



Raymond "Ray" Kestner

JUN 16, 1932 - NOV 7, 2023



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Raymond "Ray" Kestner

JUN 16, 1932 - NOV 7, 2023

Mr. Raymond "Ray" Kestner, age 91, of Grand Haven, passed away Tuesday, November 7, 2023, surrounded by his family and staff at Grand Pines Assisted Living Center. He was born June 16, 1932, in Houghton, Michigan to Steven and Amelia (Marzene) Kestner. Raymond, graduated from Houghton High School, in 1950, where he played hockey and football. He attended Michigan Technological University (MTU) and graduated with a baccalaureate degree in civil engineering in 1955. At Michigan Tech he was a member of the ASCE student chapter, Vice President of the Varsity Club, a member of Kappa Delta Psi, and was a four-year letter winner in varsity hockey.

While a student at MTU, Ray met the love of his life, Janet Kangas, in 1953, while ice-skating at the local ice arena. Two years later, on May 21, 1955, they married at the Holy Family Catholic Church, in Atlantic Mine, MI. Ray then spent two years overseas in the Navy Seabees. After returning to civilian life, he spent five years as a Paving and Quality Control Engineer on the K.I. Sawyer and Kincheloe Air Force Bases.

Ray and Janet spent the next 15 years in lower Michigan, raising their young family. During that time, Ray, along with two partners, formed the Michigan Testing & Drilling Company of Detroit, Michigan, where it became a nationally recognized firm and was listed on the Engineering News Record 500.

In 1971, Ray returned to Houghton where he served as the City Manager and Director of Public Works through 1997. Ray is credited as being the visionary responsible for the revitalization of Houghton which resulted in the city receiving the Community of Excellence Award from the State of Michigan for 1987-1989 and 1991. In 1989 he gave a presentation in Washington D.C. describing Houghton's shoreline development at the Waterfront Development Conference sponsored by the National League of Cities. In 2014, the Ray Kestner Waterfront Park was dedicated in his honor. Ray received the Keweenaw Peninsula Chamber of Commerce "Person of



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the Year" Award in 1982, was selected as the Copper Country "Man of the Year" by the Chamber of Commerce in 1984, received the Michigan Tech Distinguished Service Award in 1988, and the Rotary Community Service Award in 1989.

Ray and Janet were strong supporters of Michigan Tech and were proud to tell anyone and everyone that all seven children were graduates of this elite engineering school. Family was the center of Ray and Jan's life, and they loved spending time with their children and grandchildren. Ray enjoyed fishing, gardening under the direction of Janet, and doing DIY projects in the house and for his kids. In his later years, Ray enjoyed seeing his grandchildren and sneaking them candy when their parents weren't watching.

Raymond is survived by his six children: Dr. Mark (Liz) Kestner, Mary (Albert) Mickalich, retired Lt. Col. David (Joanna) Kestner, Doris (John) Hohle-Heins, Helen (Rob) Weykamp, and Ruth (Chris) Groven; son-in-law, Roy Bourcier; sixteen grandchildren: Jack (Ashley) Kestner, Jane Kestner, Dr. Elizabeth (Justin) Rose, Lynn Mickalich, Katie (Nate) Adams, Caroline Kestner, Emily (Taylor) Hohle, Andrew Hohle, Gabrielle Bourcier, Maxwell Bourcier, Aliina (Reilly) O'Toole, Dr. Lydia Weykamp, Alex Weykamp, Reier (Fiancé, Anna Maturski) Groven, Leah Groven, and Ellie Groven; six great-grandchildren: Elodie, Emeric and Esme Rose; Isla and Aiden Kestner; Emmett O'Toole; brother, Harold Kestner; sister, Helen Glover; and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Janet, daughter, Susan Bourcier; son-in-law, Lt. Col. Marc Hohle; brothers Robert, Paul, and Jerry Kestner, and his twin sister, Margaret Keating.

A MEMORIAL MASS will be 10 AM on Saturday, August 10, 2024, at St. Mary's Catholic Church (406 E. Savidge St., Spring Lake, MI 49456) with Fr. Charlie Hall presiding. INTERMENT will take place at the Lake Forest Cemetery with Military Honors. In honor of Ray's military service (in lieu of flowers) donations may be made to the [Wounded Warrior Project](#).

