



George "Ray" Empson

November 13, 1932 - February 23, 2025

It is with profound sadness that we announce the death of George Raymond "Ray"

Empson, age 92, a proud son of Ireland. He died of natural causes on February 23, 2025, at

his beloved Buckeye Lake house. Ray was born on November 13, 1932, in Portadown,

Northern Ireland, to the late Alfred and Sarah Empson. He was the youngest of six children.

When the bombs rained on Belfast in World War II, trucks filled with children left homeless

by the attacks would appear in the less-damaged neighborhoods the next day. His

childhood memories included how every family, including his own, would take in as many

of the displaced children from the trucks as they could find room for until their relatives

came for them. From an early age he was taught to help others.

Ray arrived in the United States on February 11, 1953, at the age of 20. On the ship journey

across the Atlantic Ocean, he was recruited by the US Army and served his two-year active

duty enlistment at Schofield Barracks Army Base on Oahu, Hawaii. He

became a proud US citizen on January 19, 1956, and never lost his delightful Irish sense of humor. He settled in Columbus, Ohio, driven by the desire to be near his eldest sister Maureen and her family. He developed a full-service gasoline station business and was a leading force in establishing a local trade association. The values that fueled his success were deeply rooted in his upbringing - "never dodging an immediate challenge by thinking you can't do it rather than it just has to be done" – were established in Northern Ireland and perfected in Ohio.

Ray spent more than 60 years mentoring many young people who became his 'kids' and 'grandkids'. Love and devotion were mutual and bountiful. He was a big supporter of youth services and activities. Over the years he volunteered with Junior Achievement and provided leadership for at-risk youth and potential high school dropouts. He was also a reading program tutor and a volunteer with Camp Echoing Hills, a camp for individuals with special needs.

Ray joined the Columbus Northeast Lions Club in 1970 and served in various positions, including two terms as President. His 55-year tenure generated thousands of dollars for local and state organizations. Most notable were Special Olympics, Nationwide Children's Hospital, Memorial Golf Tournament, Honor Flight and Pilot Dogs. True to his

humble

persona, he did not seek the spotlight but was absolutely the backbone behind many

events. He also served as a District Governor and the State Executive Administrator for

Ohio Lions. His crowning recognition for a celebrated life of service was a nomination for

the WBNS Jefferson Award, which recognizes individuals who make a remarkable impact

through their extraordinary actions in their communities without expecting a reward. Ray

was a finalist in 2012.

Ray is survived by his sister Margaret McClements of Winter Park, Florida; as well as 15

nieces and nephews, and their families, living in the United States and Australia. He also

leaves behind a host of friends who became family.

A Celebration of Life Gathering (Visitation) will be held on Sunday, March 16, 2025, from

1:00-3:00 pm, followed by a Lions Club Service at 3:00 pm, at Rutherford Corbin Funeral

Home, 515 High Street, Worthington, OH 43085. Inurnment with full military honors will be conducted at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

In lieu of flowers, any donations may be made to the Salvation Army, 3662 Karl Rd, Columbus, OH 43224-2852 or go to <https://easternusa.salvationarmy.org/southwest-ohio/central-ohio/>.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

Washington, DC

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Gathering

MAR 16. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Rutherford Corbin Funeral Home
515 High Street
Worthington, OH 43085

Lions Club Service

MAR 16. 3:00 PM (ET)

Rutherford Corbin Funeral Home
515 High Street
Worthington, OH 43085

Tribute Wall



“ Rutherford Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of George "Ray" Empson



Rutherford Funeral Homes - March 06, 2025 at 05:09 PM

MS

“ The Chambers family has known Raymond's family since they lived in Portadown. He always visited when he was back in Ireland and also when we lived in Australia. Sammie and I and our children Dawn, Gilly and Garry looked on Raymond as a very loving friend. Barbara Chambers and I visited when Katie was about 7 and Dorothy Chambers and I had the pleasure of his company in recent years. We all send our love to all Raymond's family, especially Margaret, whose email address I have mislaid.. Raymond was one of a kind and we will never forget him. Condolences on behalf of the Chambers family sent by Marian Spathaky/ Chambers.

Marian Spathaky - March 24, 2025 at 11:38 AM



“ Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of George "Ray" Empson.



March 11, 2025 at 07:48 PM

BD

“ Ben D. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of George "Ray" Empson.

