

Statement from the family of Governor Robert D. Ray

July 8, 2018

Des Moines – Robert D. Ray, Iowa’s 38th governor, who never stopped serving the state and its people in recent decades, passed away early this morning in Des Moines. Gov. Ray was 89. He had dealt with Parkinson’s disease and died peacefully of natural causes at Wesley Acres, according to David Oman, Ray’s former chief of staff.

“Bob Ray defined the modern era governorship for Iowa and beyond,” Oman said. “More importantly, he touched the lives of three generations of Iowans, who respected, trusted and followed his leadership. He will be greatly missed by many; his legacy will extend for decades to come.”

Ray was elected governor in 1968 and re-elected four times, serving a total of 14 years. He later served as CEO of two insurance firms, one in Cedar Rapids and one in Des Moines. In the late 1990s, Ray was acting mayor of Des Moines and then president of Drake University.

Gov. Ray is survived by his wife Billie, three daughters and eight grandchildren.

Plans for celebrating the life of Gov. Ray will be shared later, Oman confirmed.