



Richard Lowell Gray

January 20, 2026

Dr. Richard Lowell Gray, 74, of Surprise, Arizona, passed away peacefully on January 20, 2026, surrounded by loved ones.

Rich was born June 23, 1951 in Des Moines, Iowa, to Clyde and Jean Gray. Rich enrolled at Kansas State University in 1969, where he joined Army ROTC and became a member of Pershing Rifles. He was active on the Headhunters Exhibition Drill Team and was a founding member of the K-State University ROTC Ranger Team, which placed second nationally in the first National Army ROTC Ranger Competition in 1971.

Rich earned multiple degrees from Kansas State University, including a B.S. in Cultural Anthropology and Archaeology (1974), an M.S. in Adult and Occupational Education (1977), an M.S. in Adult and Community Counseling (1978), and a Ph.D. in Community Counseling (1986).

He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army Infantry in 1974 and graduated as a Distinguished Graduate from the Infantry Officer Basic Course. His military training included Airborne and Ranger Schools. His awards included the Ranger Tab, Parachutist Wings, Expert Infantry Badge, and Vietnam Era Service Ribbon.

Rich served as a platoon leader, executive officer, and organizational effectiveness consultant before honorably separating from the U.S. Army in

1977, where he was recognized among the top 10% of officers for promotion consideration.

Rich was a fierce and passionate advocate for kids with disabilities. He mentored and inspired many in the field of mental health services. This included Director of Mental Health Services for the White Mountain Apache Tribe, Psychologist for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and with his own psychological practice to schools in northern Arizona, including the White Mountain Apache, Navajo, and Hopi Tribes. He provided Forensic / Police Psychology services to various police departments and state agencies in northern Arizona. He also provided expert testimony in numerous civil and criminal court cases.

Rich worked as a Psychologist, Threat Manager, and Forensic Psychologist, providing his expertise to multiple school districts across Arizona. He served as Past-President of both the Arizona Counselors Association and the Arizona Mental Health Counselors Association, and as Western Region Representative on the Board of Directors of the American Mental Health Counselors Association. Rich also co-chaired the National Task Force on Multicultural Concerns for the American Mental Health Counselors Association and the Arizona State Task Force on Counselor Licensure. In addition, he served as Editor-in-Chief of the Arizona Counseling Journal, contributing significantly to the professional development of counselors statewide.

Rich was instrumental in educating families and educators of the impact of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to families.

Rich was a kid at heart. He was an incredible Disney enthusiast. He was also a Star Trek and Star Wars fan. He was an eclectic music lover, with music defining his life. He loved being a grandfather to his grandsons and step

grandchildren. He was extremely proud of his daughter and considers her his greatest achievement.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Clyde and Jean Gray, and his sisters, Flora Mary "Babe" Hunt and Rebecca Thompson. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Wanda Gray; his daughter, Catherine Elizabeth (Dean) Hanna; his sister, Mary Catherine (Mark) Coolbaugh; and his brother, Robert Mathew Gray. He is also survived by six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Graveside services will be held March 6th, 2026 at 1:30 PM at National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, 2929 E Pinnacle Peak Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85024.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Hospice of the Valley (<https://hov.org/>)

Rich lived life by the following motto:

No mission too difficult, no sacrifice too great, Duty First!

Cemetery Details

National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona

2929 E Pinnacle Peak Rd
Phoenix, AZ 85024

Previous Events

Graveside

MAR 6. 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM (MT)

National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona
2929 E Pinnacle Peak Rd
Phoenix, AZ 85024

Tribute Wall

MF

“ Working with Rich was a joy. He was an exceptional mentor and I will miss our conversations.

Marc Freese - April 08 at 01:14 PM

MR

“ Great write up!! Kudos to you. Rich was more than a colleague but a true friend. He always had your back no matter what and is one of the greatest child advocate one would ever encounter. Enjoyed our times together going out to eat and seeing movies. Will always cherish our memories we had together.

Michael Remus - January 28 at 06:50 PM

PG

Rich was my mentor at Deer Valley and I still ask myself, “What would Rich do?” He always put child first and that legacy lives on.

Parker Cheryl Galope - February 12 at 03:31 PM

LL

Rich was the most amazing human being. He was always there for his friends and colleagues and loved his family so deeply. What a gift we were all given to have known him. His professional expertise and his intuitive abilities were beyond compare and his friendship was something I will always treasure and remember.

Linda Lewis - March 05 at 10:49 PM

AC

“ Wanda & Cathy – Please again accept my deepest condolences for your loss. May your many memories together bring you comfort during this difficult time. We thank you for entrusting Simply Cremation to care for his final arrangements.

Ashley at Simply Cremation - January 28 at 11:45 AM

TJ

I was a member of the 16 member drill team with Richard and a fellow PR. Even separated by time and miles we all felt a special bond of brotherhood and affection. My prayers are sent to the family for the loss of a fine man.

Tom Jensen LTC(R)

Tom Jensen - January 28 at 03:34 PM