Ben D. - March 09, 2025 at 11:23 AM

EB

“ Great to know Ray, we were much younger then. Thank you for letting me be part of your life.

Christ is the only hope we have, before the grave and after the grave.

Rusty

Ed Boerner - March 08, 2025 at 02:38 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of George "Ray" Empson.



March 08, 2025 at 09:23 AM



“ Ray was a pillar of my family and so many more families as well. He was always there as a friend and mentor for me and so many others. I will always cherish the memories of playing ping pong, pool, and poker with him. He had a great sense of humor and a huge heart. He may be gone but he will never be forgotten.

Zac Higgins - March 06, 2025 at 02:02 PM

JS

“ Judy and I are saddened to hear of the passing of PDG Ray Empson. Ray was a dedicated Lion who served the organization for many years. He will be missed not only in his district but also at the state level.

PID Jerry and PDG Judy Smith

Jerry Smith - March 03, 2025 at 11:12 AM

JA

“ Ray was one of my best friends. The world has lost a true Gentleman with an exquisite sense of humor. Enjoyed travelling abroad & boating with him. He will be missed for sure. We had always talked about Arlington as our final resting place. RIP Ray. Jim Van Arsdale Columbia SC..

James Van Arsdale - March 03, 2025 at 09:23 AM

AM

“ My late husband Raymond E Miller, Sr. was part of that active District Governor group in 1992-1993 in what was then yet MD13 and what times they had together - from our trip to Hong Kong for the International Convention and throughout that memorable year. Ray Empson was always the gentleman and will be missed. Lion Ann Miller, 13B

Ann Miller - March 01, 2025 at 11:20 AM

LC

“ We knew Ray for many years. We were District Governors together in 1992-93. We enjoyed many weekends at his cottage during the sweetcorn festival. He lived the Lions motto of "We serve*. He was truly a giving loving man. "Well done they good and faithful servant". PDG Lilburn and Sharon Cummins

Lilburn and Sharon Cummins - February 28, 2025 at 03:34 AM

AC

“ *What a great man. Ray was always the type of person that would give anything, and never expected anything in return. He was a very close friend of mine, and even though I only knew him for 3 years, it felt like a lifetime. Thank you George for teaching me so much in those 3 years, I will always cherish the memories and I love you.*



Aiden Cotter - February 26, 2025 at 10:00 PM

JL

He thought very highly of you! I can't thank you enough for everything you did for him! He was just as lucky to have you as a friend. We're always here for you 💙

Jennifer Lee - February 27, 2025 at 11:32 PM

JE

Aiden he really thought the world of you and bragged about you all the time

Jason Evans - March 01, 2025 at 10:08 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of George Ray Empson.*

February 26, 2025 at 06:01 PM



“ *Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet was purchased for the family of George "Ray" Empson.*



February 26, 2025 at 06:01 PM



“ *Definitely King of Men. One of a kind. I think his main mission in life was to aid and assist. He was the definition of what every person should inspire to be. You have heard the saying 'he would give you the shirt off his back', I am sure he has literally done that and would continue to for ANYBODY. With much love and respect Rest In Peace Ray AKA Gramps.*



Dave Ream - February 26, 2025 at 10:50 AM



Well said Uncle David! He always enjoyed your company and get togethers ❤️

Jennifer Lee - February 26, 2025 at 06:54 PM



On behalf of Raymond Anthony Noeth and myself, we send our condolences to the family and friends. We knew Ray when he owned the Marathon Station. That was 37 years ago. He was the kindest, most generous man we ever knew. Such sad news



Kathy Hannahs - March 02, 2025 at 01:24 PM

CN

What a wonderful man! Ray was a friend to everyone! Truly a rare individual so very kind and concerned about everyone. Youssef and I were so very fortunate to have known him and to have him for a friend. We will never forget you Ray, and are indeed lucky to have so many incredible memories. Rest easy dear friend, you are still deeply loved

Casey King & Youssef Norouzian - March 05, 2025 at 10:51 PM

AS

Ray was the first man to give my husband, Denny Brennan, a job at his Sohio Station. He was the nicest man I ever met. He loved our babies & was always welcoming. There are many, many memories of Ray and I think his sister and brother-in-law where we visited one Christmas. Ray went with us one weekend to Michigan when we visited my father. Everyone really loved him, he was a wonderful friend to everyone.

Ardis Smith - March 17 at 09:12 AM