



John Ray

September 5, 1962 - March 12, 2011

John Andrew Ray was born on Sept. 5, 1962 in Bethesda, MD and died Saturday, March 12, 2011 in Fort Collins, CO. John “Andrew” was raised in Richmond, VA and graduated from Huguenot High School in 1980. He was passionate about white-water rafting and he continued to pursue his interest when he moved to Fort Collins. He attended Colorado State University (CSU) and received an Undergraduate degree from the Horticulture Department in 1989. After graduation he propagated old-garden roses at the High Country Rosarium in Denver, Colorado. John received a Masters degree in Agricultural Systems Management at Purdue University in 1993. He thoroughly enjoyed expanding his horticultural expertise when he accepted a position as a Research Technician in the Fruit and Vegetable Science Department at Cornell University. He was actively involved with the Cornell Orchards and became knowledgeable about apple tree propagation, paw paw trees, hard cider production and environmental data collection and management. He married Gayle Volk, whom he had met during his years at CSU, on August 6, 1994 in Corvallis, OR. In 1998, John and Gayle moved to Pullman, WA, where John performed cold hardiness research in wheat as a research technician for USDA-ARS. In 1999, they returned to Fort Collins, CO and they welcomed their daughter Emily into their lives in 2000. Their son, Christopher, was born in 2002. John has been a Research Associate in the Horticultural and Landscape Architecture Department at CSU where he managed the Plant Environmental Research Center greenhouses on the CSU campus. He

coordinated the CSU annual poinsettia variety trials, Easter lily crop, and spring plant sales as part of the student practicum program. He thoroughly enjoyed sharing his love of horticulture with students and the Fort Collins community. John was a devoted husband and father. Together their family enjoyed numerous travel opportunities and they shared their love of plants. They frequently spent summer weekends camping and hiking in the Rocky Mountains. John continued his lifelong desire to learn new things and began beekeeping in 2010. He recently had become active in developing an Interior Landscapes class for CSU. He was known for always being available to friends and family. He is dearly missed by the many who knew and loved him. John is survived by his wife Gayle and their children, Emily (11) and Christopher (8) Ray; parents James Roberts and Catherine Tissot Ray of Richmond, VA; siblings Sarah Ray Pickard of Stafford, VA, Michael Ray of Richmond, VA and Jennie Ray Hart of Manakin Sabot, VA as well as their families. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Rome and Elouise Simmons and Catherine Tissot; and his brother James Roberts "Robbie" Ray, Jr. A service of remembrance will be held at 2:00 pm Friday, March 18th at the CSU Lory Student Center, Cherokee Park Room. John's family requests that any memorial donations please be made to: Emily & Christopher Ray Donation Fund c/o First National Bank, PO Box 578, Ft Collins, CO 80521 OR to The Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave., Ft. Collins, CO 80526.

Tribute Wall



“ *John Ray*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *John was a friend and a fellow fruit enthusiast. I will miss him.*

Scott Skogerboe - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *We will miss you John.*

The Chappell Family - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *Sarah and Jennie, I send my love and prayers to both of you and your families. So sorry to hear about your brother John.*

Betty Dillon - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *We are so sorry to hear about John and our hearts go out to Gayle and children. We remember John coming to our home with other students for morning brunch and reading the comics to the children. Meetings were in OR when John and Gayle got married and we got to be there, Gayle was beautiful and John looked proud, nervous, and happy. If there is anything we can do for your family, please let us know.*

Anna and Harrsion Hughes - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KA

“ Words are useless...We are so sorry.

Karrie and McKenna Allen - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SV

“ Gayle, I am so very sorry for your loss. I know John was a wonderful husband and father. I am praying for you, Emily, and Christopher that you will find comfort in Jesus' words "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in Me."
My love, Aunt Shari

Shari Volk - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ So terribly sorry to hear about John. We appreciated John's love of plants and his sharing that with our children at UCC and Bennett. We always appreciated his advice at the CSU plant sale too. Hannah had great fun with John and Christopher at the Ray household as they worked on Lego projects. Our sympathy goes out to Gayle and kids at this sad time.

