



Raymond (Ray) James Kennedy

December 22, 1939 - February 14, 2026

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Ray was born and raised in New Jersey and grew up in his family business, Wayside Gardens located in Summit and Springfield, NJ. In 1959 Ray married the girl of his dreams, Carmella, who everyone calls Boots. Ray and Boots soon began building their family and had three girls: Debbie, Nancy, and Michele. Ray loved being a Girl Dad. When he wasn't working, he was creating vacation plans and outings for his family. Many curiously wondered what Ray was thinking in 1969 when he loaded his young family into the Ford station wagon with a pop-up trailer attached and headed on a month-long journey across the country. That was the start of many family adventures. Ray always wanted to have a fun time. As their girls grew up, the trips continued, with baseball spring training and games being a highlight. Always a believer in equality, Ray made sure the trips were to the Reds, Mets, and Yankees since his girls liked different teams. Camping excursions, trips to the Jersey Shore, family parties, and Philadelphia Phillies games were commonplace. The 2008 Phillies World Series Championship and 2016 Coastal Carolina Chanticleers National Championship were highlights of Ray's love for baseball.

Throughout their sixty-six years of marriage, Ray and Boots worked side-by-side as a successful team at Wayside Gardens and later in their own

business, R&C's Changing Seasons in Normandy Beach, NJ. With their girls grown, the adventures didn't end. Ray loved planning trips for him and Boots. They traveled to many places across the country, Caribbean, Italy and Ireland.

In the late 1990's, Ray and Boots began their travels to Myrtle Beach and later found a vacation home they loved visiting during their business's off-season. In 2006, they found their perfect home in the Lakeside Crossing community and happily made it their permanent home in 2017. Ray was a founding member of the New Jersey club, played in the golf and billiards leagues, and loved dancing with his girl Boots at many clubhouse parties. If there was a fun time to be had, Ray was there!

Ray continued to put his passion and expertise in gardening and landscaping to use in retirement. He truly enjoyed working in his yard, planting flowers, herbs and a vegetable garden.

Ray's joy and proudest achievement was his family. His sons-in-law Jim (Debbie) and John (Nancy), and daughter-in-law Kate (Michele) were welcomed with open arms and love. When his three grandchildren, Jonathan (Samantha), Tyler (Hailey), and Megan (Tyler) arrived, renewed family adventures began. He enjoyed seeing them excel in sports, school, and college. His pride was evident as his grandchildren married and started their own families. Ray was ecstatic about being a great grandfather of four: Theo, Kalia, James and Torr.

Ray's strength endured during his illness as he suffered from the impacts of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Throughout his struggles, his smile and joy remained when he received visits and phone or FaceTime calls from his family. Hearing "Hi Pop" or "Hello Poppy" always brought a big smile.

The family was supported throughout Ray's illness by his three wonderfully

compassionate caregivers: Barbara, LaQuisha, and Vanessa.

Ray was an incredibly loved man. Being in his company was joyful and his constant and warm smile made everyone feel welcome. When someone needed a strong shoulder, encouraging words, or giant hug, Ray was the perfect man for the job. He will be greatly missed but lovingly and warmly remembered.

Ray had such a big heart, it was no coincidence that he departed this earth on St. Valentine's Day!

If you wish to honor Ray by making a donation, please consider the Alzheimer's Association (www.alz.org).

A Celebration of Life will be held Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at the family's community clubhouse. Additional information will be sent out by the community's internal email.

Goldfinch Funeral Home, Conway Chapel is in charge of the arrangements.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR 24.

family's community clubhouse

Tribute Wall



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

February 20 at 09:29 PM



“ to Boots&Family- Charlie,Elaine Mazzucco purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Raymond (Ray) James Kennedy.



to Boots&Family- Charlie,Elaine Mazzucco - February 18 at 06:40 PM



“ Barnes & Rossana Gray purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Raymond (Ray) James Kennedy.



Barnes & Rossana Gray - February 18 at 07:58 AM

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“ *Some people may not be family by blood, but they are family in every way. Ray was that and so much more to us. Life long friends began at Lincoln school in New Providence with Butch and Ray and would continue through much of their lives bring their families together from being godfather to our first born as well as uncle to our next. We will forever cherish the 4th of July backyard bbq's, trips to the campground, the Jersey shore, bowling leagues shopping for our Christmas tree and numerous other family events. Ray's smile and laughter was something you could not forget. Ray will be deeply missed and forever remembered . Always in our hearts, Butch, Patty, Suzie & Family*



Patty Campanelli - February 16 at 08:41 PM