

RAYMOND RICHARD BRAUN



Age 76, of Oakwood, died August 13, 2024, of complications from dementia. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Ray majored in business at the University of Dayton. Having what was known then as a bad draft number, he enlisted in the United States Air Force voluntarily. He served proudly in Honolulu and Grand Forks, North Dakota. There, his assignment took him to secret missile sites. Following

discharge, he returned to Dayton and worked at Leonard's Garage in Beavercreek and Gerhardt's Centerville Service. With Bill Emmons, he established East David Automotive in 1984 and co-managed this repair business with a stellar reputation. Upon retirement, he registered for the new culinary program at Sinclair College. At age 50, he was awarded an associate degree in hospitality management with a major in baking. Internships included making donuts at Bill Evans Bakery in Old North Dayton and pies for Nanci's Fancies of Oakwood. He then joined Big Sky Bread in Kettering. That career and friendship of his bosses and customers brought him immeasurable fun and fulfillment, despite starting work at 3 a.m. daily. He also found fulfillment married to Vicki Costan from Cleveland, OH. They met at UD when he lived at 327 Loews and she at 328. They wed on Elvis's birthday in 1972 and this mixed marriage of Browns/Steelers fans survived too many Steeler Super Bowls to enumerate. They never traveled the globe. Instead, they set their sights on seeing all 50 states, fishing for grouper annually in the Gulf of Mexico and ringing in every new year at the American Czechoslovakian Club dancing to the Frank Moravcik band. They never moved from their starter home on Oak Knoll Drive but were blessed with a cavalcade of amusing and intelligent neighbors. Many remain treasured friends to this day. Ray served his community in myriad ways. He donated type O blood for 40 years, arranged Luminary night for 20 winters, and cleaned cod with the Hecht Family Fish Fry clan for decades. He was known for his homemade Kahlua at Christmas. He claimed the recipe as his own but actually appropriated it from a neighbor. He was Mr. Fixit for many friends, property manager for Oak Tree Corner and Chief Mowing Engineer for 25 lawns at one point. He loved Dave Brubeck jazz, Mountain Dew and Skyline. Always a man of few words, Ray developed aphasia in his final years. As his ability to express himself deteriorated, he displayed a vast array of expressions, which astonished his wife and delighted his personal caregivers. While he had served on stage crews for many high school plays, he never acted. Until his final year of life. Then, totally bedbound, he delighted his audience every day with silly grimaces and wide-eyed astonishment, ending each shift with a thankful beaming grin. Two beloved brothers, Tommy and Dennis, predeceased him. He is survived by his wife Vicki, sister Patricia Cribbins (Mike), brother Dave (Camilla), sister Mary Elsenheimer (Jim), and many nieces, nephews, godchildren and friends. Private services and burial took place at Woodland Cemetery. If desired, memorial contributions may be directed to the Oak Tree Corner program for grieving children, 2312 Far Hills, Room 108, Dayton, OH 45419. Arrangements entrusted to **BAKER-HAZEL & SNIDER FUNERAL HOME.**

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