



Donald "Rags" C. Ragland

April 28, 1945 - September 8, 2023

Donald Charles Ragland, age 78, of Saline, Michigan passed away peacefully on Friday, September 8, 2023 from complications resulting from his dementia. Don was born April 28, 1945 to the late Marshall Kindred Ragland and Mabel Louise (Davis) Ragland. Don is survived by his former wife Karen Lee (Martin) Ragland, two children Kelly Lee Massey (Kellis) and Parry Gordon Ragland, his grandson Travis Charles Massey and his sister Kathy (Ragland) Haskins. He was preceded in death by his son Marshall Alan Ragland and brother James Marshall Ragland.

Don was more commonly called "Rags", "Mr. Cool", or "The Baron". He graduated from Dearborn High class of 1963 and Eastern Michigan University class of 1969. He was a retired educator from the Wayne Westland School District in 1994 and was proud to retire at age 49 with plenty of time to live life. He taught Art and English. He also coached girls volleyball, and supported the downhill skiing team. Rags was proud of developing an evening class teaching bicycle safety and maintenance that took the students on many adventurous bike trips.

Soon after retiring Rags helped guide his family to live in a 34 ft. RV and travel the U.S. for over a year, covering 49 states prior to moving to Saline, MI to be near his family and friends. Once in Saline he became a substitute teacher and school bus driver for Saline Area Schools in addition to coaching youth

soccer.

Rags proudly lived life on his own terms and outside of convention. In many ways his greatest gift was as an entertainer. He was gregarious, charming, funny, and a little quirky. Throughout his life he became a local legend for hosting parties and creating opportunities for others to have fun, starting with his college house at 430 N Adams. The culmination of his character was embodied best by the remote island cabin in Georgian Bay, Ontario that he purchased right after graduating college in 1970 and spent nearly every summer there since then. The Georgian Bay environment was the most special place in the world to him. In addition to the original cottage, Rags built and maintained a smaller rustic cabin. He was able to get around his financial limitations by using thrifty and resourceful craftsmanship that was later coined “Raglandizing”. He loved to share his Georgian Bay paradise and over the decades he has brought hundreds of friends and family to this remote location to experience the natural beauty and the stories that have resulted are meaningful and far reaching. He often acknowledged that he had some of the greatest friends a person could have. This cabin is a substantial part of his legacy and the family intends to carry forward the tradition of sharing it with others.

A friend from a neighboring island, Katy, did a wonderful job capturing his cottage story on her podcast during his last summer on the bay in 2022.

<https://rewinddesign.ca/rewinddesign/2023/1/20/s1-rewind-design-e12-rags-on-axford-island>

Rags enjoyed and practiced his own art with sculpture, drawing, and painting but was especially talented at writing poems about family and friends on the loss of loved ones.

As a way to remember him, he would encourage us to spend time doing what

you love with the people that you love, and to take pride in unconventional solutions as opposed to spending time and money doing so.

A Celebration of Rag's life will be held from 2:00pm-5:00pm on Sunday, October 29, 2023 at Chateau Aeronautique Winery in Onsted, MI. Located at 12000 Pentecost Hwy, Onsted, MI 49265. <https://www.chateauaeronautiquewinery.com/> Please arrive at 2:00pm to listen and exchange stories with family and friends. Bringing your own stories is encouraged.

Please RSVP to karenmragland@comcast.net

Cremation has taken place under the care of Robison-Bahnmler Funeral Home and Cremation Services. www.rbfhsaline.com His ashes will be spread in Georgian Bay.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to: PBS or to Wayne Westland Career Technical Center - Automotive Technology Department. Details can be found below.

