



## Ray Lee Streight

January 2, 1932 - June 22, 2018

Ray Lee Streight was born on January 2, 1932 to Thomas Alexander and Elnora DeEll Streight. He was born at home on their farm in Boneita Springs South Dakota. Ray was the middle child of 11. He had 3 older brothers and 3 younger brothers, and 2 older sisters and 2 younger sisters. Ray's first couple years of life were a bit precarious. He was a small baby, which earned him the nickname "Tiny" that stuck with him through high school. He became very ill when he was a year old coming down with pleurisy, whooping cough, and double pneumonia. Ray said that he survived due to the loving care of his mother. Ray had another close call when he was 2 years old. He was playing with his siblings by an irrigation ditch near their home in which the water flowed very rapidly, when he slipped and fell in. His 8-year-old brother Glenn jumped into the swift water and rescued him just before he would have disappeared into the culvert.

During the Great Depression Ray's family lost their farm, so they moved to Spearfish, South Dakota in 1934. His father bought a large chicken house that he renovated into a home for his family. The family spent 9 years in Spearfish. A large annual event there was the Black Hills Passion Play depicting the last days of Christ. This performance was always a favorite memory of Ray's and something that he was very proud to be a part of. Many members of the family participated in the event each year. Ray was part of the crowd and on cue would get to run down the road and yell. As a kid he thought that was very fun and exciting.

In 1943 his dad took a trip to Oregon and was so impressed with its beauty and availability of jobs, that he sent word to his family back in South Dakota to pack up and head to Oregon. He had already purchased a home for the family in Gladstone. Ray's oldest siblings, Virginia and Glenn, were given a quick driving lesson from their mother so that they could take turns driving one of two cars they loaded with a few family possessions and 11 children to head to Oregon. Ray was 11 years old at the time.

He attended elementary school in Gladstone and was active in sports, playing basketball, baseball, and track. The family's home was 2 blocks from the Portland Trolley Streetcar which they often liked to ride. The kids enjoyed swimming in the Clackamas River at High Rocks and jumping from the railroad bridge into the river, which according to Ray, was a 60 foot drop to the water.

In 1946 the family moved to Oregon City and purchased a home on Central Point Road. Ray continued his athletics at Oregon City High School excelling in football. His senior year they were the Tualatin Valley League champions. Ray was co-captain of the football team and voted most inspirational player. He was given the honor of playing in the 4th Annual Shriner's All-Star game. This is a football game held each year for outstanding senior players to benefit the Shriner's Hospital for Children.

During his teen years Ray attended a Billy Graham Crusade in Portland and went forward to accept Christ. That was the beginning of his walk with His Lord and Savior.

A month after graduating high school he married the love of his life, Merle Montgomery. Merle had actually dated one of Ray's older brothers, but Merle ended up falling in love with Ray. They were married at the Oregon City Methodist Church, where they attended, and honeymooned at Rockaway beach on the Oregon coast. Ray was working at Crown Zellerbach paper mill in West Linn at the time where he loaded wood into the grinders. Their honeymoon only lasted three days because that's all the time off he could get from the mill.

Ray wanted to follow in his mother's footsteps and become a teacher. He received an athletic scholarship from Lewis and Clark College to play football and to begin his training to become a teacher. He was a member of the Kappa Phi Alpha fraternity. After two years he transferred to Oregon College of Education in Monmouth (now called Western Oregon University) and received his teaching degree in 1955. He got his first teaching job at Bolton Elementary School in West Linn that same year.

Ray was drafted into the Army in 1956 and was stationed at Fort Ord in California. In January of 1957 he was sent to Bamberg Germany and traveled there by ship via the Panama Canal. He served in the 5th and 42nd Infantry Divisions as a supply specialist. While in Germany, Ray was able to travel to the Bavarian Alps, Glasgow Scotland, Paris, Holland, and London. While there he got to see Buckingham Palace and the changing of the guard. He purchased some lovely gifts to send to Merle back home. These included china and crystal, hummels, a couple cuckoo clocks, and other items that have been treasured by the family for many years. Ray was discharged from the Army in 1958 and then was a member of the National Guard for two years. After getting out of the Army, Ray resumed his teaching career at Bolton Elementary. He also taught at Willamette, Cedar Oak, and Stafford grade schools. Ray especially enjoyed teaching 4th grade because they studied Oregon history. He loved teaching about the Oregon Trail. While attending a Portland State University class he created an Oregon Trail Game for his students to play. Ray went on to earn his Master of Science degree from PSU in 1974.

