



## Raymond Becker

September 2, 1933 - May 18, 2021

Raymond Becker, age 87, passed away on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 having spent the past five years with multiple health issues which began with a fall and ended with Parkinsons disease. He was affectionally referred to as the "Grandfather of Kalamazoo Real Estate". He was the Executive Vice President of the Association for 38 years. He also taught real estate classes for Kalamazoo Valley Community College, University of Michigan, and the Greater Kalamazoo Association of Realtors School of Real Estate. Ray's passion for his work led to many advancements and innovations in the industry. Through his work, Ray made many connections and friendships that lasted his lifetime. During his tenure he received numerous honors and awards. One of which is an auditorium named after him at the GKAR facility. The MSAE "Michigan Society for Association Executives" of which Raymond was a long-standing member stated, "During his tenure, Becker has tripled the membership, organized monthly orientation classes for new members, developed a membership manual, developed the Kalamazoo Board of Realtors' Multiple Listing Service into one of the nation's first computerized programs and took first place honors for his public relations program at the National Association of Realtors." Becker also developed a member orientation program for member boards of the Michigan Association of Realtors, for which he also established a group insurance program. His list of achievements also includes contributions to American Society of Association Executives and the University of Michigan Alumni. Raymond attended

Northwestern Michigan College and received a scholarship to attend Michigan State University. On April 17, 1987, the Dean of the Graduate School of Business Administration of MSU wrote, "Your alma mater is proud to recognize your achievements. Clearly your being selected as the recipient of the first Real Estate Alumni of Michigan Scholarship back in 1955 was an excellent choice. The leadership, service and contributions to the industry that you have made cause that scholarship to be one of the best investments ever by the industry." Raymond was preceded in death by his parents Casper Hubert Becker and Gertrude A. Dierich; brothers, David Becker, Gary Becker; former wife, Marilyn Jane Becker; sons, Kurt Becker, and Philip Becker. He is survived by daughters, Audrey Cavanaugh, Cheri Glisson, and Holly Becker-Baratta; nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren; brother, Jim and Connie Becker; and his wife, Priscilla Willis, who he married in 1990. In remembrance of Raymond Becker –

"Some people come in our lives and quickly go.

Some people move our souls to dance.

They awaken us to a new understanding with the passing whisper of their wisdom.

Some people make the sky more beautiful to gaze upon.

They stay in our lives for a while, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same." A family and friends gathering to honor Raymond is being planned. Memorial contributions can be made to the Raymond C.

Becker Realtor Business Scholarship at Northwestern Michigan College, 1701 E. Front St. Traverse City, MI 49686 or the Van Andel Institute for Parkinson's Research – VA1 Attn: Philanthropy, 333 Bostwick Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Raymond Becker*

August 31, 2022 at 01:26 PM



“ *"I am honored that I could spend Ray's final chapter in his life with him. He shared precious memories with me of his wife and children and other life experiences. It was easy to love and care for him. I am a better man for knowing him and learning from him. Blessings and peace to those he loved."*

**Ron Schuster** - June 10, 2021 at 12:00 AM



“ *"We have many fond memories with our dear neighbors, Raymond and Priscilla. They lived three doors down from us on Croton Pond for about 30 years. Many special memories were made in that time. Raymond was a true friend, who was caring, generous, kind, and fun! We miss him! Prayers continue for you, Priscilla, and Raymond's daughters."*

**George and Pamela Cronk** - June 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM



“ *"It took only a few minutes of our business acquaintance to begin understanding this man, Ray Becker was royalty. He was the best of humanity. His gregarious, yet humble and empathetic demeanor was immediately appealing. He always made me feel at ease and he always had a smile when we crossed paths. It's rare when a person of this ilk is happened upon. Lucky us who did. Ray will long be missed."*

**Keith Knapp** - May 27, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MF

“I share a quote written here by Realtor, Jim Douglas. "To all that knew him, we are better people because of it." As a service provider to the Kalamazoo Board of Realtors and to GKAR, I grew to know Ray's kind and diplomatic ways quite well over a 14 year period. A story I have told time and again is that Ray once wrote an unsolicited letter to me that was about me. He thanked me for the service I provided but more specifically, he wrote of the impact I had on him. I was surprised, honored, and so deeply touched that it brought me to tears. Why would this important man spend five minutes of his valuable time commending me? But of course we know the answer: that was Ray. Since that time, I have likely written 50 such unsolicited letters on behalf of others who have gone the extra mile for me. If Ray knew that, I believe he would know the impact he has had on my life. Ray Becker, may you rest in peace."

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**Margaret Fleckenstein** - May 25, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DC

“Ray and Larry Rogers took me fishing at Rays cabin on Beaver Island. We flew up there in Rogers Bonanza. Great guy! King if GKAR.”

