



Ralph L. Graham

December 7, 1931 - February 19, 2016

Ralph L. Graham, 84, of Kankakee, passed away February 19, 2016 in Phoenix, AZ. He was born December 7, 1931 in Chicago, IL, to J. Raymond and Gertrude M. (Minuth) Graham. He married Jeanne M. Begnoche on June 5, 1971, in Kankakee. She preceded him in death on March 14, 2014.

Ralph was a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard, stationed in the territory of Anchorage, AK and also serving in the Korean War. He attended the University of Illinois and Western Illinois University, graduating with a 4 year degree in Agricultural Science. Ralph retired from the Illinois Veterans' Home in Manteno. He also had worked at Gould Battery for several years. He held supervisory positions all his life. He was a member of the Kankakee County Planning Commission.

While "snowbirding" in Phoenix, AZ at a senior residence, Ralph volunteered as chief pancake maker and was said to be the best at it. He was raised as a Presbyterian, although he listened to a lot of Joel Osteen ministries. Ralph enjoyed bowling, woodworking, golf, playing the dice game "10,000" every night after supper, and was a constant reader with Louis L'Amour being his favorite author. He loved doing crossword puzzles and would do the one in the Daily Journal first and then others wherever he could find them.

Ralph is survived by three daughters, Linda & Jeff Woods, of Phoenix, AZ, Ethel Guynn, of Phoenix, AZ, and Kay Graham, of Chicago; one stepdaughter, Carol Friend, of Frankfort; two sisters-in-law and one brother-in-law, Pamela Graham, of Grand Junction, MI, and Sandra & Ron Shear, of Cherokee

Village, AR; 10 grandchildren, Brian & Danny Friend, Jerilyn & Kendra Jones, Mike & Brian Wilken, Andy Guynn, and Matrell, Lewis, & Eric Altman; 9 great grandchildren, Samantha, Parker, Hannah, Connor, Zane, Mackenzie, Gabrielle, Ariel, and Saige; and “special daughter,” Peggy Woodard, of Kankakee.

He is preceded in death by his wife; his parents; one brother, Warren; one daughter, Denise West; and one “special son,” Chuck Woodard.

Memorial visitation will be held Sunday, April 17, 2016 from 1:00 PM until the 3:00 PM memorial service at Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home, Kankakee. Rev. Rick Sexton will officiate. Inurnment will take place Monday, April 18, 2016 at 10:00 AM at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery

20953 Hoff Road
Elwood, IL 60421

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

APR 17. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Kankakee - Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home
1480 W. Court St.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Memorial Service

APR 17. 3:00 PM (CT)

Kankakee - Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home
1480 W. Court St.
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Tribute Wall

KG

“ Tomorrow my 'late' dad would have been turning 93 years old WE lost him on Feb,19th 2016,& is very -dearly missed!!!!

kay graham - December 06, 2025 at 11:27 PM

KG

“ my favorite memory of my ""dad"" was both of us watching jeopardy together,annnd only missing 1-2 answers!!!! then theres him teaching me how to read all U,S maps!!!!(i can still read any map put in front of me!!!) r.i.p dad!!!!miss kay m graham,chicago

kay m graham - January 24, 2021 at 12:20 AM

MG

“ Miss Kay Graham lit a candle in memory of Ralph L. Graham



Miss Kay graham - June 21, 2020 at 03:51 PM

JR

“ Hello, I'm Miss Kay Graham, I was Ralph's youngest daughter, last time I spoke to him was the eve of his (devastating) passing! he spoke to me, informing me how proud he was of me, what I've become & who I am to him, annnd I was asked to promise him NOT to dwell on him going away, but to cherish what I meant to him!!!! Thanks for this awesome website! & for allowing me to share this bit with you!

jrgraham9juno@yahoo.com - September 26, 2017 at 02:28 PM

KG

“ my fondest memory of my dad may be , the way he always welcomed ANYone to his home with a handshake & a drink! then he sat in his easy chair & had all visitors watch T.V with him & my mom! he spoke constantly of people NOT using """"""common sense"""" and wished our Government did for a better world I'll will MISS him something awful!!!! Thank you for this site!
Miss Kay graham, Mr.Graham's 5th & last daughter!

kay Graham - February 24, 2017 at 03:39 PM

KG

“ I'm Ralph's youngest daughter Kay, It's still very hrad to speak of him as "not being here any more" I never could (picture) life without him IN it! He ,,,W-A-S my rock, strength, best friend, Jeopardy & crossword partner! (of which I still work in his honor!!!) I'm still dealing /coping with him in heaven! Thanks for your support,,,,,, today he would have turned 85 years old!!!! Happy birthday dad in heaven!!!!!!
Love you sooooo much it still hurts!

kay graham - December 07, 2016 at 12:43 PM

SI

“ Sister Inga lit a candle in memory of Ralph L. Graham



Sister Inga - April 13, 2016 at 09:11 PM

KG

Thank you sooo much Sister! It meant alot to me seeing this post!

kay graham - July 19, 2022 at 02:51 PM

KG

Thnak you to all who have lit candles in my dad's memory!!!!It really means alot to my family!!!!

kay graham - March 28, 2025 at 12:36 PM

KG

Thank you so much Miss Inga!!!!

kay graham - December 06, 2025 at 11:30 PM

TL

“ Worked with Ralph at Gould Battery and also Jean his wife. Ralph was a easy going guy who made a hard day at work a little more easier. He was my supervisor in different departments when I worked at Gould and he was a good supervisor. I lot of people who worked at Gould did not like it when he was dismissed by the Management at Gould. My sincere condolences to his family and I am sure that Ralph is up above smiling down and looking after them.



Ted Lease - April 09, 2016 at 05:48 PM

JB

I agree with Ted's comments, Ralph was a Super-Nice Guy when I also worked for him at Gould, always fair with his workers. Last ran into him at the Bourbonnais Festival back in the 90's, along with Jeannie & Stan Sexton another GNB Sup'r , and he was still the same friendly guy. RIP Ralph, Ted & I will always remember and appreciate you.

jerry bjick - April 13, 2016 at 01:33 PM

KG

Mr.Lease thanks so much for your kind words about my dad! He only spoke of his job when funny things happened & he said he'd caused them! He really loved working with everyone at Gould & met & married my stepmother from there! A Mrs Jeanne (Miller/Begnoche)

kay Graham - February 24, 2017 at 03:46 PM



A huge Thank you to all who said such sweet things about my 'late' fatherMr.Ralph Graham

kay graham - July 19, 2022 at 02:53 PM