



Raymond Murray Harding Sr.

Jan. 20, 1934 ~ June 2, 2022

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The State of Utah has lost a dedicated servant, leader, and true friend. Raymond Murray Harding, Sr. passed away June 2, 2022 from natural causes, at home in Provo, with family.

Ray led a remarkable career by any measure. On August 5, 1985, Governor Bangerter appointed him as a judge on the Fourth District Court, where he honorably served until his retirement in 2000. In 2001, the Utah State Bar Association named him Judge of the Year.

Previous to his judicial appointment, his career spanned multiple private law practices, first in Salt Lake City and later in Utah County; serving as Assistant Attorney General in Alaska; as General Counsel of Skaggs Companies; as a judicial clerk to Justice E.R. Callister, Jr. on the Utah Supreme Court; as an adjunct professor at Utah Valley University; in the U.S. Army during the Korean War; and for three terms as a member of the Utah House of Representatives.

Above all, Ray was a family man. His steadfast faith was matched only by his devotion to his wife of 70 years, Martha Rasmussen, whom he wed June 12, 1952, a week after high school graduation, in the Salt Lake LDS Temple, and their seven children. Ray delighted in time with family, whether boating and waterskiing on Lake Powell, snow skiing, walking the early morning Dakota pheasant fields, meting out \$1 gingerbread house awards, or reconnecting at Golden Corral buffet celebrations.

An adventurous parent and a gifted storyteller, he was the kind of father who taught his family to pray together and play together, who rose regularly at 4 a.m. to begin work, who was at every one of his kids' activities, long before that was en vogue. Quiet, serious, and commanding a respectable demeanor, he was the kind of grandfather who held swimming parties at the neighborhood pool, made hand-cranked ice-cream, pulled you on a sled behind his

truck, taught you to garden or birdwatch or do genealogy work, and helped pay for your mission or wedding dress. If you wanted chicken nuggets, an orange Creamie, hot dogs, or some Arctic Circle, Grandpa Harding was your man.

A man who achieved his goals, Ray was a skilled boater, a self-taught woodworker, a master bread-maker, a pilot of small planes, and an avid hunter, fisher, and camper. His love of the outdoors began as a child, when he would bicycle from his home to local canyons—a love he passed on to his children and grandchildren. He was scoutmaster to all four sons; each earned their Eagle Scout award.

A passionate advocate for education and the rule of law in society, Ray spent his retirement making the world better. For years at a time, he served in Ukraine for the American Bar Association, to build and deepen the independence of the nation's judiciary; with Martha, he taught English at university in Qingdao, China; and they served an LDS mission in New York City.

Devout in his faith, he served in innumerable church callings, including as MTC Branch President, young single adult ward bishop, coordinator in the Provo Temple Baptistry, and with Martha as senior missionary coordinators at the MTC.

He loved books, television, and film; the murder mystery, spy thriller, and slapstick comedy were his favorites. No one has ever laughed harder than watching Christmas Vacation or Pink Panther movies with Ray Harding.

A native son of Salt Lake, Judge Harding was educated at South High School, Utah State University, and the University of Utah, where he earned both his undergraduate and law degrees.

An example of how far one can come in life with hard work, a selfless nature, and a smile, Ray stressed the importance of education. His work ethic will live forever in us all.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Jessie Sophie Brydson and William Dean Harding, his stepfather, Milton Riley Young, his sweet daughter-in-law, Becky, and his beloved daughter, Roxanne.

He is survived by his wife, Martha, their children, Ray, Jr. (Becky), Doug (Cindy), Darrell (Linley), Matt (Reneé), Chris Gold (Toby), and Kathy Davies (Lincoln); twenty grandchildren, and 39 great-grandchildren.