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**Dave Christensen** - May 23, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MW

“Ray was my first resident when I started working at Riley's Grove and I loved him dearly from the first day I met him. I looked forward to every shift knowing I would see his smiling face- I'll never forget the many memories of sneaking away to watch football, basketball, & baseball games in his room, how he would give me a Weathers candy and tell me Good Job honey at the end of my shift, or the endless giggles we would share about our own personal jokes. Thank you for sharing him with us- I feel so blessed to have taken care of him and gotten to know him. I have no doubt he is with his creator catching some big fish with his big smile watching over us all!”

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**Mary Sue Witkowski** - May 23, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JM

“I met Ray when my husband John was president of the board. We went to several conventions and other Realtor gatherings over the early eighties and after. Ray was always professional, genuine, kind, and a great leader. He always put the spotlight on his board members not on him. And he was fun! Rest In Peace, Ray. And my sympathies to the family.”

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**Judy Moore** - May 23, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DS

“Our friendship started way too late in life and ended way too early. It was a warm and sea air filled day in February 2011 that we sat down to dinner and met Raymond and Pricilla in the Emerald Princess Dining Room. We have befriended many people in our years of cruising and it was an absolute pleasure to meet such a wonderful couple from Michigan. As real estate appraisers, it was always a pleasure to discuss the current status of the real estate market with Raymond as well as trade stories of years past. As avid travelers we could and did spend hours discussing the most memorable places in the world that we have and have yet to see with the two of you. Raymond will be missed. He fought long and hard over the past few years and is now at peace. Our memories will be cherished and our prayers will be with those mourning the loss of Raymond and with Pricilla as she starts the next chapter in her book of life. Friends always, Love, Dave and Deb Smeenge”

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**Dave and Deb Smeenge** - May 22, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JB

“Ray was an outstanding, caring man. He was innovative, gentle and a mover & shaker on so many levels. I looked to him at the start of my career in real estate and remember his support and extension of himself to always help others to be their best. Thank you Ray. I extend my support to his family and friends in this time of loss and memories. God’s peace. John Brown”

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**John Brown** - May 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM

AV

“I met Ray in 1965 and he persuaded me to join the Kalamazoo Board of Realtors. I was active as a Realtor for 35+ years. Ray was a kind and considerate man and was admired by all who knew him. Ray was one of my best friends, We were tennis buddies for many years. My wife Kathleen and I stood beside them as Ray and Priscilla were married in 1990. We had many good times together. Priscilla was a real godsend to Ray and they had many travels around the world. He will be sorely missed by all”

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**Anthony C VanZanten** - May 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DM

“Ray Becker was an amazing boss. He hired me right out of high school and taught me everything I needed. He encouraged me to become his assistant and I worked for him for 22 years, until his well deserved retirement. He was generous with his time if you had questions or just needed something clarified. As a staff, we would get together one weekend a year to canoe the Muskegon River. What fun we had. He will most certainly be missed and my thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends. Dawn Marr employee”

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**Dawn Marr** - May 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM

HK

“Starting out in Real Estate, Ray Gave me some good advice, that I will never Forget. and I will missed him. Henry Kellum”

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**Henry Kellum** - May 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM

RP

“Priscilla: Sincere Condolences..Having lost a wife of 56 years in March, I know how painful it can be.”

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**Robert Parks** - May 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JC

“I joined GKAR in 1983 coming from 3 years of experience in Northern California real estate, which at the time was typically regarded ahead of most of the country in real estate practices. Not in Kalamazoo, because of one of the most hands on, progressive thinking leaders in the industry, which was Ray Becker. Education, education, education, was the mantra that he/his Board of Realtors pushed the membership for. Become more professional, hone your skills in sales, become involved in your Board, and join a committee. Becoming a committee member was giving your time and energy to the association and the community, to give back, and improve our industry. I can't remember him not being present at any Risk Management committee meeting or other committees I was on ever, unless he had to take a quick phone call, which typically always happened. Because of his leadership and our memberships involvement, we became the leader in the state in the transformation of creating new forms, especially sales agreements, that needed a complete overhaul in the late 80's and early 90's. Most state associations used our forms and contracts as a template to work off of because of the thoroughness and thought out detail due to commitment of the many committees. With Ray in charge, our association was a family, actually better than a family. Because it seemed like everyone got along, because of his never ending smiles, and love of people and his job. Thank you Ray!!! Hope you're at match point with a big lead in heaven against your tennis foe.”

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**Jim Cavanaugh** - May 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JD

“I would like to pass on my deepest sympathies to Priscilla and the rest of Ray's family. He was the consummate professional and taught me so much over the years. From about 1981 when I went thru orientation and working with him on several committees, I learned so much about how to work with people to get things done. He was so good at that! I have missed him since he retired and knowing now that he has passed, I miss him even more. To all that knew him, we are better people because of it, and to those who never had the privilege, you have missed an opportunity to know and learn from a great man!”

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**Jim Douglass** - May 20, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DB

“Ray was the Executive Vice President of the Kalamazoo Board of Realtors when I joined in 1968. My dad, Joe Boris, and I were both proud to have served on the Board of Directors of the Kalamazoo Board of Directors under the tutelage of Ray Becker. A sad day for all Realtors.”

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**dick boris** - May 20, 2021 at 12:00 AM