



## Raymond Joseph Waszut

April 21, 1933 - March 15, 2026

Raymond Joseph Waszut passed away in his home in Crystal, MN, on Sunday, March 15, 2026, at age 92. Ray was born on April 21, 1933, as the youngest child and only son of Rose Rapacz and Joseph George Waszut. He was completely beloved from the moment he took his first breath. As in, he was literally carried on a pillow by his parents and sisters. His older sister, Rose, who was 15 years older, was often mistaken for his mother because she took him most everywhere she went.

Raymond grew up in North Minneapolis, attending St. Philip's and North High School, where he excelled in athletics and art. During the summers, the family's cherished delinquent was sent to the Swanson's family farm, his brother-in-law's, in Thief River Falls, to keep him out of trouble. It did not take. Shortly after graduation, he was drafted into the Korean Conflict. Despite being advised not to be eager for a position, he volunteered as a medic and was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division (nicknamed "Tropic Lightning"), which was deployed from Hawaii to South Korea near the 38th Parallel. Raymond took great pride in serving his country, as it allowed him not only to be a protector but also a healer for his fellow countrymen. After the conflict ended and his division returned to Hawaii, Raymond won numerous ping-pong tournaments, learned how to surf, and buried a military tank.

After he returned to the States, he received an Associate's in Electrical Engineering from Brown Technical College. He worked his way up the ladder to become the manager of returns at Gold Bond Stamps, where he worked for

19 ½ years before being let go. At that time, if you employed someone for 20 years, you were required to provide them with a retirement plan. So, every employee was let go just shy of 20 years. Nevertheless, he cofounded a vinyl patch company, Vinyl n' Ink, and made patches for the YMCA and all of its parent-child programs nationwide.

Just after his return home, he and his future wife, Betty Lou Kohnen, decided to date more seriously (there was one date prior to deployment... it didn't end well). And, although the ring went back and forth numerous times over the years, the two were meant to be life partners until the end. They spent their free time camping in the National Parks, working on their Brainerd-area cabin, attending the Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion (WMSTR), and jamming with their friends in a group called The Junction Bunch. It is important to note that Raymond was the face of WMSTR for thousands. He played the 353 Steam Engine's "Hobo" for over 40 years and ensured more attendance than anyone will ever know.

Raymond was a stay-at-home father to his daughter, Wendy Rae, during her teen years. He loved being her dad, and he loved her. Legend has it that when he found out Betty Lou finally had a viable pregnancy, he got so drunk in celebration that she needed to carry him back home, all while he repeated, "I am just so happy." This is when he started to balance his love of shenanigans with his devotion to civic and familial duty. When Wendy brought home the man who made her happiest, Andrew Barrett, Raymond accepted and loved him as if he had been there all along. Wendy and Andrew brought him two grandchildren ten years apart: Isabelle Rose and Aaron Raymond. He made them feel loved and supported all the time, no matter their accomplishments or failures.

Raymond was one of those rare people universally adored. He was adamant about following the Golden Rule and instilling it in others because "everyone is important." He was the quiet steadiness of every family gathering. He always knew what was happening with the weather and was eager to learn about how it was where his loved ones were. He created beautiful landscape art and

ingenious architectural and carpentry designs. He loved to watch wildlife and had several beloved pets throughout his life. He collected so, so very many rocks everywhere he went. He loved nothing more than seeing his family members excel in their respective passions. He voted in every election and paid his taxes without complaint. And, at the very end, no matter how his day actually may have been, he said, "Every day is a great day."

Raymond Waszut is survived by his wife of 65 years, Betty Lou Bernice Waszut, of Crystal, MN; his daughter, Wendy Rae Waszut-Barrett; and his son-in-law, Andrew Barrett, of Crystal, MN. Also surviving are his grandchildren, Isabelle & Anna Marceau of Madison, WI, and Aaron Barrett of Appleton, WI. They will hold him in loving, steady, and ungovernable memory for the rest of their lives. We love you.

