

Gerald Frank "Gerry" Ramsey



Birth: July 12, 1938, Missoula, Missoula County, Montana, USA

Death: October 17, 2011, Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico, USA

Burial: [Guaje Pines Cemetery](#), Los Alamos, Los Alamos County, New Mexico, USA

Gerry was born in Missoula Montana to Frank K. Ramsey and Beatrice Joyce Woodford on July 12, 1938. His family moved to Ames, Iowa in 1943 so his father could attend Veterinary Medicine College of ISU. They would live on Story Street for the majority of his childhood. Gerry attended Welch School from kindergarten through 9th grade and then Ames high as a sophomore through senior graduation.

Growing up, US Highway 30 ran through the backyard of his parent's home, which meant all the traffic was close by. Being a child it was inevitable that when it snowed a moving target was most desirable. One day Gerry and his brother were throwing snowballs at the passing semi trucks, which he indicated was "pretty easy." They decided to challenge themselves and aim at the cars instead. After 15 minutes of the new target they were having no luck until Gerry threw a perfect snowball. The arc was just right to hit the car's hood, which is exactly what it did. The man in the car immediately stopped and got out. He then proceeded to chase the boys. Pretty soon the boys decided to take their punishment because the man was very fast. They both stopped to turn around and see that man was their father. Of course the only car that they hit would be their father's. Both boys certainly learned a great lesson that day.

Gerry attended Iowa State University in 1956. This would be the year of his first failure. He was taking a swimming course. In this course they had a rule that they didn't want any outside swimming suits in their pool so students had to swim naked. Gerry decided the he was not going to do that and rather than going through the reasonable methods of dropping the course, he just didn't go to class any more. Consequently he had a 0.0 grade point for swimming. However, in my eyes this was not a failure, but a statement of my father's integrity that he held his entire life.

In 1957, Gerry joined the Navy. Before admittance, Gerry had to take the placement test to indicate his areas of strength, but emphasized to the recruiters he wanted to be a cook. He aced the test for the BNA Reactor Operator, for BNA Nuclear Weapons Technician, and for BNA Communications Technician. Even though he had no idea what he was doing he chose to become part of the Naval Nuclear Power Program as a nuclear electronic technician/reactor/operator and was never a cook for the Navy. I do have to note though he was an outstanding cook in our home and taught us how to cook a mean steak.

Boot camp was not a very fun place. Gerry decided that if there was some way he could skirt around the requirements of boot camp that is what he would do, so he joined the choir company and sang his way through boot camp.

Marriage to Nancy L. Hansen occurred in July of 1960 after completing Nuclear Power training. Nancy and Gerry had three children together, Rochelle, Scott and Liseja. He was selected to attend college in the Naval Enlisted Scientific Education Program in 1960. He attended the University of Kansas from 1961 to 1965 and earned a BS in Metallurgical Engineering. He attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned in 1965. From 1965 until 1978, he spent most of the time at sea while serving in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans on nuclear submarines. His time in the Navy allowed him to live in a myriad of places from Pascagoula, Mississippi to Holy Loch, Scotland.

Gerry recalled a time while he was serving in the Navy when he was able to do almost anything physical that could be done on a submarine. He tried doing pull-ups and stated to himself that it was a simple task. He was able to 10 pull-ups and that was it. He decided to wait a week and try doing the pull-ups again. He got exactly 10 and then he ran out of steam. He determined a week was too long to wait so tried again the next day. He again got 10 pull-ups. He tried several other maneuvers and got exactly 10. He then thought maybe the whole thing was mental. But, once again he tried and only got ten. Finally he decided to combine mental and physical. He got 11. He repeated the combination and went from being able to do only 10 to being able to do 27 pull-ups. The combination of mental and physical and not giving up on either one help him succeed not only on the pull-ups, but throughout his life.

He retired from the Navy in 1978 and moved back to Idaho where he thought he would live for the rest of his life.

Gerry finished his MBA from Idaho State University in 1981 and took a job with Idaho Water Resources monitoring ground water pollution and well drilling. In 1983, he was lured back to the nuclear power industry at a reactor called Enrico Fermi II located on the outskirts on Monroe, Michigan. The job was great, but the politics were too much. At the end of the year he moved back to Idaho and the job he had previously held. In 1985 he was divorced from his first wife.

