

IN LOVING MEMORY



DECEMBER 6, 1951 – DECEMBER 14, 2023

RALPH KERBS

CELEBRATION OF LIFE



Portland State University

Portland Oregon



On recommendation of the University Faculty, and by the authority of the State of Oregon, Portland State University hereby confers upon

Ralph Norman Kerbs

the degree of

Bachelor of Science

Liberal Studies

With all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto. Given on this Thirteenth Day of December, Two Thousand and Fourteen.

Det. Miskew

Wm. Wood
President of the University

Ralph

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR BELOVED

RALPH NORMAN KERBS

Ralph Norman Kerbs was born on December 6, 1951 to a young legal secretary who came to Oregon to place “Baby Boy Gereaux” up for adoption. Ralph was baptized in the rite of the Roman Catholic Church December 30, 1951, and adopted by Norman and Carol Kerbs, who lived in Portland, Oregon, officially on February 16th, 1952. Unable to have children of their own, Norman and Carol would later adopt Rose Meinecke (b. 1955) and Rebecca Glommen (b. 1958). They also had a foster daughter named Vera (b. 1949) who passed away in 2004.

Norman Kerbs (b. 1923) passed away in 1995, and Carol Kerbs (b. 1926) would pass away in 2014. Both are buried together at the Willamette National Cemetery in Portland, Oregon.

As one can imagine, Ralph was a well natured and kind child, who would often be surrounded or doted on by awaiting friends and fans. As his sister Becky would describe him, Ralph was never crass or rude as other boys in his age group and was a stickler for manners and common courtesies.

Ralph would run to school every day as part of his natural inclination toward athletics and become a paragon of sportsmanship and integrity. While young, Ralph and his sisters would tap dance together, before his interests would expand into the scholastic, sporting pursuits of baseball, basketball, and football in his later years.

Ralph graduated from Jesuit High School in 1970, and attended Portland State University as an English Literature major, but did not officially graduate with his Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies until December 14, 2014.

Ralph married Linda M. on August 14, 1976, and lived in Portland, where he worked for Farmers Insurance as an agent for many years. They had two children, Brandon Kerbs (b. 1979) and Brenda Webster (b. 1981). The couple would divorce in 1983, and Ralph would make a career change from insurance to an operator for Tri-Met April 10, 1989.

Ralph would meet Malaka G. while driving for Tri-Met in the early 90's, and marry in 1992. They had one child, Kaleema Murphy (b. 1993), and would later divorce in the mid-2000's.

Ralph started dating Holly Worthington, who had twin daughters, Nicole and Cassandra Worthington (b. 1989), in the early 2000's, and would marry on May 6, 2006. After more than two decades (almost 25 years) with Tri-Met, Ralph officially retired in 2014. The couple would remain married for the remainder of Ralph's life until his death on December 14, 2023.

Ralph had been interested in finding more about his biological family for many years but after a notice in 2002 saying his adoption record was closed, accessible and legal avenues were limited. In 2011, a man named Chris Bartosh reached out to Ralph via the Department of Human Services, indicating that he may be related as a biological half-sibling. Chris had been interested in cataloging family history and genealogy, and was surprised and intrigued to find a biological half-sibling.

Alongside Holly, Ralph went to Wisconsin to visit the Geroux side of his biological family in 2012. They also attended the O'Brien family reunion that celebrated the older and broader family connection during that visit. Chris was Ralph's biological mother's son, and through his efforts, Ralph was able to meet some of his biological father's family as well, maintaining contact with several of his siblings: Julie Meyers (b. 1958), Michael Voll (b. 1962), David Voll (b. 1965), Jennifer Matysik (b. 1966), and Chris Bartosh (b. 1957) who passed away in 2015. Ralph's biological father James Voll (b. 1931) passed away in 1992; his mother Mary Margaret Geroux (b. 1931) passed away in 2008.

Ralph Norman Kerbs is survived by his wife, Holly; his three biological children, Brandon, Brenda, and Kaleema, two step-children, Nicole and Cassandra; and five grandchildren, Tayler, Gavin, Aiden, Tyson, and Sonata.



