



Ralph Thomas Bergsma

June 3, 1931 - January 12, 2021

Ralph Bergsma of Traverse City passed away peacefully on January 12, 2021, at 89 years young. He was preceded in death by his son Brian Keith in 1977 and brother Donald James in 2009, and is lovingly remembered by his children, Kirk (wife Julie Bergsma), Eric (wife Sara Bergsma), and grandchildren Jillian Manning (husband Craig Manning) and Hunter Bergsma. Ralph was married January 30, 1954, to Lynda Jane Leaver, and the two were approaching their 67th wedding anniversary.

Ralph was a husband, father, and role model with strong family values. He believed honoring one's word and that a handshake was better than any legal document. He was an avid power boater and golfer, enjoyed hunting and fishing, and was an eternal optimist. Ralph was also proud to be an Eagle Scout with the Bronze Palm and serve as a U.S. Air Force 1st Lt.

A graduate of Michigan State University (Landscape Architecture, 1953) and the University of Michigan (Architecture, 1959), Ralph had a celebrated and pioneering architectural career across the state. Locally, he was the project manager for Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, developing the master site plan, design of the first hotel building, and four condominium projects on the property. Ralph expanded his career into the Hospitality industry to become General Partner of the Waterfront Inn Resort Hotel and Conference Center (an additional property he designed) and President of RB Hospitality Management Co., the owner and operator of the hotel's restaurant, Reflections, from 1983 to 2005.

For more than 45 years, Ralph called northern Michigan home and was an involved member of his community. He served as Director of the Michigan State Chamber, Director of the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, Co-Chairman of the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce New Designs for Growth initiative, Director of the Traverse City Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Director of the Gaylord Convention and Visitors Bureau. He also served as an Advisory member of East Bay Twp. Master Plan, Member of East Bay Twp. Planning Commission, member of the Traverse City Rotary Club, trustee of

the National Cherry Festival, and a board member of the Traverse Symphony Orchestra and 10 year Sponsor of the Traverse Symphony Spring Swing fundraiser.

Greater than all his accomplishments is the legacy he leaves behind. Ralph's humor, generosity, and entrepreneurial spirit touched hundreds of lives in the community and live on in his family and loved ones.

Ralph will be remembered with a private family ceremony: memorial contributions can be made to Munson Healthcare Regional Foundation. Please share any comments or memories with Ralph's family at www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com.

The family is being cared for by the Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

Comments



“ A better friend you could never find. So many fond memories. He was simply the best . He will be missed but never forgotten. RIP my good friend.

don belyea - February 04 at 01:54 PM



“ We have been friends of the family since the mid 70s. Even though we have not communicated recently we still have many fond memories of Ralph, Lynda and the boys. Ralph was always there if anyone needed him and he had a vision of what should come next in all of his ventures. Our sympathies go out to the family

Arne & Judy Lundmark

Arne Lundmark - January 20 at 08:19 AM



“ Kirk I was so sorry to read of your dads passing. He was always such a nice and well respected man in our community. I hadn't seen him in a number of years but will always remember him fondly from the chamber committees and the Bluffs. My sympathies go out to you and your family. With sincerity Jim Walter.

Jim Walter - January 22 at 11:58 AM



“ Stephanie extends her condolences as well.

Jim Walter - January 22 at 12:01 PM



“ When Ralph and Lynda moved to Green Valley and only four doors away, Pat and I became good friends with them. We had dinner at least once a week with them at various restaurants in the area. Ralph and Tom formed a close golf relationship and played several times a week. The golf four-some was Ralph, Tom and 2 other close neighbors and was quite competitive. We took trips with Ralph and Lynda to many of Tucson's scenic areas ~ especially in the mountains. We have truly missed them since they moved back to Traverse City full-time. In a short time, they had become our closest friends in Green Valley. Ralph was such an interesting person and spending time with him was truly a joy. We miss him, Lynda and his family. RIP dear friend.

Pat and Tom Borg
Green Valley, AZ

Pat and Tom Borg - January 18 at 04:37 PM



“ Sorry to hear the passing of Ralph. I will always remember Ralph and Kirk taking the time to talk and check in with me when I was employed at Waterfront Inn. One of a kind true hearted soul. May you rest in peace!

Debbie Tithof-Wooters - January 15 at 08:55 PM