



Harold J. Bray Jr.

October 1, 1952 - June 16, 2022

Harold passed away unexpectedly on June 16, 2022. A lifelong Benicia resident, he was born on Oct. 1, 1952 in Vallejo, Ca. Starting at 10 years old, Harold delivered the Vallejo paper twice a day, 7 days a week in the Highlands area where he lived. He was proud of this job. He made \$15 a month and talked about it often.

Harold had a lifelong passion for motorcycles. His dad, Harold Sr., was a Benicia Police Officer and the BPD had a 'motorcycle clubhouse' that was on top of a hill on Columbus Parkway. Starting when he was 3 or 4, his dad would put him on the tank of his motorcycle and drive up to the club. He was hooked. Harold purchased his first motorbike with money from his paper route. That motorbike was a game-changer for his paper route. As he got older, he did quite a bit of dirt bike racing and eventually got a Harley. He loved nothing more than riding.

He also learned to love hunting with his friend Walter Crandell. Grampa Crandell would take Harold and Walter hunting and through these trips, Harold's love of the outdoors grew. Grampa also had a sand blasting business, where he would take the young boys to work. Harold often told how Grampa would lower them by ropes into tanks to sand blast the interiors! Can you imagine? Harold's dad would even let him miss school sometimes if Grampa needed them for a job for because he paid them \$50.00 a day!

Intrigued by airplanes and space, Harold had a passion for the skies. He started flying lessons early in life, but waited until his 40s to complete them. He took his first solo flight on Dec. 5, 1999. He never looked back, earning his instrument rating and continuing to gain his twin engine certification. There were many adventures with his wife Debbi and friends, often times flying to places for 'mini vacations' as he called them.

Harold was also the fun guy, the center of attention, always making people laugh. He was so smart with a quick wit and the timing of a professional comedian. He said he was lucky that both his mom and dad had razor sharp wits so he got a double dose. Despite his reputation as a funny, crazy guy, he was truly a sensitive person. He loved his family and friends deeply and valued being a nice, kind, honest man of integrity.

In 1972 he was drafted into the Army. He would always say he was in the last draft the US

ever had, but almost apologetically add “but I didn’t have to go to Vietnam”. He said he didn’t want to go into the army, after all, he had a great job as a carpenter. He said it ended up being one of the best things that ever happened to him. He actually loved it. He would say everyone should have to experience it. At boot camp they made him a squad leader almost immediately, so he earned his own room. He learned many great skills including driving huge earth moving equipment. He made great lifelong friends and together they all learned to skydive. He said they were able to jump from planes and even Huey helicopters just by joining a military club for only \$15 a month. He logged almost 200 jumps.

Harold got his General Contractor’s license in 1978 and built many incredible projects, most of them in Benicia. He loved the fact that even in a small town; most of his customers were repeats or referrals. He built numerous homes and buildings around town, even designing and drawing blueprints for many of them. Recently, he and Debbi tried to remember the last time they worked out of town, but it was years ago. Most customers have become great friends.

Harold is survived by the love of his life, Debbi, his children Sarah (Damian) & Ryan (Jordi), his mom Iris Dow (Groton, CT) his dad Harold Sr. and stepmom Stephanie, his sister Debbie, and his bonus sisters Lindsay (Darren) & PJ (Neal).

He has 8 beautiful grandkids, and of course, his constant companion, his lab Maggie. He was preceded in death by his beautiful sister Patty who is survived by her husband Pete. He leaves behind many, many nieces and nephews and friends from everywhere he went. He will be missed by all that knew him.

A Celebration of Life with Military Honors will be held July 30th at 1:00 PM at the Benicia Clock Tower.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the USS Indianapolis Legacy Organization, PO Box 16042, Chattanooga, TN 37416 or visit www.USSIndianapolis.com.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL 30. 1:00 PM (PT)

Benicia Clock Tower
1189 Washington St
Benicia, CA 94510-3239

Tribute Wall



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Harold J. Bray Jr..*



July 29 at 06:34 PM

SQ

“ *I went to school with Harold, am saddened to hear of his passing. He served at the same time as I did, he was a soldier, I was a sailor, he like his Dad served with honor.*

Stephen Quandt - July 16 at 04:29 PM

PT

“ *Pat & Kamal Taj purchased the Memorial Trees for the family of Harold J. Bray Jr..*



Pat & Kamal Taj - July 12 at 06:53 PM



“ *I met Harold while my husband and I worked at the Napa Airport. He earned the nickname Smiley from me and shared flying and motorcycles with my husband. He remodeled both our bathrooms and was often thought of fondly throughout the years. My condolences to the entire family, community and friends. He was always such a light!*

Linda Doucette Kaddas - July 07 at 07:16 PM

EA

“ *We were so proud and blessed to have known Partner...he loved life so much and always had a huge smile that made everyone around him smile too! We loved every minute with him, Debbie, Harold and Stephanie, we have so many great memories. We are so thankful we got to know Partner, we felt like he was part of our family, such a special guy....we will miss him. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of the Bray family....we love you all, Eric and Melba Andersen*

Eric and Melba Andersen - July 03 at 04:04 PM

LC

“ Harold was such a great guy. So sorry to hear of his passing. He did all of my home/cement renovations. I loved running into him in town with his dogs. We used to talk about our love of Labrador Retrievers. He always had a huge smile and loved chatting about all kinds of things. He will definitely be missed. My thoughts and prayers are with you, Debbie and family.

Lori Lambro Carter - June 27 at 08:41 PM

SQ

I went to school with Harold, I am saddened to hear of his passing. I live in Cleveland Ohio, I found out about his death from my brother who still lives in Benicia.

Stephen Quandt - July 04 at 02:09 PM

BB

“ So very sorry to hear of Harold's passing. Great guy. We'll miss him.

Ben Blackshear - June 26 at 04:03 PM

BA

“ We did not get to know Partner long enough! He was an absolute joy to be around. We are so thankful for the memories and the times we spent together. Our prayers are with Debra, Harold, Stephanie and his family and friends.

Our heartfelt condolences to the Bray's

Betty & Kris Andersen - June 22 at 03:27 PM

TT

“ It was always a good day When I met up with Harold and exchanged a few words. Always a big smile and quick to laugh. Wanted to know how your doing and what's new. A bit of banter of days gone by. We met over 40 years ago. He and his partner Harold Siler. What a couple. Enjoyed their company and working with them. I have so many memories of those days, I'm thankful each one. I loved hearing other people sing the praises of Harold Bray. Harold changed my poor old kitchen into a show case. I had the pleasure of working his jobs. He was a master tradesmen and a leader of tradesmen. Working on his jobs was a joy. I will think of him probably every day and remember those times gone by. I pray for Debbie and Harold senior that they know he is always with us.

tobert Totherow - June 21 at 09:41 PM

DV

So sorry to hear about Harold. Benicia boy through and through. RIP Harold.

Dan Vogelpohl - June 30 at 06:51 PM

TF

I was so sorry and sad to hear this. My Condolences to the Bray family. My Thoughts and prayers are with you all. Rip Harold!

Tiffany and family - July 02 at 05:13 AM

MV

what a loss ,went to benicia high , class of 70, he was always ,a joy to see around town ,this local benician will be greatly miss ,my prayers are with the family R.I.P. Margaret Vizuet and family

margaret vizuet - July 07 at 09:42 PM

RD

Harold was my neighbor up to July 2021. He leveled my garage floor for me. A fair and pleasant man who enjoyed life with many experiences. He always had a smile and that's how Pauline and I will remember him. Our hearts are with Debbie and the family. God bless! Rick Dillion

Rick-Pauline Dillion - July 22 at 06:27 PM