



Ray Winn Class of 1953

Ray Winn made his gracious exit at the tender age of 91, passing away in the presence of family in December 2025. Born in Price, Utah, in 1934. Raised in Las Vegas, Nevada. Ray spent time in both his hometown of Las Vegas and Montecito, California. Developed, owned, and operated approximately one million square feet of commercial real estate holdings in Texas. Also developed, designed, and built high-end residential real estate through his company K+A Design Group. www.ka-dg.com.

Over 60 years' experience in technology and technology management in the areas of Nuclear Weapons testing, test site management, classified government projects, large-scale remote site construction and logistics, commercial product operations, Nuclear Submarine Planning, space probe (Viking Lander) sensor/imaging development, fusion research, radiation detectors, Nuclear Rocket Reactor operations, Los Alamos certified nuclear reactor operator, nuclear instrumentation. Ray owned patents in semiconductor lithography, photosensitive polymers, radiation sensors, bearing-less fans, medical accessories, semiconductor photo-mask systems, imaging systems for semiconductor lithography, UV sources for micro-lithography, Radar Navigation System, bipolar nuclear accelerator for cancer treatment, and classified patents.

Hobbies/Interests: 12,000-hour multi-engine pilot, writing music, writing newspaper articles, photography, political policies, nuclear fusion, being incredibly lazy, eating good food, enjoying family, and being generally socially and politically obnoxious.

Ray was both brilliant and creative; he was a composer and an adventurer, a writer and an author. He was a serious man who had a childlike mischievousness. For example, he put a mathematical equation on his license plate called Avogadro's constant: 6×10^{23} . (Actually, $6.02214076 \times 10^{23} \text{ mol}^{-1}$. It acts as a bridge between the atomic and macroscopic worlds, relating molar mass to real-world measurements; it is one mole of atomic matter.)

Ray loved deeply and was steadfast in his loyalty to his friends and this country. He was a proud Republican and could not understand why every American wasn't.

He was a pilot and a sailor. He owned several planes and boats over the years. His achievements were many. I can walk you through some of the poignant moments and important accomplishments in his life and career.

Ray was born in Price, Utah, in a coal-mining town to a Mormon mother, five brothers, and a father who worked in the mines. When his father abandoned the family, the mining company put his mother and brothers out into the snow and locked the door to their one-room company house. The next day, his youngest brother died from exposure to the

extreme cold. The Mormon Church rescued the family and relocated them to Las Vegas, Nevada. There, his mother worked tirelessly, taking on two shifts a day as a waitress.

The Airline Owner and The “It” Girl: Ray’s brilliant mind was on full display before age two. He spoke in complete, articulate sentences. At age three, he was fascinated by how anything mechanical operated. His mother explained that electricity powered these devices and came out of the wall through electrical plugs. Ray grabbed a knife and stuck it into a socket. He got a jolt that knocked him off his tiny feet. He did not pout or cry. He just got angry.

His grandmother gave him a toolset so he could figure things out on his own. “Here’s the toaster, take it apart and put it back together again,” she said, and he did just that. The vacuum cleaner and anything else he could handle were next so that he could understand their function. He quickly understood how AC and DC currents worked. As a young child, he got his first paper route and made money. Ray was different, of course. He chose a paper route that no other paper carrier wanted, on the rich side of town and a paperboy’s nightmare. The lots were large, and the houses were set back. It took twice as long to deliver the same number of papers in that area as in a typical tract of homes. He could not toss the papers to their doors, so he decided to hand-deliver the paper into his client’s hands or at their doorsteps.

This simple act put into motion two transformative events. First, he met the founder and CEO of Bonanza Airlines, a start-up Las Vegas air carrier. This man was so impressed with this industrious little redheaded boy and his sweet smile that he began to give Ray stock in Bonanza Airlines as tip money.

Later, many years later, Ray would cash in that stock and purchase his first house.

Clara Bow, 1926: The second meeting was even more transformative. He met Clara Bow on his route. She was the First Lady of silent cinema; the original IT girl. She was a beautiful, vivacious blonde and did her own stunts in those days. She won the very first Academy Award for acting, along with the entire cast (which was how they first gave the award).