Thiemann Family - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ Gayle, Emily and Christopher,
My thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time. You guys have been on my mind these past few days. I am remembering all the fond memories of John and how he made my cousin the happiest woman alive.

Love, Suzie

Suzie Mangum - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ *Gayle, Emily and Christopher,
My thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time. You guys have been on my mind these past few days. I am remembering all the fond memories of John and how he made my cousin the happiest woman alive.*

Love, Cousin Suzie

Suzie Mangum - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ *Dear John-
Thank you for helping me through graduate school at CSU. Your sharp wit and contagious laugh, even if it was at my expense, was the agreeable soundtrack of my time there. Our heated scientific debates, constantly accompanied by chalk dust and graph lines, were always enlightening. In fact, you clarified many scientific principles for me; you were an excellent and thorough educator. Thank you also for teaching me more than I ever wanted to know about wiring and programming a weather station (below). I wish I would have let you know earlier how much your help meant to me. Farewell. you will be fondly remembered and truly missed.
Kind regards-
Jen*

Jennifer Boussetot - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TW

“ *It was a pleasure to have met Andrew during our visits to the USA to see Jennie and Roger. Our thoughts are with you all. XXX*

Tony & Sue Weatherhead - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

AL

“ My heart goes out to all the family and friends. I didn't have a lot of contact with John but the times I did left a lasting impression of a caring, helpful, energetic, and extremely competent guy. I will miss seeing him at the plant sales at PERC. Hugs and sympathy. Andrea

Andrea Lawrence - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SK

“ I still remember woking with John at Dr. Harrison Hughes' tissue culture lab back in the 80's. John was always jolly and a pleasure to have around. I also remember visiting him while he was working at the High Country Rosarium. He will be greatly missed. Gayle, I am very sorry for your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your children.

Sarada

Sarada Krishnan - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

HS

“ Gayle my thoughts are with you. Heidi

Heidi Schwaninger - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CB

“ Our hearts and prayers are with the whole family in this sudden loss of Andrew Ray.

Prayerfully, Carolyn and Bill

Carolyn and BillWilkins - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TB

“ Dear Gayle,
I'm so sorry for this terrible loss. My thoughts are with you.

Thomas

Thomas Björkman - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BW

“ *With deepest sympathy from Lafayette Florist Gift Shop and Garden Center and Brian J Wheat*

Brian J Wheat - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

IM

“ *There will never be another one like you!
Adios, old friend...*

Ian Merwin - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

HB

“ *My Prayers go out to the whole family.*

Holly Brown - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TH

“ *Gayle and Family,
John always brought spunk, feistiness, and incredible knowledge to everything he did. He is missed greatly. My family's prayers are being offered for comfort and peace for you at this difficult time.
With love,
Teri*

Teri Howlett - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ I will miss you.
Was cleaning up and found our Rocket
In the garage.
I'm so sorry. For you and everyone who knew you. Your family. Time
spent with you and all of the kids was precious.
God Bless,
John Gieser

John Gieser - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DH

“ We are keeping all of the family in our thoughts and prayers as you
go through this most difficult time.
Doug & Janet Hill

Doug & Janet Hill - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ Our thoughts are with you at this difficult time.

Jean Swann - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ We were so sorry to hear about John he was always fun to be
around. He will be missed. Our prayers are with you Gayle, Emily,
Chris and the rest of the family.

Don and Peg Matti - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ What shocking news to learn that John has passed away. He was a
light in many people's lives, and brightened our lives. His life was an
inspiration to many, and he will be fondly remembered.

Chris Wien - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MO

“ We so enjoyed spending Wednesday night suppers with John at church learning about plants and fencing and whatever topic came up. He was such a caring parent to Emily and Christopher as he was always there to get their dinners and then get them to choir. Gayle, Emily and Christopher, you are all in our prayers and hearts right now. Peace be with you, John and to your family.

