smile when he isn't sure we were on the right track. It isn't often you meet person who can change you mind with out you realizing it is happening. Billie and I worked together on the Zoo board so I had the opportunity to enjoy The Governor at many events. Most important to me however was his opening our state to other citizens from other countries who wanted to be free. He was the magic man who gave Iowa the true name of Heartland.



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 16:20

Farewell to a great man, a powerfully inspirational speaker and a beloved governor. May your journey to your next life be a peaceful one.



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 16:17

I was so very sorry to hear of his passing...many years ago we actually played tennis together several times at the Waveland Courts....he was the nicest man and we always had so much fun! Sending prayers of comfort for the family.... Mary Lou Fitch



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 16:09

My late husband George and I had an acquaintance with Robert Ray that spanned over many years. I first met him in 1963 when he was elected Iowa Republican State Chairman and I was was just named Lyon County Vice- Chairperson. We both guided our constituencies through the 1964 General Election when there were heavy losses statewide in the Goldwater presidential campaign. Only two counties in the state, Lyon and Sioux, saw winning tallies for Goldwater. "Bob" went on to run for Governor and I continued to serve my county supporting

Republican candidates for statewide and national office until 1972. By this time my husband became active in city offices and traveled to Des Moines to accept a certificate of award on behalf of the city. As he took the stage to accept the award, George said, under the applause, "Betty says "hello", to which Bob replied, "Tell Betty hello". His recollection of people and events was uncanny. In 2005 when he became the only governor or former governor to receive Iowa's highest honor, the Iowa Award I sent him a note of congratulations. In the past such a gesture would evoke a hand written note from Bob, so you can imagine my surprise when the phone rang one day and he was on the other end thanking me for my note. Again I was impressed with his gracious manner. He asked about my husband George and our family and we chatted for a few moments about events we had participated in. As I look at his biography and the extensive list of public service groups he was a part of, I am impressed as many Iowans must be by the dedication to service Robert D. Ray gave to his family, community and state. May his wife Billie and their family be comforted as they mourn the passing of a man who in his quiet manner walked as a giant among us. Blessed be his memory.



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 16:00

The Iowa World Language Association was having its annual meeting in Des Moines and Governor Ray was invited to welcome the group. The next morning there was a message on my answering machine asking me to call him. When I did, he thanked me for having asked him to speak! What a gentleman!!



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 15:16

It was an honor to work along side Governor Ray the year he served as Drake's President. We received many calls for him during that year. One that I picked up was from THE WHITE HOUSE - President George W Bush. I nearly dropped the phone. What I also learned from him was about good communication and how special his handwritten notes were to people, and I received one of those which I will treasure. Besides the work of the day, our office loved it when he was hungry for ice cream (his favorite) so we could sneak a few minutes to go get some. Billie Ray was also awesome to work with on anything we needed. Thank you Billie.



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 14:34

It was 1992 and Governor Ray was hosting a party on the top floor of the Ruan building. My job was very simple, walk around and offer a canapé to the guests. As I made my rounds, I came face-to-face with Governor Ray and, as I was "the help," I wasn't going to speak. He looked right at me, smiled warmly and asked, "How are you doing tonight?" I smiled and said, "I'm doing very well, Governor Ray. Thank you very much, and yourself?" He said he was doing fine. Then he looked at me again and said, "I think it's a nice party." I smiled and said, "It most certainly is, Governor Ray. You've done very well." He smiled, I smiled and walked on. I was the help, but that didn't matter to him. I was a PERSON, and he felt it necessary to say hello. I was a child when he was governor, but I have never, ever heard one person, Republican or Democrat, say one word against Governor Ray. When the Vietnamese refugees came to the Iowa, I remember meeting two of them and having dinner with them and playing Yahtzee at my Aunt Shirley's kitchen table. Later that night, we all sat and ate dinner together. I even remember their names, Kit and Nu. Governor Ray forged friendships in every life that he touched, and he touched millions! He was truly a man whom ALL politicians and all people in general should strive to emulate! God bless you, Governor Ray!



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 14:17

In the early 1960s, Robert Ray was my mom's lawyer. He helped us through a trying and stressful time. We saw him years later in Winterset. Of course he remembered my mom, but surprisingly he remembered me too. "Well didn't she grow up to be a lovely young lady!" He was a classy guy all the way around!



