

Ray Barnhart Biography



Ray Anderson Barnhart - Class of 1946 - b. January 12, 1928 - d. May 26, 2013 served in the political and community arena for over 50 years.

Ray was born in Elgin, Illinois to Ora and Alice Barnhart. After graduating from Elgin High School in 1946, he joined the United States Army in 1946. He later graduated from Marietta College, Ohio and the University of Houston with a Master of Arts degree in 1951. In 1955 he joined his father in the construction business in Pasadena, Texas where he became a successful businessman.

Ray, an Eagle Scout, lived, ate, and breathed politics for most of his earthly life. A staunch conservative, he began his political career in 1964 as a City Councilman in Pasadena.

From there, Ray served as a Texas State Representative from Harris County, served as Chairman for the Texas State Republican Party when, in 1976, Ronald Reagan personally asked Ray to head his Texas presidential campaign. Ray was also appointed a Commissioner to the Texas Department of Transportation in 1979 and was later appointed by President Reagan as Director of the Federal Highway Administration. To date, his seven year tenure under Reagan is an agency record for longevity.

Ray received many awards for his distinguished career but shunned the recognition as was his nature. He often related that it was the "plain and common" people that made things work not the "big" people who make the decisions. He was a lifelong Rotary Club member which typified his life of service to the community and workplace. And Ray was passionate and cared deeply for the people of Texas!

Ray is survived by his wife, Jacqueline, and his two daughters, Whitney Barnhart of Shadyside, OH and Mallory Barnhart Rousselot and husband, Mark of Sonora, TX; his grandchildren, Nicole McDuffie and husband, James, Reid Rousselot and Evan Rousselot; and his great grandchildren, Addison and Cooper McDuffie. He was preceded in this journey by his parents and most recently his sister, Ellen Richardson of Carroll, Iowa.

As was his way, Ray didn't want any memorial so he asked that you give humbly to your favorite church or charity. Ray will be honored by internment in the Texas State Cemetery.