Mike, Betsy, Allea & Jack Ortega - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

RC

“ I met John Ray in college. With friends, Paul and Dennis, we spent many days backpacking in Colorado. John never failed to raise our spirits and to make us laugh. Thank you John Ray for being you. My condolences to Gayle and family. Peace be with you.

Ron Conard - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

PZ

“ No words can express the pain from the loss of a friend like John. You enriched my life with your humor, your craziness, and your love for your family and your dedication to all of your students and faculty at CSU. To Gayle and the kids, to your Mom Cathy and Dad Jim, Sarah and the rest of the family my deepest sympathy. I will miss John tremendously. Rest in peace my friend

Paul Zimmerman - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KM

“ It has been such a pleasure to get to know your family over the last three years. I am incredibly saddened by your loss. Your family is in my thoughts and prayers.

Katie Meadows - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ John and I met in CSU when I was a grad student in 2000, He was very friendly and helpful. One thing I remember was his infectious smile and humor. I shall miss him.

My condolences to Gayle and Family.

Jayraj Muni - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ A very fine man will be missed

Larry McQuain - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BH

“ We extend our deepest condolences to the entire Ray family and will continue to keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

Bety and Ross

Betty and Ross Hotchkiss - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MP

“ I'll always remember John as a bundle of energy, with a great sense-of-humor and a wealth of knowledge about so many things. He was always curious about everything, and a very hard worker. He was a tremendous asset to the Department over the years that he worked at Cornell. We are all so very saddened by John's loss and share in grieving with Gayle and her children.

Marvin Pritts - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CH

“ John will be dearly miss. We love you Gayle, and will be praying for you and the children during this difficult time.

Chuck and Cindy Haley - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ There are no words to express our heartfelt sympathy to you and your family during this time. We are so very sorry for your loss. If there is anything we can do please let us know. May all the love of family and friends comfort you.

-The Jordans

The Jordan Family - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BL

“ I knew John while we both were technicians in the Department of Horticulture at Cornell. He was always so helpful and knowledgeable. John knew exactly when to use his humor to lighten up the mood. I am terribly sorry John is gone. My thoughts are with Gayle and your family.

Betsy Leonard - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ I met John Ray many years ago, when through a mutual friend we became college roommates. I will always remember John as a passionate man who loved his family, friends, the outdoors, Colorado and the beauty of nature. He was a brilliant, warm and caring person who always seemed to find the good in life and he will be dearly missed. He touched people in his own unique way and you should be proud of the positive impact he had on so many lives. I will always hold a special place in my heart for him. He will be missed... but never forgotten.

My sincerest condolences to John and his entire family.

Mike Barrowman - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ Dear John,

No matter what mood I was in you always put a smile on my face. I will miss talking to you about horticulture, fermentation, beekeeping, and all of the other things we had in common. PERC and the Dept. of Horticulture will never be the same without you. Even though you are no longer physically with us, you will always be in our memories. Rest in peace buddy. Much love, -Remi

Remi Bonnart - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MZ

“ So sorry for your loss. I'll always remember John working very hard to teach Emily's girl scout troop how to build a fire with wet wood in pouring rain at Rocky Mountain National Park. He was so patient, animated, knowledgable and a great dad.

Mark Zabel - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BR

“ Gayle,

All of us in Corvallis are thinking of you and the children at this difficult time. I hope that the memories of the good times of your life with John will sustain you in the coming years.

Barbara Reed - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ *Gayle, Emily, and Christopher,
I am so sad for your loss. I hope that knowing there are so many people thinking of you and willing to help in any way we can will help you through this time. Please let Adam and me know if we can watch kids, bring meals, or help in any other way. You are in our thoughts.*

Shanna

Shanna Henk - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ *I feel lucky to have gotten to know John through CSU. It didn't take long after meeting John to realize that his family, his faith, the horticultural industry and the students at CSU were the passions of his life. His warm smile and caring spirit touched many lives and will be missed.*

Gayle, May Faith, Family and Friends comfort you are your family.