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 13:37

In 1980 I was a state 4-H Officer and a freshman in college. On Thanksgiving Day the Rays invited the 4-H officers and some senior citizens to Terrace Hill for a Thanksgiving dinner in the formal dining room. The officers, that had cars, were asked to pick up the senior citizens. I don't recall how the senior citizens were chosen, but they were all living by themselves and as I picked them up they weren't living in

ideal conditions. We had a wonderful meal with the Rays and our wise elders. After dinner the Rays invited all of us up to the private quarters where we continued our conversations. Governor and Mrs. Ray were so attentive and welcoming to everyone. As a young person that was still developing I know that Governor Ray had an influence on how I behave today. I try to be a gentleman and to approach conversations with civility and respect. We lost a great Iowan. But we will never lose the memories.



Lonnie C. Appleby wrote on 2018-07-09 at 13:31

It was 1992 and Governor Ray was hosting a party on the top floor of the Ruan building. My job was very simple, walk around and offer a canapé to the guests. As I made my rounds, I came face-to-face with Governor Ray and, as I was "the help," I wasn't going to speak. He looked right at me, smiled warmly and asked, "How are you doing tonight?" I smiled and said, "I'm doing very well, Governor Ray. Thank you very much, and yourself?" He said he was doing fine. Then he looked at me again and said, "I think it's a nice party." I smiled and said, "It most certainly is, Governor Ray. You've done very well." He smiled, I smiled and walked on. I was the help, but that didn't matter to him. I was a PERSON, and he felt it necessary to say hello. I was a child when he was governor, but I have never, ever heard one person, Republican or Democrat, say one word against Governor Ray. When the Vietnamese refugees came to the Iowa, I remember meeting two of them and having dinner with them and playing Yahtzee at my Aunt Shirley's kitchen table. Later that night, we all sat and ate dinner together. I even remember their names, Kit and Nu. Governor Ray forged friendships in every life that he touched, and he touched millions! He was truly a man whom ALL politicians and all people in general should strive to emulate! God bless you, Governor Ray!



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 12:47

I am very sorry about the lost he helped my mother to passed the law on Indian burial



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 11:40

Stories about Bob Ray personally helping people are nearly

endless. JoAnn Nelson, my future wife, was on Governor Ray's statehouse staff for 6 years. Once she casually mentioned that she would be moving to a new apartment over the weekend. Governor Ray recruited other staff members with himself to help her move. it's the kind of thing that inspired overwhelming loyalty from his staff.



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 10:59

I was new to Iowa, and stood next to Robert and his wife at a function. He was very cordial, and we small talked for a bit. Later that day, I was introduced to him as the former Governor. I did not know the man I previously conversed with was such a powerhouse. He was one of my first impressions of Iowa, and it was a fitting one, for he was very gracious. I would meet him many times throughout the years, and he was always friendly and humble. I know why he was re-elected so many times. A true gentleman in every sense of the word. God speed, dear sir.



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 10:21

Wouldn't it be great if today's politicians try to emulate a civil politician like Bob Ray. What a good man we just lost



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 10:20

My second job after college graduation was working for The Governors Office for Planning and Programing, Bob Tyson was Director. This was in the days when the governor ran every two years for election. The Governor lived in old Mansion, prior to Terrace Hill. The office was a great group of politically astute operatives and who were devoted to the governor. I worked in Health planning and that got me started on my career and healthcare policy. I owe a debt of gratitude to the Governors Office for Planning and Programing for getting me started In a very satisfying career in health policy. I also met my first husband there who worked in the Governors Highway Safety program. Dana Brown Petrowsky Ward



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 10:15

I remember playing church league softball with Bob when he was State GOP Chairman. I was the manager/shortstop and he was the pitcher--and a very good one, too. Later my kids benefitted

from going to school with SE Asian children whose families Bob welcomed to Iowa. In recent years I have had the privilege of teaching for the Ray Society. He was a great gentleman, competitor, and governor. He is greatly missed in our current political environment.



wrote on 2018-07-09 at 10:08

When I was a Freshman to be at Drake I played slow pitch softball for the University Christian Church team & our pitcher for every game was this "older" guy Bob Ray. He was a strong leader & just loved striking out at least one batter a game. If you know slow pitch softball that is a major accomplishment for any pitcher! He was a great team mate.

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