Clara was not the bubblehead image portrayed by the Hollywood machine. She was, in fact, a scholar. She read the Greek tragedies in Greek. She spoke French fluently. She was obsessed with classical music. She collected every Columbia RKO classical album ever produced. She built an entire wing onto her home to house the voluminous collection. She didn’t allow anyone into her inner sanctum. Ever.

And then Clara met Ray.

She was smitten by this sweet little boy who got off his bike and handed her the paper. She invited him in, gave him lemonade, and learned that he loved music. So, she began to play classical music for him on her piano. Later, she gave him the only other key to her sacred inner sanctum where she spent hours every day listening to all the great composers’ symphonies. Ray would come and go into her studio daily, listening to every record and learning, remembering every piece of music he heard, the names of the composers, the names of the conductors, and any discernible differences between the various orchestras around the world.

Whether it was the London Philharmonic or the orchestra in Prague, he knew the subtle differences. His iron vault memory recorded every note played. He fell in love with classical music in the third grade. A love affair that lasted Ray through his entire life.

On to EG&G in Los Alamos: In high school, Ray's mother was always working and always gone. Angie was a darling woman. She told me directly she couldn't really keep track of her own children. She just wasn't home. She told me they were in God's hands. She took a rare day off from work to attend a special meeting about Ray requested by the student counselor. She went to the meeting completely ignorant of how Ray or any of her kids were doing in school. She sheepishly asked, "Is Ray doin' alright?" She thought perhaps he was in trouble. The counselor was astounded. He responded, "Mrs. O'Neil, you really don't know what's happening with Ray, do you?" She responded, "No." He went on to tell her that "It's not how Ray is doing in school but how we are doing as educators. That's why you're here today. We have given him all senior-level college curriculum books. He has completed all the coursework. He has a better command of math and science than our own instructors. He has taught himself how to play five different instruments without lessons or instruction."

As these things go, word got out about this brilliant boy at Las Vegas High. The counselor spoke to the principal, who spoke to the Chamber of Commerce and then local state representatives. It was decided that Ray should skip college entirely and work with the PhDs at Los Alamos Labs in New Mexico.

They figured out a path for him to do this through employment with a private contractor named EG&G (Edgerton, Germeshausen, and Grier, Inc.)

Before going to New Mexico, he married Lorraine, his high school sweetheart and best friend, whom he had met in band class. Lorraine was a brilliant girl in her own right with a 160 IQ. They played in the Las Vegas Symphony together and ultimately had three children and, years later, three wonderful grandchildren.

Once in Los Alamos, Ray went on to file for and receive 33 patents in nuclear weapons design and several patents for advancements in photography, principally used to capture the first images ever taken from the surface of Mars.

Shortly after that, Ray was nominated and won as the Outstanding Young Man of the Year for the State of Nevada. Then he was nominated as one of the ten outstanding young men in the U.S.

Touring With Bobby Kennedy and John Glenn: He went on a speaking tour across the United States with Bobby Kennedy and John Glenn. Bobby Kennedy became Attorney General of the U.S., and John Glenn became an astronaut. Ray became a top executive with EG&G, a defense contractor, and ultimately had management responsibility over 14,000 employees.

John and Ray became good friends on that tour. After John Glenn successfully orbited Earth for the first time in 1962, he honored Ray by giving him the watch he wore on that trip through space, thanking him for his friendship during the speaking tour.

Ray oversaw the private technology side of Area 51 in Nevada, alongside the Commanding General. Ray's job was to develop stealth technology. When President John

Kennedy took a tour of Area 51 for the first time, it was Ray in the helicopter with him, explaining why EG&G chose that site.

Ray launched a private airline to transport incognito the hundreds of civilians needed to do the important work in Area 51. He named the airline after the General's wife, Jane. It is still in business today.

Country/Western Music Producer: After Ray was done with corporate life, he sought a change, a complete change; something totally different to do and something fun. So, he started a Country-Western music studio to produce the next big hit album. He discovered two talented singers named the Perry Sisters in Boston. He produced their first album ("Feelin' Country") that got to number two on the Country-Western charts.