Duane

Duane Sinning - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

GK

“ *Sincere condolences to Gayle and Family during this time of immense loss. Your friends and colleagues at NGRL are thinking of you.*

Gary Kinard - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SA

“ So stunned and saddened to learn of John's untimely death. He was one of the good guys, and the world is a little darker with his loss. I met John when he was a CSU student, and have always admired his wit, intelligence, and generosity of spirit. My prayers are with his family, his wife, his children, and I hope your many memories will sustain and comfort you in your grief.

Sande - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

EN

“ We are all deeply saddened by the loss of John. We will cherish the memories of the times we spent together. John was such an incredible person. Always making us laugh, teaching us new things, helping everyone in any way he could. He had an incredible sense of humor and a way of brightening up the room wherever he was! He will be greatly missed!! Peace, prayers and blessings to all of John's family and friends.

Elizabeth Neil - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

RR

“ I want to thank John for the many years of his kindness toward me. He was a very special person to have known. He was always willing to help anyone in need. My prayers go out to his family and loved ones. May his memory continue to live in your hearts and through the many plants he so generously gave to everyone. God Bless Your Family who will continue his legacy.

Ramiro Ramirez - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DH

“ John will be missed. Always enjoyed visiting with John about whatever. I valued his keen insight into greenhouse management issues. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of the family.

David Holm - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

AB

“ I will always appreciate John's willingness to share his knowledge, humor, experience and thoughts about the world with anyone; whether they asked for them or not. I will miss our long conversations about making hard cider and other fermented beverages. John was a truly unique person and he will be greatly missed.

Amanda Broz - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

ES

“ My sincerest sympathy to Gayle and family. I haven't worked at the orchards (Cornell) for a few years, but I'll always remember John's selflessness and sense of humor. He touched many hearts.

Erma Sacchi - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

YH

“ John was a consultant on my graduate research project and he even continued some trials in the plot for a few years afterward. I am so very sorry for your loss. He will be missed,
Yvette

Yvette Henson - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ So sad to hear about John's death. It was a pleasure working with him at High Country Rosarium in Denver. A wonderful man so full of energy!

Melinda Campbell Stroupe - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MV

“ Dear Gayle, Emily and Christopher,
Please know we are thinking of you at this sad time. Christopher and Latifah were in preschool together at the UCC. We have fond memories of John from there, certainly that he was a devoted father.
With love & prayers, the Hirchi-Vogls

Mary Vogl - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ John would go out of his way even with his busy schedule to help anyone out. He had a profound impact on me as a graduate student. I will miss him greatly.

Drew Miller - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

ML

“ Gayle, Emily and Christopher,

I am so sorry to hear the passing of John. You are in my thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

Melissa, Brian, Austin and Addison Lackey

Melissa Lackey - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ My heartfelt sympathy goes to the family of John Ray. He was an extremely good person that certainly made my education easier because of his help. The campus community lost one of the good ones. God Bless!

Jay Fetig - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ Thank you, John, for being my daughter's teacher. Karen enjoyed your classes, loved her work in the greenhouses, and respected you very much. My thoughts and prayers are with your family.

Cathy Snider - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

EM

“ Our very best thoughts are with you Gayle, Christopher and Emily.

Eric Sutherland, Christie Mathews - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SS

“ John Ray was the perfect neighbor, always being a good friend with a kind heart. Rolf Court will always remember and miss him for being the person he was.

I speak for all our neighbors, when I say "Gayle we are here for you in the difficult time ahead. Please allow us to help in any way we can. Emily and Christopher, always be proud of your wonderful father, who will always be with you.

Love and heartfelt sympathy, Sondy

Sandra Skrove - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

NH

“ Dear Gail, No words can describe how sorry I am for your loss. John's legacy and spirit is lived through your children and I am honored to be one of their teachers. My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

Nicole Hallenbeck - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DP

“ John I will miss you dearly. I have been flooded with memories for the past few days of the backpacking trips we made during college and the years we spent at CSU. Everyone was great! You were an insperation to everyone you touched with your life. One of the fondest memories I have was the week we spent winter camping at 11,200 feet at treeline outside of Aspen. I remember the stew you made Ron and I after telmark skiing thur the trees like madmen and the snow cave you built and slept in. You will live on forever in my heart John. The greatest gift we can now give to the world and each other is to touch someone else with the love and gusto that John touched us!