PBS Foundation

Donate Online:

https://supportpbsfoundation.pbs.org/site/Donation2;jsessionid=00000000.app20101a?df_id=1520&1520.donation=form1&mfc_pref=T&NONCE_TOKEN=03A7C0DEE9AF726E0420832A164BEFD9

You can mail your gift to:

PBS Foundation

1225 S. Clark Street

Arlington, VA 22202

703-739-5051

Tax ID: 20-1476451

In Memory of Donald "Rags" Ragland

Please notify family member: Karen Ragland of donation

Karenmragland@comcast.net

508 West Jefferson Street

Petoskey, MI 49770

734-320-0424

OR

William D. Ford Career-Technical Center

36455 Marquette

Westland, Michigan 48185

Directed to: Automotive Technology Department

Attn: Pam Pierce

In Memory of Donald "Rags" Ragland

Questions can be directed to: Pam Pierce

734-419-3138

piercep@wwcsd.net

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

OCT **29**. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Chateau Aeronautique Winery
12000 Pentecost Hwy
Onsted, MI 49265
<https://www.chateauaeronautiquewinery.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ Donald "Rags" C. Ragland

October 23, 2023 at 01:07 PM



“ Karen, The last time I saw Rags was in New Port Richey when Mile and I took him for a boat ride. He loved the fact that I brought jerkey and yogurt to snack on. He was so interesting to talk to, and I wish I'd knowm him earlier..

Natalie Zyla - October 16, 2023 at 04:09 PM



“ I taught with Ragland at Lincoln Elementary in Westland in the late 70's. Oh, how funny he was. At that time he was in a program that helped underachieving kids at our "at risk" school. He took them on bike trips and after school programs. One day at our staff meeting he appeared in a swimsuit (he was skinny) with his bike to let us know he was back. The staff went wild. This was Don, always the unexpected. Lost track of him after the program went unfunded. Reading his obit it said he taught English. My response to that would be....Don, I didn't know you knew English. Oh, he would have liked that. He was good friends with John Prusak, art teacher at Lincoln. They kidded around and changed their name to Pruland and Ragsak. John Prusak died this past March. Oh, the fun they must be having in heaven....if there is one. He was very good with kids, never punitive. I guess it was the kid in him that made him so good with kids. Mrs. Westerhold to you Mr. Ragland.

Pam Westerhold - September 24, 2023 at 12:14 PM

JO

“ Growing up & sharing a fence with the Ragland family brings back so many great memories! At 12 years old, I remember Don & his buddies preparing to leave on an out west adventure after High School- on the side of the car was painted “California for bust!” Don was a character and he loved a good debate. I recall one time on the dock at Parry Sound he was taking his position and I wouldn’t bite on the topic, so Don actually argued both sides of it against himself! He was truly a caring and giving man, even when he’d rather put duct tape around a failing old pair of shoes than buy new ones! He will be missed. John Ochs & family

John - September 23, 2023 at 09:10 AM

PJ

Dear, dear Rags, what a force the four of us were!! John Prusak, now in Heaven with Don, and my dearest friend, Georgia McDaniel, our fabulous P-E teacher at Lincoln and myself, Judy Premin, music. We planned so many great fine arts experiences for the students: always fun and enjoyed a great staff. I hope Don, John, and my dear husband Bill, are having a get together planning an event. And Pam, I was grateful that your students were ready for music class when they arrived at my room. And I also remember the “swimsuit” event!!

premin judith - September 27, 2023 at 06:44 PM

DP

I just stumbled upon this. Mr. Ragland's after school bike club was an awesome thing for us 6th graders. I am one of the original bike riders of Lincoln. Went on the first trip to Bruin Lake, stopped at one of the dorms in Ann Arbor in 1972. Mr. Prusak took a bad fall at a park in Dexter. One of the things we learned was putting our bikes between a dog and ourselves. That trick came in handy a couple of times during the bike ride.

Mrs. Premin, you may not remember the production of Peter and the Wolf that year but I do. I played the wolf.

Daniel Parr - August 23, 2024 at 06:42 AM

BF

“ *Barrie Wilson Family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Donald "Rags" C. Ragland.*



Barrie Wilson Family - September 17, 2023 at 12:30 PM