Memorial Service Tuesday 3/24 at 2:00pm with visitation 1 hour prior at Washburn-McReavy Glen Haven Chapel 5125 West Broadway Crystal, MN 55429. 763-533-8643. Interment Glen Haven Memorial Gardens.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR **24.** 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Glen Haven Chapel  
5125 West Broadway  
Crystal, MN 55429

## Memorial Service

MAR **24.** 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Glen Haven Chapel  
5125 West Broadway  
Crystal, MN 55429

## Graveside Service

MAR **24.** 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM (CT)

Glen Haven Memorial Gardens  
5125 West Broadway  
Crystal, MN 55429

## Reception

MAR **24.** 3:30 PM - 5:30 PM (CT)

Glen Haven Chapel  
5125 West Broadway  
Crystal, MN 55429

# Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Memorial Service for Raymond Joseph Waszut in memory of Raymond Joseph Waszut



Washburn-McReavy - March 17 at 03:51 PM

KS

“ Your Dad was the nicest most humble kind man that I've ever met!!! I and my family are so very sorry for your loss. This has to be the year where we all loose our Dads! It's a sucky club for sure. Lots of hugs and Prayers the Schauer family

Kathryn Schauer - March 24 at 01:45 PM

CR

“ My grandson Sam Rotz was allowed to ride the 353 for one round with "the Hobo" when he was little. Sam showed up with a kerchief tied to a stick as his prop. When he was finished he told us the Hobo asked him if he wanted a "swig" out of his bottle! At 6, he thought it was real and hurriedly declined! It was and is one of his memorable highlights of WMSTR!

Cheryl Rotz - March 23 at 03:04 PM

“ I wonder if, prior to 1984, Ray Waszut ever considered that he would be adopting dozens of high school kids as his own.

*Ray and Betty's only child, Wendy, began her high school theater career in the fall of 1984. Within the span of a few months, she had been cast in two shows, one of which was the annual musical.*

*"Oklahoma" had a cast of around 30 kids. As many times happens, opening night was fast approaching and the set and costumes needed finishing. Parents of the cast and crew all came in one night to help pull off the production. There was a great sense of community in action.*

*Ray was there, leading a good amount of the construction, as many dads weren't adept at using power tools. He didn't have an ego and didn't need to say a lot. He just exuded quiet confidence and the other dads took note.*

*Ray and Betty hosted the closing night party at their home. Imagine a couple with one child suddenly having 30-some kids flooding their home for a whole night! And to add to the fun, there was a beautiful snow outside the windows. Their entire first floor had kids covering every open spot as movies played on this thing called a 'VCR' and everyone gorged on soda, pizza and cake.*

*In the morning, Ray was out front helping a few people jump start their cars and shovel out. 'Cause he was dad!*

*Maybe it was then that he realized he had adopted a bunch of kids?*

*If not, he surely must have realized it the following summer when Wendy joined a musical revue group with 12 boys and one other girl.*

*Yep, Ray all of a sudden had 12 boys on his hands. And they all looked to him as dad. He also must've known that his teenage*

*daughter was completely safe with these 12 boys around her. After all, they were all now her brothers!*

*Ray was at every performance of Wendy's and his adopted kids. He supported us in every way possible. And he never got angry with us, even if this particular son of his accidentally let the boat drift away from the dock at the Polish Palace up north.*

*It's funny reading what a trouble maker he was back in his day! For us, he was such a peaceful, happy presence as we were growing up together. Someone we all loved being around and talking to.*

*Ray is one of those people you can never forget. I am so thankful to have had him in my life.*

*Love to all the Waszut family,  
David Webber*

---

**David Webber** - March 23 at 02:33 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Raymond Joseph Waszut.*



---

March 23 at 12:53 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Raymond Joseph Waszut.*

---

March 23 at 12:53 PM



“ *Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Raymond Joseph Waszut.*



---

March 22 at 04:18 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Raymond Joseph Waszut.

---

March 22 at 04:18 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Raymond Joseph Waszut.

---

March 17 at 08:01 PM