

Ted Ray Ruggles

April 15, 2025



Ted Ray Ruggles, born on July 12, 1949, in Mishawaka, Indiana, passed away peacefully in his own home surrounded by his family on March 18, 2025. He was the only son of Oliver George Ruggles and Patsy Ruth (Wolff) Ruggles, a devoted husband to Donna Lee (Smith) Ruggles for 33 years, a loving father to Emily Caitlin Ruggles and Oliver Joseph Ruggles, a cherished brother to Mickey Marie (Ruggles) Fell and the late Julie Ann (Ruggles) Champion, and an uncle to Heather Marie (McCoy) Butler and the late Ryan Patrick McCoy. Ted's warmth and kindness touched all who knew him.

After graduating from Indiana University, Ted went on to graduate school in behavioral psychology at two preeminent institutions in the field, earning a master's degree from Western Michigan University and a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas. He distinguished himself as a consummate scholar, publishing articles, book chapters, and presenting numerous papers at national conferences. Recognizing his talents, faculty at Kansas kept him on after he completed his Ph.D. to continue his teaching and research. Despite his busy schedule, Ted was always ready for an adventure. One day, he and his best friend Greg walked into a motorcycle store,

bought two new motorcycles, packed their bags, and rode across Kansas into the Colorado Rockies in search of fun.

From Kansas, Ted headed west to California to seek his fortune. He first worked at Sonoma State Hospital, where he developed a model for evaluating treatment effectiveness, which later became the statewide standard. From Sonoma, he moved to Humboldt County, becoming a highly sought-after psychologist for the Redwood Coast Regional Center. He founded Northern California Developmental Services, which provided support for individuals in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties for 41 years. Ted then went on to serve as Chief Psychologist at Pelican Bay State Prison. Once again, his competence was recognized, and he subsequently became an expert for a federal court-appointed special master tasked with evaluating the statewide implementation of mandated mental health services in the state prison system. Ted clearly distinguished himself wherever he worked.

After moving to Northern California, Ted met the love of his life, Donna, and together they built their family and home in Humboldt County. After that, he spent over 25 years in Gasquet, California, where he found joy in the tranquility of rural life. He had a dream of building a house from the ground up and turned that dream into reality. Using his woodworking talents and attention to detail, he handcrafted or directed every aspect of the construction of their home in Gasquet, creating a space perfectly suited to his family and as unique as he was. Without reserve, Ted deeply loved his family, and his desire to provide a beautiful home and surroundings was driven by his wish to offer them abundant opportunities.

Ted's passion for gardening, nature, and animals was a source of inspiration and comfort to his family and friends. His legacy of love and dedication will forever be remembered by those who were fortunate to know him.

Though Ted tended to be a quiet man, just below the surface was a wonderful, creative sense of humor, and an amazingly broad competence. Ted was one of those rare people who could do anything, from car repair to woodworking to complex psychological work. If he didn't already know how to do something, he would learn. In a letter of recommendation for Ted, one of his faculty advisors at the University of Kansas described him as "a man's man." She was referring to Ted as quietly strong and capable. In his poem "If," Rudyard Kipling wrote that if a man could "talk with crowds and keep his virtue and walk with kings—nor lose the common touch," he would be a man. That was Ted.

Ted will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing and loving him.

Donations can be made in honor of Ted Ray Ruggles to Coastal Home Health & Hospice. P.O. Box 6042, Brookings, Oregon 97415 CoastalHHH.org