Dennis Pierce - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SP

“ Thoughts and prayers to all the Ray family. I remember Andrew fondly from the times at Reveille United Methodist Church in Richmond, Va.
Thoughts and prayers to all.
Sue Amos Parahm

Sue Amos Parham - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KP

“ Rest in peace John.

Karen Panter - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ Gayle,Emily,and Christopher, we are so sorry to hear of your loss. Our prayers have been and will continue to be for your peace and comfort. Though we don't know your family well, we love you.

The Martinez Family - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SA

“ Andrew was a very nice little boy. My children grew up with the Ray children at Reveille UMC. His parents, Cathy and Jim, were in my Sunday School Class (Christian Fellowship Class). It was good to hear about all his accomplishments and wonderful life. I am sorry that it was so short.

Sally Anderson

Sally Anderson - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

HC

“ Gayle,
I am sorry for your loss. You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers.
Sincerely,
Heidi

Heidi Cornell - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KB

“ I am sorry to hear about John. Our thoughts are with you in this time of sorrow. Dean, Karen, Madelyn and Andrew.

Karen Bennett - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BO

“ We send our heartfelt condolences to Andrew's family, and offer our support and help, if needed. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

May God give you peace and courage in this time of sorrow.

With our love and warmest regards.

Betty and Noel Owers - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ John Ray...We worked together for 3 years off and on as I went to school in the Horticultural dept. and did consulting work overseas in the late 80's. John was a wild man. He was fun. He was also quite serious when it came to the plant business. We took care of the fruit plots at PERC and out north near the Budweiser plant. My favorite times with him were doing tissue culture up in the lab and going over to the western slope during apple harvest time. John was a unique person, and one that I have never forgotten though the years have moved on.

Michelle Myers - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Gayle, Emily and Christopher

Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Take care

March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

EW

“ John was a wonderful man, father, friend and every helpful neighbor..I miss seeing him every morning hustling around with his coffee cup, getting the kids together, taking out the garbage, mowing the lawn in summer, coming over to my house for helpful suggestions re my garden/house..

I miss John and my heart is aching, as I look across the street and know how wonderful Gayle, Emily, Christopher have always been for me, and my love and sympathy go out to them, and I hope that I can be as good a friend and neighbor to them as John was...and maybe I can be a better neighbor now.

I love you all, my condolences for your loss, please turn to me if you need something..Anne

EAnne Wuerslin - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ My deepest condolences for Gayle, Emily and Christopher. I had big shoes to fill following in John's footsteps at Cornell's Horticulture Dept. Lots of great stories told over the years about John's antics! Though I may never gain John's love of the pawpaw smoothie, I sure hope he's enjoying one now!

Mike Brown - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ John was always friendly, enthusiastic and ready to help a friend out. I valued his knowledge and friendship. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of the family.

Mike Bartolo - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TB

“ John was a wonderful man. I learned so much from him. We always had tons of laughs. He was always available & gave great advise. I will truly miss him!!

Theresa (Prucha) Barnes - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ I am very sorry to hear of Johns passing. He was a good friend and colleuge. we worked on many Plant Growth Regulator research projects together.
I will miss him as as a friend and resource in Horticulture.
My prayers go out to you and family.

Dave Barcel - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ I frequently visited the PERC to purchase plants grown by my fellow students at CSU. John was always there, excited and jovial, talking to everyone and eager to answer any questions. You could see his passion for what he did and it showed in the plants. My tomatoes were incredible last season. I often thought what fun it would be as a student under his teachings.

My thoughts go out to your family and this year I dedicate my garden to John.

Megan Fogarty - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CV

“ It's been a few months and you're still in my thoughts, John, and missed every day. You are an inspiration for going the extra mile. You live on in our hearts, soul and laughter. Rest in peace.

Carol Volk - March 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM