



Raymond Anthony Wheeler

Deacon Raymond Anthony “Ray” Wheeler, age 84, of Hollis, NH, passed away peacefully in the evening of July 29, 2025, surrounded by his family and supported by his faith, after a long battle with Alzheimer’s. He was born on June 21, 1941 in Ayer, MA, son of the late Ralph A. and Cecile M. (Gallien) Wheeler.

Ray spent his early life in Ayer where he graduated from Ayer High School. He earned a bachelor’s degree in Natural Science from St. Anselm College and a master’s degree in Natural Science from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Ray worked as a science teacher, teaching physics and chemistry at Tilton High School, and then for Bedford High School in Massachusetts. He later worked at Digital Equipment Corporation as a salesman, retiring in 1991.

Retirement brought a change of pace in Ray’s life, though you could say he stayed just as busy. He invested in an early startup called “College Link” which allowed students to apply for college electronically and with a more standardized application process. While the project was inventive, it was ahead of its time for academia. Reserved, thoughtful, and rational – that was Ray.

While a parishioner at St. Catherine of Alexandria in Westford, MA, Ray was ordained as a permanent deacon at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston in 2004. His diaconate assignments included St. John the Evangelist in N. Chelmsford and St. Joseph the Worker in Nashua.

In his spare time, Ray was an avid skier, making trips to Sugarbush for over 37 years. He frequently volunteered at St. Joseph's Hospital offering comfort to patients receiving treatment at the oncology department. He was an extremely devoted grandfather, attending as many baseball, basketball and soccer games as possible. His grandchildren will fondly remember his calming guidance.

Ray is survived by his beloved wife of 61 years, Claire L. (Handley) Wheeler; his two children, Gregory R. Wheeler and wife Olympia of Acton, and Christa M. Palma and husband Dennis of Lunenburg; grandchildren Raymond, Demetrius, Nicholas, Connor and Caden; brothers Howard Wheeler and wife Sharen of Goffstown, NH, Kenneth Wheeler and wife Karen of Hardeeville, SC, sister-in-law Carmel Handley of Hooksett; and many nieces and nephews.

While Ray's family is heartbroken by his passing, they are comforted to know that he is at peace and with his loving God.

Visiting hours will be held Monday, August 4th from 4 – 8 pm in the McGaffigan Funeral Home, 37 Main St., (Rte. 113) Pepperell, MA. His Funeral Mass will be celebrated Tuesday, August 5th at 10:30 am at St. Joseph the Worker Parish, 777 W. Hollis St., Nashua, NH. with reception to follow. Burial will be held Wednesday, August 6th at Westlawn Cemetery, 7 New Estate Rd., Littleton, MA at 10:30 am.

To view the livestream of the Funeral Mass, please see <https://www.stjoenash.org/worship> at the time of service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Joseph's Indian School, 1301 N Main St, Chamberlain, SD 57325; Corpus Christi Food Pantry, 3 Crown St,

Nashua, NH 03060 or to Home Health and Hospice Care, 7 Executive Park Dr, Merrimack, NH 03054.