

Topeka, KS

Raymond (Ray) A. Droge, 81, of Topeka, died Friday, October 13, 2023, at Grand Brook Memory Care in Allen, TX. He had been a resident at Grand Brook since February 2022. He had battled Lewy body dementia for many years before our Lord called him home.

Ray was born April 15, 1942, in Seneca, KS, the son of Raymond and Gertrude (Koch) Droge. He grew up in St. Benedict, KS where he enjoyed shooting pool at Bergman's store, running a bulldozer to build terraces and learning woodworking from his grandfather. He graduated from St. Benedict High School in 1960.

On October 5, 1963, Ray married his high school sweetheart Mary Lou Sudbeck at St. Mary's Catholic Church, St. Benedict, KS. They raised four boys in Topeka, KS and celebrated 34 years of marriage before Mary lost her battle with cancer. Ray married Janice Zander on February 2, 2002 at Assumption Catholic Church, Topeka, KS.

Ray was an entrepreneur and developer at heart. Early in his career he operated a barber college in North Topeka. When not teaching how to cut hair or selling cars for Nemaha Valley Motors, he was busy building houses for his friends and family. In the early eighties, Ray sold his share of the barber college and turned his full attention to the housing market to become a realtor, which he enjoyed until retirement in 2010.

Ray loved the outdoors. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, camping and most anything as long as it was outside - especially KSU football. Ray was also very active in his community and Mother Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Church. From helping rebuild neighborhoods after the 1966 Topeka Tornado, to the North Topeka Sunrise Optimist Club and the Knights of Columbus, he never missed an opportunity to step up and make a difference. One example was the recreational area Ray and his fellow Optimist members created near Seaman High School. His soft-spoken demeanor and vast experience made him a well-respected member of a wide variety of boards and organizations in the North Topeka community.

Ray was preceded in death by his first wife, Mary Lou (Sudbeck); his son, Darrell; his parents Gertrude and Raymond; and his sister Diane Laub.

Ray is survived by his wife Janice Droge; three sons, Bruce (Robin) of Olathe, KS, Keith (Lynnette) and Eric (Bonnie), both of Dallas, TX; two sisters Norma Jean Wojciechowski of Maumee, OH and Reva Deters of Seneca, KS; one brother, Craig Droge of Topeka, KS; six grandchildren Mallory, Camden, Alexandra, Kalese, Grace & Josh, and one great grandson Eli.

A visitation will be 5 to 8 with a rosary at 7 p.m. on Friday, October 20, 2023, at Mother Teresa of Calcutta Church, 2014 NW 46th St. Topeka, KS 66617. A Catholic Mass & Burial will be held on Saturday at 10:30 a.m. on October 21, 2023 at St. Mary's Catholic Church Cemetery with Father Arul Carasala officiating and Joshua Droge, Camden Droge, Nick Mannoni, Brent Zeferjahn, Tom Cummings, & Rick Meader as pallbearers.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Mother Teresa of Calcutta Church - Topeka, KS.