(A FEW OF) RALPH'S MANY PASSIONS

Since the show aired in 1966, Ralph was an avid “Trekker”—not a “Trekkie” as the youth would have you believe—for Star Trek: The Original Series. The subsequent Gene Roddenberry spinoffs / series were an obligatory generational pastime he passed down to the children in his house at the time of them airing. Star Wars (the originals preferred but not exclusive) was another series that Ralph watched with his children, and one that stuck with his son and his children into adulthood. Ralph was greatly interested in sci-fi and fantasy, either written or visual. He also appreciated the work of Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell, artists who paint retro-style art pieces centered around bodybuilders and fitness icons.

Ralph was also a dedicated movie goer and entertainment connoisseur. Ralph and Malaka shared a love of historical plays, venturing down several times to the Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon, during their marriage. In 2008, his daughter Kaleema recalled the recession being a tell-tale indicator of financial stress taking its toll when her father no longer took them to the theater every weekend for several months to see any new movies. Fortunately, Holly and Ralph were able to enjoy their leisure schedule in his later years and often spent full weekends at the cinema watching movies. Needless to say, when the pandemic hit, it was a very challenging time for Ralph and his love of the cinema.

Since (and likely before) his trip to Afghanistan in the 1970's, Ralph was always impassioned by travel. He preferred to drive whenever able, and trips to the coast or Canada or California via car were not uncommon. When all of his children were young, they took trips to Canada, visiting Vancouver B.C. and Victoria, and the Oregon coast. Ralph traveled with his son Brandon to Europe in 2001, and often drove to visit him with Kaleema in tow when he lived in California. Holly shared Ralph's passion for travel and the two were avid cruise enthusiasts, taking Cassandra, Nicole, and Kaleema on a Mexican Riviera cruise when the girls were teenagers. He extended this experience to his adoptive mother Carol when he and Holly took her on an Alaskan cruise before she passed.

For his last travel adventure, Ralph completed one of his dream trips of driving through Canada, into Alaska and back via the ALCAN highway in August of 2023 with Holly, just a few months before his passing.



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ENDLESS LOVE
AND SHARING YOUR LIFE WITH US RALPH.
MAY YOU REST IN ETERNAL PEACE.**





MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

He was the best travel companion a person could ever hope to have. He loved road trips and planned them from start to finish. He picked wonderful things to see and explore along the way. He was willing to drive anyone to their destinations who wanted his help. Even when it was across country! That man loved to drive and explore new places.

HOLLY WORTHINGTON-KERBS





MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

His toast at Kaleema and Tommy's wedding.

KAREN MURPHY

MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

When dad cut my pancakes wrong when I was young and I cried. I never knew someone could butcher something so bad! Only sad/bad/memory of dad.

KALEEMA MURPHY

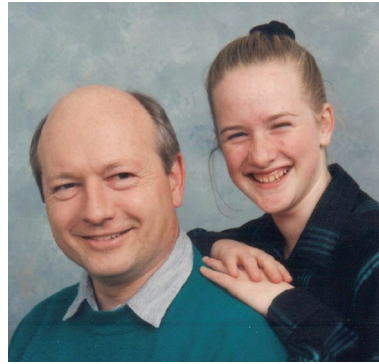


MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

Playing tennis together since 1975. Discussing movies and politics.

DAN HEGG





MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

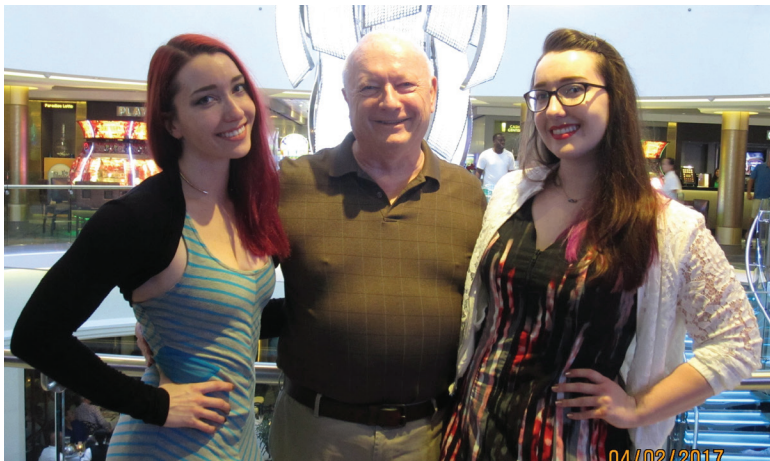
Ralph always had a playful energy about him. Most of my favorite memories are the little moments like giving him a big energy bear hug, or playing at trying to poke each other while dodging the others, and who could forget pressing a gift bow on his head when presents were being opened. He was always so good at going in on a joke or playful banter.