It was all going very well; they had a bright future together, until Mona Perry ran off with the drummer and her sister, Sally, ran off with the guitarist. And that brought a quick end to his dream of being a Country Music producer.

Ray moved to LA to start over. A friend of Ray's who was aware of his technical gifts asked Ray if he could solve a serious problem in semiconductor manufacturing. Intel, at the time, had invented a highly condensed high-speed semiconductor that performed multiple operations simultaneously. It was revolutionary. The problem was that no one could produce it in volume.

Ray, listening to the technical issues and challenges involved, figured out the solution almost immediately. Which was astounding, because DuPont, IBM, Intel, TI, Microsoft, and all affiliated companies in this business had teams of scientists trying to come up with a solution. Yet Ray, listening to the problem for the first time, understood how to fix it.

Ray went on to invent the Pellicle, which made the manufacturability of Intel's Pentium chip possible. The Wall Street Journal stated that Ray's invention was as important to the advancement of computer technology as the invention of the transistor.

Ray started a fine dining restaurant in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Geronimo Lodge was born in 1989 and was an instant success. It continues to delight foodies to this day.

Here is a mildly edited rendering of Ray's arc. There was one Ray Winn, and one was more than enough.

- 1953 – Begins his career with EG&G, a physics and energy company and U.S. government contractor. Soon he'll have a security clearance. Ray is 19 years old.
- 1960 – Escorts JFK on a helicopter tour of the weapons test site.
- Worked across numerous advanced scientific fields including nuclear weapons testing, nuclear submarine planning, fusion research, nuclear rocket reactor operations.
- Participated in space probe sensor and imaging development including the Viking Mars Lander program.
- Worked at highly classified government sites including Area 51 and Los Alamos.
- ca. 1963 – buys a little V-tail Beechcraft Bonanza, commuting from Santa Barbara (where he lived with his wife Lorraine and three children at the time) to the nuclear test site in Nevada where he worked.

- 1974 – Meets Mike Weber who was going to graduate school and renting a room in Ray's rooming house in Chestnut Hill near Boston College. Ray builds a recording studio in the basement of the rooming house for his enjoyment.
- 1976 – Founds Condor Coatings Company and hires Mike Weber.
- 1978 – Phillip A. Hunt Chemical acquires Condor Coatings Company. Ray and Mike stay on with the company for about a year.
- 1978 – Purchases first sailboat "The Condor," a 56' ketch rig, teak and brass, affectionately known as "The Taiwan Turkey"
- 1979 – Founds Advanced Semi-Conductor Products in Santa Cruz, California, developing and patenting a special type of pellicle. ASP became a primary supplier of pellicles to the early semiconductor industry.
- [Exact Year Unknown] – Founds a nightclub called Edge.
- 1988 – Meets Peter Kavoian in August, beginning a personal and professional partnership lasting nearly four decades.
- [Exact Year Unknown] – Co-founds K+A Design Group which develops, designs, and builds high-end residential real estate. Together they develop and manage approximately one million square feet of commercial real estate in Texas.
- 1989 – Founds Geronimo Restaurant in Santa Fe on Canyon Road. When dissatisfied with the restaurant's bread quality Ray purchases a local commercial bakery.
- Early 1990s – Ray and Peter relocate to Montecito, California.
- 1994 – Purchases and restores a historic estate on Rametto Road, transforming a derelict property into a major architectural estate.
- 1995 – Sells Geronimo Restaurant to employees. The restaurant remains one of Santa Fe's most respected dining destinations.

A CV in Short

1957-1980: Chief of Staff to President @ EG&G, Inc.

1981-2002: President and CEO @ Advanced Semiconductor Products, Inc.

2006-2010: President @ Nano Life Sciences, Inc.

1987 to passing: Real Estate investor and developer @ 'Self-Employed'

2011 to passing: President @ Alexandros, Inc.

These biographies are based on research and could contain discrepancies.
If there are any excerpts you feel should be changed please feel free to contact [webmaster@lvhsaa](mailto:webmaster@lvhsaa.com)

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