



Ralph G. Tennant

December 16, 1926 - April 15, 2020

Ralph G. Tennant, age 93, of Royal Oak, passed away 15 April 2020. Ralph grew up in Detroit Michigan with his parents Helena and William, and his big brother, Bill. As a young man, he was anxious to join the armed forces and ended up serving in the American Merchant Marines during World War 2. After traveling the globe a few times over, he returned to Detroit to finish school and start his career in business. Professionally, as with many others in the area, he ended up working in the transportation industry, starting as a regional salesperson selling motorcycles, moving on to becoming a buyer at Douglas and Lomason and eventually landing a job in purchasing at Chrysler Corporation. Over a very successful career with Chrysler he rose to Director Level and he and his team oversaw the plastics and electrical segment for purchasing. Upon retirement, he stayed connected to the industry accepting a few consulting roles with local manufacturers. Anyone who ever met or conducted business with Ralph knew him to be a man of intelligence, integrity, good humor and a man with an exceptional work ethic.

Personally, having returned from the war, he attended classes at Cass Tech to complete his degree, and along the way met a beautiful young lady (in a stunning pink suit, no less!) named Maxine who was also going to school. They courted and eventually married in Detroit, followed by a memorable honeymoon in New York City. For a few years after their marriage, Maxine and Ralph lived across the street from his parents and next door to his brother Bill,

Bill's wife Virge and their kids (Bill and Ann, and Jim). Eventually, one thing led to another and Maxine and Ralph moved out to Royal Oak, where they raised their three children: Linda (Don) Ruddock, Lance (Cyn) Tennant, and Lisa (Megan) Tennant. Ralph worked diligently at Chrysler in the Purchasing department, and Maxine was more than busy raising their three children (one car family for some time) and keeping the home organized. Even though he had little free time, Ralph did enjoy all sports, especially golf, and in his last 30 years or so, he was an avid walker for general well-being/fitness. He would also attend the kid's games/plays/events, along with being a loyal fan of all the motor city's professional sports teams (Lions season ticket holder from Briggs Stadium to the Pontiac Silverdome, and season tickets to the Tigers also at Briggs). Life in Royal Oak was full and fulfilling for all, and to say the family was blessed is an understatement. It is important to note that over his life as a loving father, his absolute favorite thing in the world was when we would all get together (he would positively beam recounting those family gatherings, saying he was so happy just to watch and to listen to our collective energy, insanity and laughter).

Spiritually, Ralph was committed to making a difference. He was a dedicated Episcopalian, worshipping regularly (Wednesdays and Sundays) at St. James Episcopal Church in Birmingham, MI. For more than 60 years, he was an active member of that congregation, and many of our closest personal friends came from that extended St. James family; over the years, St. James became a second home/place of solace for Ralph. He was a Sunday school teacher for a number of years, and a regular member of the bowling and golf leagues there over the years, participating well into his '90's. Ralph also volunteered as a tutor at his old elementary school, Greenfield Union (in the DPS system), helping youngsters learn the 3 R's (reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic).

Over the past 40 years, Ralph became the loving and "hands-on" grandfather of 3 (Nash, Wyatt and Zack) and great grandfather of 5+ (Campbell, Sloane,

Astoria, Kennedy, Mara and little TBD), and he thoroughly enjoyed pitching in to help out as needed with baby-sitting/house-sitting duties (labor of love for him). His daughters-in-laws and son-in-law, and the brides of his grandsons all knew and loved Ralph so very much, and he was an active, vibrant presence in their lives. They all have so many great memories of him that will help them through the tough months adjusting to life without Grampa, Grumpy, Dad, Pop and their dear friend, Ralph.

Due to the current restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, a memorial service will be held in the future when all who wish can attend to pay their respects. He was actively involved in the following organizations should anyone feel compelled to make a donation in his honor: Gleaners Community Food Bank, St. James Episcopal Church or the Salvation Army.

Please see www.SullivanFuneralDirectors.com to share a memory. (19 April 2020)

Tribute Wall

LD

“ Dear Lance, Linda and Lisa.
Have been thinking of you all, over these last weeks amidst the craziness of this world at the moment, and remembering fondly the infrequent times i had with your dad .He was always positive and made me feel welcome and connected. I admired his openness. He was truly lovely gentleman and i always appreciated his conversation and caring inquiries about me Jim and the boys.
Rest in Peace Ralph.
Lesley Dawes (EX Tennant)

Lesley Dawes - May 05, 2020 at 01:14 AM

HH

“ Ralph was a lovely caring gentle person , he had a wonderful sense of humour and was much loved by my family. He would always turn up at the family gatherings whenever we came across to visit in America, he always wanted to know how all our family back home were, asking about his distant relatives, my mum and dad always felt so close to Bill and Ralph, especially my mum who loved her two cousins dearly.
Ralph and I shared some fun emails together over the years, but he always asked for news about his extended English family.
He really was treasured by us all, and shall be greatly missed by all of us. Thank you Ralph for being part of our lives, we loved you greatly.