CASSANDRA WORTHINGTON

MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

So many Saturday mornings only half watching the basketball game in which his grandson/my son were playing, because of Ralph's charming funny stories. What a gent.

RICHARD SPRY



MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

Ralph was the man who really showed me what a real man and father should be like. He was the most loving and supportive father, and even though we weren't his blood, he never treated my sister and I as anything less than *his* daughters. Thank you for your endless love and light Ralph.

NICOLE WORTHINGTON



MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

Ralph was my brother, Bill's, best friend. When Bill and Ralph met I was only seven years old, and those that were of Bill's and Ralph's age were heroes to me, and I looked up to them immensely. Ralph became my brother, too. He always took an interest in my life and was never afraid to instill his values to lead me down the right path, especially on the athletic field. His generosity and love continued through my life as we were able to spend quality time to together through the years. Time that I will always cherish.

ROBERT O'SHAUGHNESSY





MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

Ralph's mom raving about what a great job on his haircuts! I said... it's really not that difficult (lol).

LISA STARK

MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

Ralph attended Holly's 50th high school reunion very proudly wearing a vest she had sewn for him. I thought to myself...that is special! Such fortune for my friend to hold.

KATHLEEN CARO



MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

Ralph's resemblance to my dad is so crazy, it makes me smile.

DAVID VOLL





MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

Ralph was the brother I didn't know I had. It was a gift to have him in my life. I miss him - his phone calls, our discussions of recent movies he'd seen, updates on Holly, his kids and grandkids, and his travels. I was fortunate to have the time with him that I did, but it was much too short.

JENNY MATYSIK



MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

Ralph was my Go-To-Movie-Guy on Tuesday's matinee, cheapest ticket of the week. He always knew the director, main actors and what other movies they'd been in or directed. Speaking of talking, he could talk for hours if you put him up to it. I was recovering from surgery and a knot of friends had gathered. Ralph yacked, about what, I don't know, for the full hour he was there. Even my dog (Chloe) stared at him and took notice. He'd be no good in a prisoner camp.

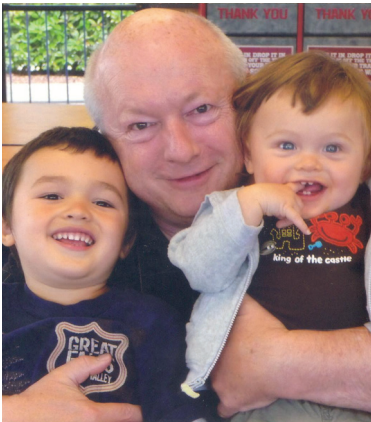
ELAINE RICE



MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

He was a story teller and I would go over to his place once a month and we would exchange stories. I loved his little village he would set up every year. I would be able to see come alive. And his smile always made me feel right at home. Ralph, I surely miss you and will miss our conversations.

LESLIE WOOD



MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

Uncle Ralph was always a cheery and bright uncle who shared his love of life with all who surrounded him. I remember him always being a strong pillar of love and kindness with a side of silly! His love for his family, life and joy was felt. You are so loved and missed and will hold your flame in our hearts forever.

KRISTAMY TURNER

MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

He was always a personable gentleman.

ROXANNE DOTY



MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RALPH:

Watching his grandson Gavin play high school basketball and having Ralph explain the finer points of the game to me; Thanksgiving Day. I looked forward to just visiting with Holly and “Mr. Twinkle” (My name for him); I liked him for the good human he was.

CASSANDRA ZIMMERMAN