Arrangements entrusted to The VanZantwick Chapel of Sytsema Funeral & Cremation Services (620 Washington Ave., Grand Haven, MI 49417). To share special memories with the family, please visit <http://www.sytsemafhn.com>.



Events

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Memorial Mass

 **Saturday**, August 10, 2024

 10:00 AM ET

 **St. Mary's Catholic Church of Spring Lake**
406 E. Savidge St., Spring Lake MI 49456



Cemetery Details

 **Lake Forest Cemetery**
1304 Lake Ave., Grand Haven MI 49417





Tribute Wall

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John Sullivan posted:

My condolences to Ray's family. Ray was my best friend in Houghton. I met Ray in 1971 and we worked together in various capacities over the next 40 years. I was able to visit Ray and Janet in their South Haven home in 2017. I brought pasties from the Soumi Cafe, we ate and a very nice visit. Your great memories, your Love for Ray, and our Lord will comfort you now and in the coming days. God Bless you.

November 16 at 4:35 PM



Tom Lepisto posted:

Dear Kestner Family; This is a sad day. You have lost a dad, Grand dad and a friend. I had the privilege of knowing your dad. I worked with him while I lived in Houghton. He was a true "Straight-Up" man, reliable, determined and principled. I was amazed to see him perform his job and witness his tireless efforts. He could work rings around his peers. He was a very good mentor to a young man (me) and I wished I could have thanked him in person. I know these days ahead will be tough. He is in a better place with your mom. Rejoice in the celebration of his life. You have so many memories over the years. May they comfort you and provide many smiles and less tears. My deepest sympathy Tom Lepisto, Centreville, MD

November 15 at 3:48 AM



Anonymous sent a Florist Choice Bouquet to the Kestner family.



November 12 at 3:21 AM



Chantel Montgomery lit a candle in honor of Raymond.

I helped take care of Mr. Kestner At GP and I just would like to say I am so grateful to been able to have met this man. Great guy, always had a story to tell, and made a huge impact on GP. Rest Peacefully Mr. Kestner



November 11 at 3:48 PM



Tribute Wall

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Kathy Meyer posted:

Uncle Ray was a force... Dad (Paul), was so proud of his younger brother and all of his accomplishments. Many awesome memories visiting back in the day up in copper country. Ray's amazing legacy lives on in Houghton and in his family... Blessings & Peace The Meyer Family (Kathy Kestner)

November 11 at 6:33 AM



Paula Kestner-Blair November 12 at 3:01 PM

Uncle Ray always made me laugh, he always had a plan to make life better for everyone. When my Dad (Paul) and Mom died and we came up to Houghton to bury them, we saw the park dedicated to Ray and I was so proud. The boys are now back together and God will have His hands full! My heart is with all my cousins, I ask for Peace for you all! Love, Paula Kestner-Blair



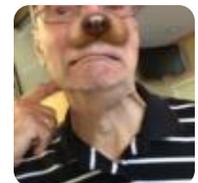
Joellen Strey posted:

I always enjoyed having chats with Ray when I would be at Helen's or when I would go over years ago to help him and Janet at their condo . You never knew what Story you would get but always left with a smile on your face .

November 10 at 7:22 PM



Ruth Groven shared a photo to the **Family Photos** album.



November 10 at 1:01 PM



Ruth Groven shared 3 photos to the **Ray and Jan** album.



November 10 at 1:00 PM



Tribute Wall

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Ruth Groven shared 8 photos to the **Family Photos** album.



November 9 at 6:08 AM



Karyn Ruohonen Rudak posted:

Our condolences to the Kestner family. I have many fond memories of both Ray and Janet with the times I spent at the Kestner house on Jacker Ave in Houghton when Helen and I were in high school. He had a quick wit and a laugh like no other. May your memories fill your hearts! Karyn Ruohonen Rudak

November 9 at 6:08 AM



Media

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Ruth Groven shared a photo to the **Family Photos** album.

November 10 at 1:01 PM





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Ruth Groven shared 3 photos to the **Ray and Jan** album.

November 10 at 1:00 PM





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Ruth Groven shared 8 photos to the **Family Photos** album.

November 9 at 6:59 AM





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Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Raymond by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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