Hazel Howker

Hazel Howker - April 28, 2020 at 04:56 AM

JT

“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Joi Tennant - April 24, 2020 at 03:37 PM

JT

“ *Ralph was one of the most deeply thoughtful and caring, generous and genuine people I've known. He was my husband's uncle, a real gentleman, and he graced any family gathering with his presence. He was always sensitive to whatever was going on, showing interest and respect for all who were in a room with him. He was devoted to his own mother and then to my mother-in-law, making a point of visiting her or sending cards. He would always ask about my mother and father, and showed concern for any trials or problems they were dealing with. He was the Tennant family's patriarch for the last 30 years, and he was so very loved and respected by everyone in our extended family. I admired his self-discipline in so many areas of his life. He demonstrated sincere affection for all of us. He was a Christian and very devoted to his church, always attending Sunday services and participating in church activities. We had many good conversations about the challenges our churches were facing as the years went by. He loved his golf games and the guys who were his regular golf buddies. He loved to go to downtown Detroit to hear the Detroit Symphony. He had a great sense of humor, too. This photo of Ralph shows how his eyes laughed. We will miss him terribly!*

Joi Tennant - April 24

Joi Tennant - April 24, 2020 at 03:23 PM

RB

“ It is said that you can know the tree by the quality of it's fruit. I never got to know Ralph well but I am a friend to his son Lance. Ralph and Maxine certainly have done a great job in raising their children. Lance speaks so highly of his mom, dad and siblings that I feel a part of this wonderful, loving family. Ralph led by example. Kindness, caring, good humor and self sacrifice to benefit others are honorable traits that Ralph passes down in his family. Here's to a life well lived and to love, laughter and happiness. Ralph's legacy continues through Lance and the entire Tennant family. There is love.

Rich Brouckaert - April 22, 2020 at 09:36 AM

SM

“ Lisa -- I am so sorry to hear about your father's passing. Even though we never met, he was always such a pleasant person to talk to on the phone. I can still hear his voice. My condolences to you and your whole family.
Sharon McKenna

Sharon McKenna - April 21, 2020 at 01:45 PM

KG

“ I had the pleasure of working for Ralph several years ago and always admired him as a teacher and mentor who led by example. As I reflect on my memories of Ralph the first words that come to mind are "kind" and "gentleman". He was a wonderful person. I extend my condolences to the Tennant family.

Kevin Galvin - April 20, 2020 at 04:02 PM

TC

“ Lisa, I'm so sorry to hear of your father's passing. He was a wonderful, kind man with a knockout smile. Please keep me posted on future memorial plans. Much love, Theresa

Theresa Clancy - April 20, 2020 at 03:11 PM

ES

“ So many great memories of Ralph and the Tennant family I don't know where to begin, and as a fellow parishioner at Saint James we will greatly miss Ralph. We knew the family on many different levels from neighbors to the church to Schools - Indeed as the obit highlights Ralph was proud of his family, and my 1st live musical theater experiences were HS productions at RO Kimball, which he was delighted to support as the family participated, introducing me, and many others to a whole new world along with an introduction to the city of Detroit. Ralph had a deep, rich history of Detroit sharing many unique aspects few would know he would happily recount to interested listeners. Ralph would go out of his way to help strangers and the kindest, friendliest person you'd ever want to meet. Heartfelt condolences.

Ed Sutter - April 19, 2020 at 05:06 PM

P3

“ It is always hard to lose a father...especially one from our greatest generation...warm and witty...a true gentleman who looked so handsome in his winter beret! Heartfelt condolences to my friend Lisa and all the Tennant clan. Wishing you peace and love from Paula and Mary

Paula 3 - April 19, 2020 at 08:25 AM

BH

Ralph and I played golf in the Friday Royal Oak Senior Gold League for several years, he was a fine golfer and friend. I will keep Ralph in my prayers.

bill hagan - April 19, 2020 at 04:42 PM

KM

Didn't know Ralph long but he was a resident at my community. He was always such a happy spirit! His smile and warmth will be missed!

Kibri McMurray - April 20, 2020 at 05:12 AM

CW

I bowled with Ralph and he was a great person who will be missed

chris wilson - April 20, 2020 at 02:29 PM