

Robert Franklin Ireland Obituary

April 23, 2022

By Philip Ireland

Robert Franklin Ireland, born July 30, 1932 on the family farm in Darlington, Missouri, died Saturday, April 23, 2022 in Springville Utah, just shy of his 90th birthday.

He is survived by daughter Janna Holmes of Provo, Utah and son Steven Ireland of Rio Rancho, New Mexico, both of whom were at his bedside in his final hours. He is also survived by sons Gregory Ireland of Bernalillo, New Mexico, Philip Ireland of Oakhurst, California, long list of grandchildren and great grandchildren and by his brother Dudley Ireland of Darlington, and Dudley's children, Danny, Donna, Dwayne and Ralph.

Mr. Ireland was preceded in death by Mary, his wife of 62 years.

Mr. Ireland was a man of deep faith, a Baptist, a Methodist and a born-again Evangelical, who tried at every opportunity to pass on his love of Jesus Christ to anyone who would listen.

He was born to Maud and Hobart Ireland on the family farm in Gentry County. He was born in the garage because the house had burned down six months earlier. With the help of others, Hobart Ireland had already begun rebuilding the family home by the time Robert was born.

During World War II the Ireland family farm prospered. Mr. Ireland attended school in Darlington, delivering the St. Joe Gazette in the mornings and the St. Joe News Press in the afternoons to 47 customers in Darlington on his new Schwinn bike.

When the school in Darlington burned down in 1945, Mr. Ireland took the bus to Albany High School to finish 8th grade. He continued there through high school, where he played baseball, football and ran track. He graduated in 1950, and began his studies at St. Joe Junior College while working at a local dry cleaner.

Mr. Ireland transferred in 1952 to the University of Missouri on a baseball scholarship, but left a year later.

That same year he met his future wife, Mary O'Grady, in Kansas City.

Mr. Ireland was drafted into the Army in 1954, and served stateside during the Korean War until his early honorable discharge in 1956.

He and Mary married on July 2, 1955 and honeymooned in the Rockies.

They lost their first son, Robert Jr., in 1956, shortly after birth.

Mr. Ireland enrolled in Southern Methodist University's engineering program in 1957 and graduated in 1961 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering.

Their eldest living son, Greg, was born in Dallas in 1957. Philip came two years later in 1959.

Mr. Ireland went to work for the Federal Bureau of Public Roads, a job that took the family to New Mexico where Janna was born in 1961, and to Oregon where Steve was born in 1962.

Mr. Ireland's work with the Federal Highway Administration took the family to Topeka, Kansas, Dover, Delaware, Clinton, Maryland, and Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. He retired from the U.S. Department of Transportation in 1992 after 35 years of service.

After retirement, Bob and Mary took to the highways again, graduating across the years from camper van to travel trailer to motor home. Some of their destinations were determined by their passion for helping; they volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, assisting in the construction of houses in cities across the country. Their travels took them all over the United States to visit the kids and grandkids, and across the globe on cruises and tours.

A public viewing will be held at 10 am on May 7, 2022 at the Roberson-Polley Chapel, 403 N Hundley St in Albany, Missouri, with a memorial service at 11 am. Mr. Ireland will be interred that afternoon in the family plot near his mother and father in the Darlington/Rouse Cemetery in Darlington, Missouri.