



## Raymond L. Ford

May 8, 1944 - January 14, 2026

Raymond Lee Ford, age 81 of Highland, IL, died Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at Barnes-Jewish Hospital (BJC) in Saint Louis, MO.

Ray was born in Kirksville, Missouri, to Betty June Pritchard and John Eugene Ford on May 8, 1944. They lived in Ethel, Missouri, during his younger years and later his family moved to St. Louis where his Dad found work.

When he was in fifth grade, his family moved to Cahokia where he graduated from high school in 1962. He went on to college at SIU-E earning a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in school administration. He also earned credits towards a specialist's degree.

Several years after his family moved to Cahokia, his parents opened Cahokia Floral and Gift Shop. On busy weekends, Ray helped out in the flower shop where he developed a real knack for floral arranging.

After graduating from SIU-E, Ray was hired to teach at Breese Public Schools where he stayed for six years. He was awarded The Outstanding Educator Award from the Breese Jaycees in 1968.

It was during that time that he met Brenda Brant, his future wife, on a blind date. He had family coming in for the weekend and needed a date. He got her

number from the mother of a friend of Brenda's who worked at the flower shop, and as they say, the rest is history.

Ray and Brenda were married November 9, 1968, after a 10-week courtship. In the early years of their marriage, Ray worked on his master's degree and later a specialist degree. It was in 1970 that they welcomed their first child, David Ray.

In 1972, Ray was hired as the building principal and sixth grade teacher for New Douglas Elementary in the Highland school district. Ray and Brenda bought their first home in Highland in August of 1972 and welcomed their second child, a daughter named Terri Lynn in 1973. In 1978, they welcomed their third child, Adam Jay.

As the family grew older, Ray started coaching Khoury League for middle school kids and later for son's teams.

In 1985, Ray became the building principal of the 4-5-6 building in the Highland district. In 1998, Ray won the Those Who Excel Award for Exceptional Commitment and Service from Highland Community School District and the Those Who Excel Award from the Illinois State Board of Education for Outstanding Contributions to Education. He was in the 4-5-6 building until his retirement in 2003.

Ray became an avid golfer and had 5 hole-in-ones. He was also an avid bridge player and was the director of the Highland Duplicate Bridge Club. Ray earned the certification of Master Bridge Player. He played bridge in many different clubs. He liked playing games with a couple's group. He enjoyed taking walks and fishing. He and Brenda took many cruises, as well as their favorite yearly family vacation to Branson, where they enjoyed lots of boating, game nights, going to shows and making lasting memories.

Ray was a member of the First Baptist Church of Highland where he taught adult Sunday School for many years and served as the Church Moderator for almost 20 years. He was a man of very strong faith.

Survivors include:

Wife - Brenda J. Ford, nee Brant, Highland, IL

Son - David Ray Ford, Glen Carbon, IL

Daughter - Terri Lynn (Brian) Hagler, Maryville, IL

Son - Adam Jay (Kristen) Ford, Rowley, MA

Grandchildren - Cole Jordan (Josie) Moss, Noah Matthew (s.o.-Kourtney Zobrist) Moss, Trey Ronald Moss, Arabella Grace Ford, Savannah Jean Ford, Ava Joy Ford and Aiden Jay Ford.

Great Granddaughters - Ronnie Jo Moss and Jordie Ray Moss

Sister - Beverly (s.o.-Philippe Belonni) Szopinski, Bethalto, IL

Brother-In-Law – Lt. Com. Rev. Larry J. (Tammy) Brant, Twentynine Palms, CA

He was preceded in death by his parents, John Eugene "Gene" Ford (died 10/21/1994) and Betty June Ford, nee Pritchard (died 7/1/2014).

Arrangements are being handled by Spengel-Boulanger Funeral Home in Highland, IL.

Visitation will be held from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM on Saturday, January 31, 2026, at First Baptist Church in Highland, IL.

Funeral Service will be at 11:00 AM on Saturday, January 31, 2026, at First Baptist Church in Highland, IL, with Rev. Cody D. Knapik, Pastor, officiating.

Interment will be at Highland City Cemetery in Highland, IL.

Memorial contributions may be made to First Baptist Church or HACSM.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 31. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church  
2709 Poplar Street  
Highland, IL 62249  
(618) 654-4145

## Funeral Service

JAN 31. 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church  
2709 Poplar Street  
Highland, IL 62249  
(618) 654-4145

# Tribute Wall

SM

“ *Brenda....I just heard of Ray's passing....words cannot express the depth of your loss. Ray was wonderful and lived such a fulfilling life.Roy and I were honored to know him. Sending our deepest condolences.*

Sue and Roy Morris - January 31 at 11:14 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Raymond L. Ford.*



January 30 at 03:03 PM

CD

“ *Claudia Davidage planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Raymond L. Ford.*