Ray and Merle purchased property in West Linn and with the help of his brothers, Ray built their first home near Willamette Park. They wanted to start a family and began the adoption process to get their first daughter, Janet, in 1959. Two years later, their daughter Nancy came along.

In 1965 they purchased a home in Oregon City near Rivercrest Park. Merle's sister Gwen lived just around the corner. They began attending West Linn

Baptist Church that same year. In 1975 they transferred to Oregon City Evangelical Church where their daughters had already become active in the youth group.

Family vacations consisted of camping trips to Waldport on the Oregon coast and the Metolius River in central Oregon. It was there that Ray taught Nancy how to fly fish. The family took one road trip to Montana. Ray insisted on stopping at every historical marker along the way much to the dismay of Merle and the girls. That was the end of road trips for the Streight family.

Ray and Merle were both animal lovers and had a soft spot for stray cats. They lovingly cared for numerous cats and dogs over the years. They even claimed a neighborhood squirrel as one of their pets and named it Chipper. One of Ray's hobbies included gardening. He would spend hours working in his yard. He had both vegetable and flower gardens as well as berries and fruit trees. Ray planted tulip bulbs that he brought back from Holland. He grew beautiful dahlias and roses. He would cut flowers from his yard and make arrangements for Merle to enjoy and would also take them up to the Oregon City Evangelical Church to place in the sanctuary for Sunday service.

In 1984 Nancy married Michael Martin and soon after, Rachel and Alyssa were born. They became the light of their grandparent's lives. Both Ray and Merle were an integral part of Rachel and Alyssa's lives growing up. They attended as many of their activities as possible and nurtured them in so many ways.

Ray retired from teaching in 1987 after 30 years with West Linn School District. He soon got a job at the Emporium Department Store at the Oregon City Shopping Center where he worked until 1994. Ray was the top salesperson of the store his last year there. In 1997 Ray and Merle moved to Ainsworth Estates to be even closer to their daughter, son in law, and most importantly their two granddaughters.

In the 90's Ray attended a writing class at Oregon City Evangelical Church with his sister Pauline. It was this class that inspired Ray to keep a journal. He continued journaling for almost 10 years. Ray wrote about current events, the

weather, but mostly about the time spent with his family. He found joy and humor in the daily lives of his granddaughters.

Volunteering was a huge part of Ray's life. He was very involved in the churches he attended. He was a deacon, council member, and helped with many building projects. Ray was involved in Men With Vision missionary organization and the Pastors Prayer Partner ministry at Oregon City Evangelical Church. He even helped in the church nursery. He loved holding babies! His love of Oregon history drove his desire to volunteer at the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and the Museum of the Oregon Territory in Oregon City. He was a lunch buddy volunteer at both Mt. Pleasant and King Elementary schools as well as a volunteer in the King School library where his granddaughters attended. He also served as the president of the neighborhood association in Ainsworth Estates where he lived.

Ray and Merle lived in their home in Ainsworth Estates until 2012 when they moved into Oatfield Estates care facility due to Merle's declining health. Merle passed away in 2014. They were married for 62 years. Their daughter Janet passed away the following year. Although Ray's health was beginning to decline, he was able to attend the wedding of his granddaughter Alyssa last summer when she married Josh Hansen. This past father's day he spent the afternoon with Nancy, Mike, Rachel, Alyssa, and Josh enjoying the beautiful day and the gardens of Oatfield Estates. Five days later on June 22, 2018 he joined Merle and Janet in heaven with their Lord and Savior.

# Previous Events

## **Committal Service w/ Military Honors**

JUL 5. 1:00 PM (PT)

Willamette National Cemetery  
11800 SE Mt Scott Blvd  
Portland, OR 97086

## **Celebration of Life with Reception**

JUL 7. 11:00 AM (PT)

Oregon City Evangelical Church  
1024 Linn Ave.  
Oregon City, OR 97045  
<http://ocec.net>

# Tribute Wall



“ He was my 3rd grade teacher at Cedaroak and the most horribly verbally abusive teacher I've ever witnessed, constantly screaming at students, especially the boys he deemed weak. 40+ years later I am still traumatized.

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**Student** - June 27, 2025 at 04:01 AM



“ *Ray Lee Streight*

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January 28, 2023 at 02:51 PM