In the summer of 1985 he was chosen as a supervisor of the Omega West Reactor in Los Alamos, NM and he moved out to Los Alamos that Fall. In November of 1985 he was married to Marilyn L. Thompson. Together they have had three children, Kelle, Paige and the surprise blessing, Joshua. In 1992, a small leak was found in the Omega West Reactor and the reactor cooling system so the reactor was shutdown. He was then hired by the Los Alamos National Laboratory Emergency Management Office as an analyst, planner and exercise director. During his time in that position he assisted with building the new Emergency Operation Center. He retired from LANL in the summer of 2004 after almost 19 years of service.

Gerry joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1965 and served in many capacities within the church. His favorite, however, was serving the young men and being a member of the Santa Fe Stake High Council.

One of my favorite memories of my father was when I was a child. My father and I were at a gas station. We had gone in to pay for gas and my father noticed a gentleman who appeared to be homeless. It was apparent that the man was very hungry and had only a few dimes in his pocket. As my father paid for gas, he handed the cashier an extra ten dollars to cover any food that the other man would want. My father never waited for a thank you or brought any extra attention to himself. I am grateful I was able to witness that moment because it has changed me forever.

Gerry courageously battled Parkinson's for nine years until he passed away on October 17, 2011. Throughout those years he was always positive and a pleasure to be around. He still had a smile on his face and enjoyed laughing.

Gerry is survived by his wife of 25 years, Marilyn and six children: Rochelle Ramsey of Blackfoot, ID; Scott Ramsey of Scottsdale, AZ; Liseja and Rich Gurr of Encinitas, CA; Kelle and Landon Harrison of Mesa, AZ; Paige Ramsey of Salt Lake City, UT; and Joshua Ramsey of Los Alamos, NM. He is also survived by his brother, Richard and his wife Ann Ramsey of Marion, IA; sister, Janet and husband Chris Durlam of Jefferson, IA; and brother, Homer Ramsey of San Diego, CA; as well as his thirteen grandchildren. He is further survived by nieces, nephews, other relatives and many friends. He was preceded in death by his father and mother.

Gerry can certainly be remembered as the avid golfer, the man who loved the outdoors, the man who taught the young men how to fix and ride snowmobiles, the actor, the Naval officer, the man who really hunted and researched before he bought anything, but I know his willingness to serve others will always stand superior in my mind. He was a strong example of someone who always put others before himself and was even willing to take the shirt off his back if someone needed it more. Gerry was an amazing man and I am glad to have been able to call him my father. May his legacy encourage us all to forget ourselves and serve others.

We love you and will miss you dearly Gerald Ramsey. I love you dad.
This was given at Gerry's funeral by daughter, Kelle Harrison.

Honor Courage and Commitment. These Navy core values describe my father perfectly. He honored my mother, his country, his family, and his God. He had great courage and did many epic things. He was commitment to his family, his country and to God. But I want to talk about how he was my father but most of all he was my hero. For as long as I could remember I have always look up to him. He taught me many great things. He taught me how to golf, ride dirt bike, how to always respect people, and most of if the horse bucks you off you better get back on. He could be the most intimidating man but he was very kind. I remember biting my mom and him biting me back to teach me lesson. He used to read my sister and I a book called the Teeny Tiny Women, he would read the book and at the end he would gradual get quieter and quieter and then he would shout BOO and scare us every time. I remember riding with him to the Commissary or going with him to speaking assignments when he served on the Stake high council. When we were little he would lift my sister and me up like we were weights. He would take me snowmobiling with him and the older boys. When I would get in trouble he was so scary that I thought I might have just pee my pants. My Dad was the reason I join NJROTC in high school and now want to be in the United States Marine Corps. My dad showed me how a man should treat a woman, because of this I want to marry a man just like my father. I will always remember him drinking Dr Pepper and eating Snickers. When he would come home my sister and I would run to him and give him a great big hug and he would give us an even bigger hug back. Dad on Christmas morning would always make cinnamon roles, just to torture us children, or so it seemed. Also dad loved his dog, Jewel, they were so close that if Jewel were human she would have given my mom a run for her money. My dad and Jewel did everything together. They would go on walks together, take naps at the same time and they even grew old together. Jewel died before my father but I know that they are chilling up there going for walks just like they use to on Earth. There are so many more stories I could share about my father but like the divots on golf ball you just can't count the many amazing things my dad has done. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous, judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" given by Paige Ramsey at Gerry's funeral