Claudia Davidage - January 30 at 03:03 PM



“ *Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Raymond L. Ford.*



January 30 at 12:59 PM

TF

“ *The Moss, Eilers, & Huelsmann Families planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Raymond L. Ford.*

**The Moss, Eilers, & Huelsmann Families** - January 30 at 12:59 PM

TH

“ *Tom Hartman planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Raymond L. Ford.*

**Tom Hartman** - January 30 at 09:26 AM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Raymond L. Ford.*



January 30 at 09:26 AM

BH

“ *Brenda, my thoughts and prayers are with your family. May God be with you and give you strength during this time. Bill and Shirley Hanks*

**Bill Hanks** - January 30 at 07:53 AM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Raymond L. Ford.*



January 29 at 09:55 AM

JL

“ John & Kathy Longo planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Raymond L. Ford.

John & Kathy Longo - January 29 at 09:55 AM



“ Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of Raymond L. Ford.



January 27 at 11:09 AM

LD

“ Larry & Debbie Feilner and Dana & Deanna planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Raymond L. Ford.

Larry & Debbie Feilner and Dana & Deanna - January 27 at 11:09 AM

DB

“ Mr. Ford was the principal of Highland Upper Elementary when I was in the 4-5-6 building on the Lindenthal campus. Mr. Ford was a fair man and even though Mr. Ford and my mom didn't get along and I didn't like him as a principal as a kid.... looking back I realized he was just doing his job. Rest in Peace Mr. Ford.... tell Ms Patsy Schwarm, Mrs. Rogier, and Mrs. Simpson hello for me and Matt Boekhout. And you get to reunite with my dad too. My condolences to Mr. Ford's family.

DOUGLAS A BURCHAM - January 20 at 01:46 PM

JB

“ Mr Ford was my 7/8 grade teacher in Breese. He also taught me in high school. I feel he taught us respect and he respected his students. He taught us to think. When I was in 8th grade, my mother dropped me off on North 6th Street by the grade school steps. I went in and noticed not many kids about. We had a big rain the night before and I found out from Mr Ford the basement was flooded and since our cafeteria was in the basement school had been called off. I said, ok I'm going to walk home then. Mr Ford asked where I lived and it was about 8 blocks he called my mother but no one answered. He said bad weather was coming and he would drive me home. So I got in his car and when we got to my house, my mother wasn't home. He said tornado watch was in effect and he couldn't leave me alone, so he would take me back to school where some faculty was and I could continue to call home. I asked if he could drive by my grandmothers just down the street that perhaps my mother was there. Which she was. He did not leave till he saw me and my mother at the door. Within 10 minutes a tornado did hit Breese. We were ok and thank goodness Mr Ford was too. It was a simpler time but I feel he went above and beyond for me, as he would for any of the students. I will always remember him fondly. My sincere condolences to his wife and family and all who knew and loved him. RIP Mr Ford.

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**Janice Raterman Beckemeyer** - January 18 at 03:39 PM

TH

Thank you for taking the time to share this beautiful memory of my dad

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**Terri Hagler** - January 19 at 09:22 AM

RE

“ It's been many, many years since I saw the Ford family. But when I was a young boy, we had good times together at church gatherings. It was a big deal when I got to visit them at their home on the "other side of the river from St. Louis" when was living on the farm near Atlanta, Missouri. May God bless all of the family and support during this time of loss.

*Robert Epperson*

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**Robert F Epperson** - January 17 at 02:43 PM

BW

“ Going to miss his stories and humor at Game Night.

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**Becky Wheeler** - January 17 at 09:53 AM

LD

“ Ray was such a quality human being--a loving and devoted husband, father, and grandfather; a leader in his church and community; an excellent golfer and bridge player; and most of all a cherished friend to so many, it would be difficult to count. He will be sorely missed by friends and family.

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**Linda Driesner** - January 16 at 11:17 AM

FK

“ Brenda and family Sorry for your loss sending prayers

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**floyd and lynn klaus** - January 16 at 10:03 AM

CT

*So sorry for your loss*

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**Cheryl Taylor** - January 16 at 12:36 PM

BO

*RAY I WILL MISS SEE YOU IN SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS,,RIP  
SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS BRENDA*

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**BOBBIE** - January 16 at 07:26 PM

FD

*I met Ray at the First Baptist church when I came to Highland in 2017. We shared times together at the Korte gym, breakfast at the 9th Street Diner with men from the church, and later, breakfast at Hardee's after gym visits. Ray and I spent many hours fishing in the local area, and one time with a guide at Little Egypt Lake where his son's family has a cabin. We had a great time - you could call it a 'bucket list' experience. Ray was well known here in Highland and I'm honored to be known as one of his friends.*

*Frank Doerr*

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**Frank Doerr** - January 20 at 10:13 AM

BW

*To Brenda and family, many happy memories of Raymond which usually included his distinctive laugh. All of us feel your loss, Cousin Benjamin*

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**Benjamin Williams** - January 20 at 10:44 AM