



Ron Ward's Obituary

Ronald Ray Ward, 62, was promoted to his home in heaven on Tuesday, February 20, 2007. He was well-loved and will be greatly missed.

Ron was born in Walloon Lake, Michigan on November 8, 1944, the oldest child of Rod and Mabel Ward. He grew up on a corner of his grandparent's farm, along with his two sisters and three brothers. Ron spent as much time as possible in the woods and near the lakes of beautiful Northern Michigan. Hunting, fishing, camping and football became the passions of his life. But after high school, Ron turned down a college football scholarship in order to attend Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music to pursue a different passion—serving God by serving people!

After moving out west to teach music at Montana Institute of the Bible/Big Sky Bible College in 1968 he “fell in love” with the state of Montana where he remained for the rest of his life. Ron had planned to teach music for a year, but his love of music and teaching college students resulted in a life-long commitment to Bible College education. He taught at MIB/BSBC for fourteen years, and has since taught at Montana Bible College and served on their board since its founding.

While teaching in Montana, Ron also fell in love with his best friend, Ann (Skaw) Ward, whom he loved faithfully for 34 years. Ron was a committed husband and loved his three children unconditionally. His heart was imprinted in the life of his wife and children, passing on to them his love of music, literature, the outdoors, worship of God and the nurture of people.

Even though Ron loved teaching at the college level, he always knew that someday he wanted to be a pastor. That opportunity came in 1982 when he became the first pastor of Mountain View Bible Church in Helena, MT. In 1986, Ron became an associate pastor at Grace Bible Church in Bozeman, MT where he served for nine years. For the past eleven years, Ron has pastored Manhattan Bible Church, in Manhattan, MT. In each of these churches, he poured himself into teaching, discipling and caring for the people in his flock. He loved God's Word and God's people deeply.

In 1993, Ron miraculously survived an aortic dissection followed by a stroke which left him paralyzed on his right side. After months of rehabilitation, he returned to ministry where God continued to use him, despite physical weakness. He was an example of perseverance, humility, and dedication. Despite a slowed pace and many physical complications, he lived life without complaint or self-pity. He saw each day as a God-given extension of his life. God's grace truly did shine through his weakness.

Ron will be remembered for his warm smile, his firm handshake (even one-handed, he was always reaching out for people), his sense of humor, his love of a good story (both the telling and the hearing), his love of good food and Ann's cooking (often teased for his sweet tooth and hidden candy stashes), and his delight in little children, especially his grand-children. All who knew Ron could recount a few entertaining hunting and fishing stories, dating up to this past hunting season. The guys who hunted with him since his disability marveled at his steady, one-handed shot!

Ron is survived by his wife, Ann; their three children and spouses; four grandchildren; his father and step-mother; a sister and three brothers. He was preceded in death by his mother and one sister.

The significance of Ron's life is not found in the degrees he earned, the trophy animals he hunted, or the positions of leadership he held. Rather, God used Ron in weakness and strength to impact the lives of others who are still impacting others. The echo of Ron's life is sounding forth across the state, and even the world. Ron lived his life for the glory of God, whose approval is the only one that matters. And now he has received a rich welcome into his eternal home.

Graveside services will be held at 10 am on Friday at Sunset Hills Cemetery with a memorial service to follow at 11 am at Grace Bible Church. Visitation hours at Dokken-Nelson's Sunset Chapel will be from 9 am to 9 pm on Thursday. Memorials in Ron's name may be made to the Montana Bible College, 3625 S. 19th Ave. Bozeman, MT 59718.