



Ernest 'Ray' Hilliard

August 7, 1937 - June 16, 2024

Ernest "Ray" Hilliard, age 86, of Verdigris, OK, passed away on June 16, 2024, in Claremore, OK. He was born on the family farm near Turkey Ford, Oklahoma on August 7, 1937 to Jim and Freda (Landers) Hilliard.

Ray graduated from Grove High School in Grove, OK, with the class of 1956. After graduation, he went on to proudly serve in the United States Air Force for over 21 years. He specialized in Electronics and Radar equipment. He traveled to many states during his armed forces experience, including Alaska, California and Maine, just to name a few. His military career also included service in the Vietnam War. After his time in the Air Force, he moved to Verdigris and continued his career at McDonnell-Douglas and American Airlines in Tulsa. After his retirement, he and his wife, Karen, moved back to the farm near Turkey Ford for several years. After Karen's death in 2014, he later married Orlene Meadows Humphrey on November 15, 2018 in Miami, Oklahoma and the couple returned to Verdigris to make their home.

A fun-loving and sociable individual, Ray was known for his love of storytelling, especially teasing his sisters with childhood memories. He adored children, and people in general, always ready to engage in conversations that would bring laughter to those around him. He was a devout Christian and a member of the Church of Christ.

Before his health declined, Ray enjoyed studying the Bible, singing, playing the fiddle, and was actively involved in the American Legion and the VFW in Claremore, OK.

Ray, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, is survived by his wife Orlene, daughter Kimberly Stahl of Grove, son Kevin (Mary) Hilliard of Verdigris, sisters Joyce Rosser of Newport News, Virginia, and Carol Pritchard of Grove, 5 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild, and a host of extended family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife of 56 years, Karen Hilliard, brothers James Hilliard and Curtis Hilliard, half-sister Jadine Alberty, and half-brother Jerry Haynes, and infant son Darin Lee Hilliard.

Ernest "Ray" Hilliard will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all who knew him. The family will receive guests for one hour before the funeral.

Funeral Services for Ray will be held at 11 am on Thursday, June 20, 2024 at Nichols-Stephens Funeral Chapel. Burial will follow at Council House Cemetery, Wyandotte, with military honors performed by the Tinker Air Force Base Honor Guard.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

JUN **20**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Nichols-Stephens Funeral and Cremation Service

10201 U.S. Highway 59

Grove, OK 74344

(918) 786-6761

nicholsfunerals@yahoo.com

Tribute Wall

TD

“ I worked with Ernie at McDonnell Douglas. Best radio man around. Miss you brother.

Toby Davis - February 19 at 08:32 PM

AY

“ Andrew and Johnna Young purchased the Sweet est Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Ernest 'Ray' Hilliard.



Andrew and Johnna Young - June 18, 2024 at 05:22 PM

CC

“ Christine Smith & Toni Coffee purchased the Tender Tribute for the family of Ernest 'Ray' Hilliard.



Christine Smith & Toni Coffee - June 18, 2024 at 11:46 AM

CC

“ Christine Smith & Toni Coffee planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ernest 'Ray' Hilliard.

Christine Smith & Toni Coffee - June 18, 2024 at 11:46 AM