



## Raymond Sira

November 28, 1961 - September 25, 2022

Raymond Sira, 60, of Shawsville, VA, died as a result of a sudden accident at his home on September 25, 2022. Ray was born on November 28, 1961, in Raritan, New Jersey. Ray graduated from Bridgewater-Raritan High School West and Somerset County Vocational School in Bridgewater, New Jersey. In addition to his studies in electronics, he was a tenor in the choir, advanced choir, and Cavaliers.

Ray's sense of adventure started very young with him crawling through the storm sewers in front of his childhood home, then later going on trips with his dad to real caves. He fell in love with caves and the caving community, leading to a lifelong dedication and passion that shaped the rest of his life.

Ray's adventures continued with his love of motorcycles. A highlight was riding his bike cross-country to a National Speleological Society (NSS) Convention.

During his younger years, Ray was an active member of the Northern New Jersey Grotto (NNJG), a local caving club, where he held positions as Treasurer, Vice Chairman, Chairman, and Editor of the NNJG's newsletter Speleothemes.

Ray left New Jersey and moved to the New River Valley area of Virginia in 1993 to be near the caves and cavers he grew to love. He soon took a job at

Virginia Tech. Although he was a seasoned caver, he decided to attend the VPI grotto's training program and officially joined the VPI Cave Club as member 356 in October 1995. He became a life member of the grotto in spring 2011. Ray would gladly help take new students caving, graciously passing on his knowledge of caving skills and practices. Ray was thanklessly dedicated to the caving community. He participated in practice rescues, assisted in several cave search and rescue incidents, and often helped with cave and road cleanups. Ray is in the yellow suit on the cover of the NSS' Caving Basics book. Ray was a lifelong NSS member where he managed to be both Secretary and Treasurer of the NSS Vertical Section for many years. He also ran the Vertical Section climbing contest at NSS Conventions. Countless young cavers have learned vertical caving techniques from Ray, always in a safe and thoughtful way. Ray was also the Giles County, Virginia, coordinator for the Virginia Speleological Survey, for several years. As an accomplished caver, there are many stories of harrowing adventure that involve Ray, a cave, and some combination of misfortune and excitement followed by a little luck, skill, and good company.

Ray was a great guy, one of those folks who does things, often in the background, without expecting recognition. His enthusiasm for service, willingness to help, infectious (and goofy) laugh, and all around positive attitude made Ray beloved by all. There isn't a person around who met Ray and didn't like him. Ray entertained us all with his amazingly complex and creative Halloween costumes and never missed an opportunity to send a Christmas card to a friend. We are lucky for the adventures we shared with him, the service he shared with his community, and the memories we have of his time here with us. He will be sorely missed by his family, friends, and the caving community.

Ray's love for his family was felt by all. He never forgot anyone on their birthdays or at Christmas. He was dedicated to helping his mom and dad as they aged, often spending his vacation time with them in Pennsylvania.

Ray was the son of Geraldine A. "Jerry" Sira (deceased) and Adrian, "Ed" Sira, and the middle brother of Adrienne Ferenczy, Richard Sira, and the late Russell Sira. He is also survived by brother-in-law Jeffrey Ferenczy, beloved nieces and nephews Kevin Sira, David Ferenczy, Nathan Ferenczy, Joshua Ferenczy, Olivia Ferenczy, and Hannah Ferenczy, and also beloved great nephews Nicholas Sira, Nathaniel Sira, Victor Ferenczy, and Jeremiah Ferenczy.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the VPI Cave Club scholarship fund in Ray's name. These funds will be used to sponsor young cavers to attend the annual NSS Convention (VPI Cave Club, P.O. Box 558, Blacksburg, VA, 24063).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP **30**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

McCoy Funeral Home  
150 Country Club Dr. S.W.  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
(540) 552-3211  
mccoyfuneralhome@verizon.net  
<https://mccoyfuneralhome.com>

## Funeral Service

SEP **30**. 2:00 PM (ET)

McCoy Funeral Home Chapel  
150 Country Club Dr S.W.  
Blacksburg, VA 24060

# Tribute Wall

BB

“ I was shocked and saddened to read in this months' NSS News that Ray Sira had suddenly passed away last September. Back in the 80's 90's and into the 00's I was happy to have gotten to know, play with and cave with he and his parents. I was honored to visit them in their home in Raritan.on my trips up NJ in 1988. As others have said, Ray was a fixture at NSS regional conventions and regional events - always sharing a good time. As well as being darned good cavers, he and his Dad are consummate gentlemen. We could talk to them/him about anything.

My last communication with Ray was him contacting me to renew NSS Vertical Section corporation records in NC. He called (or emailed) to ask me to look into it. I was wondering as recently as a few weeks ago if I needed to do that again! Better check on it now!

Again, I am so, so sorry to hear about Ray's passing. He is done far, far too soon. I am - as well as the rest of the world - is better because of him.

With memories of many good times,

Bill Bussey  
Pittsboro, NC

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**Bill Bussey** - September 13, 2023 at 02:31 PM

JB

“ When I went to look through my photos for one of Ray, it seemed like he was in almost all the caving photos. That was Ray, always there! I distinctly remember that every year for picnic he would be transporting some critical piece of group camping equipment (tarps, poles, etc). So many things happened in part because of Ray.

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**John Booker** - September 30, 2022 at 01:40 PM

JB

“ Ray sold me my very first rope (secondhand) and look what that started. Ray was the quiet (ok no, not if you heard him laughing) and extremely dependable center for VPI and the Vertical Section. Ray taught me vertical skills and told me ridiculous (and probably even true!) stories over my years at VPI. His Halloween costume was always the best. I will always enjoy my memories of camping and doing vertical stuff with Ray over the years. I'm glad we crossed paths for as often and as long as we did. I sure will miss you. The world and especially our community are lesser without you.

John Bowling - September 29, 2022 at 09:18 PM



“ Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Raymond Sira.



September 29, 2022 at 06:43 PM

JD

“ Jennifer Dencklau lit a candle in memory of Raymond Sira



Jennifer Dencklau - September 29, 2022 at 02:55 PM

JD

“ Ray you will be missed on slops as well as under ground

Jennifer Dencklau - September 29, 2022 at 02:54 PM

GD

“ *As many have said, Ray was a great person. Wherever he is now is enriched by his presence, and our world lessened by his absence. Rest in peace, Ray. We shall see you a bit down the road. --- Glen and Alice Davis*

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**Glen and Alice Davis** - September 29, 2022 at 02:15 PM

EF

“ *I am glad that ray is my friend. He was a wonderful person. Capt. Ed*

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**Ed Fortney** - September 29, 2022 at 01:25 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Raymond Sira.*



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September 29, 2022 at 01:15 PM

RK

“ *Roby Koerschner lit a candle in memory of Raymond Sira*



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**Roby Koerschner** - September 29, 2022 at 12:52 PM

RK

*The VPI Cavers love Ray. As a friend said, he was the best!*

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**Robyn Koerschner** - September 29, 2022 at 12:57 PM

CT

*Ray was a cool dude. Dressed to perfection. But he was also a caver and would get down and dirty like the rest of us. Never a glory hound but always in the background making things happen. His will be big shoes to fill in the vertical training arena. I will miss that warm smile. We lost another wonderful person way too soon.*

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**Carol Tideman** - September 29, 2022 at 02:21 PM

LO

*Ray - you will be greatly missed! The world was a better place with you in it!*

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**Lynn Ott** - September 29, 2022 at 03:15 PM

DV

*Oh hell, Ray was one of the nicest people I've known.*

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**Dave Valentino** - September 29, 2022 at 04:15 PM

SH

*Ray was always one of the nicest fellow cavers and a pleasure with whom to converse. You will be missed and yet remembered! Climb on, my friend!*

*Steve Hall*

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**Steve Hall** - September 29, 2022 at 05:18 PM

GH

*Ray (and Ed!) are lifetime caving buddies, and this is a painful tragedy. Ray and I worked closely for years in the NSS Vertical Section, and frankly he kept me (mostly!) sane!*

*Also, Ray and I drove on a 1500 mile round trip to Alabama, to attend the funeral of our another lifetime caving friend, Vertical Bill Cuddington.*

*Little did I realize that that was our last trip, and last pictures, together with our Caving Family.*

*We all miss ya already, Ray!*

*Gene Harrison NSS-9268 VPICC 62*

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**Gene Harrison** - September 29, 2022 at 07:24 PM

BK

“ *Bill, Robyn and Kathryn Koerschner purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Raymond Sira.*



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**Bill, Robyn and Kathryn Koerschner** - September 29, 2022 at  
12:49 PM