

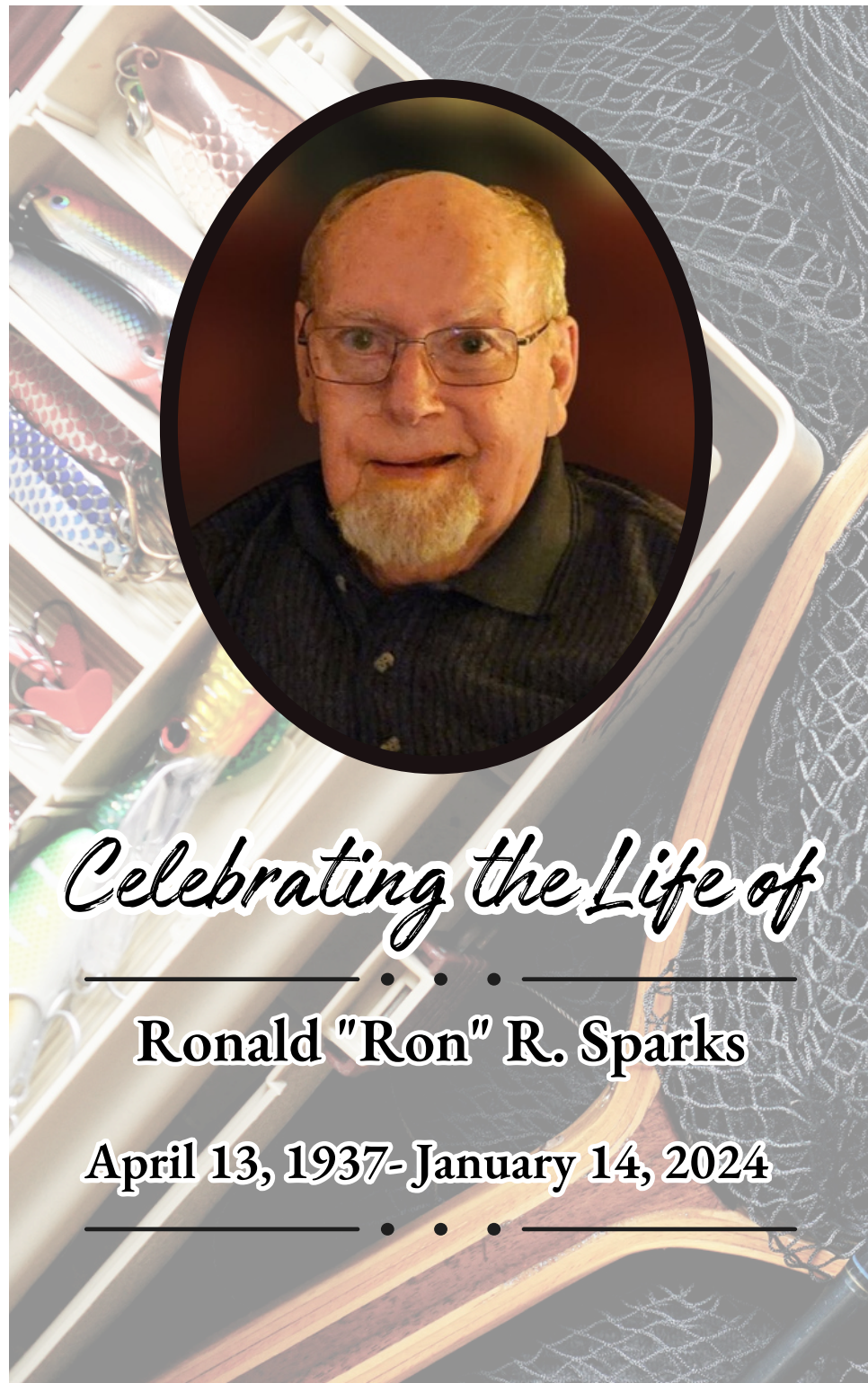
At one time Plainview did not have weather sirens & could not get financial aid from the state because they did not have a designated civil defense director. In 1979 Ron went to school to the 'State Seminar on Emergency Preparedness' & became the first Civil Defense Director in Plainview. He gathered enough volunteers, including training his own sons, to be weather spotters and when bad weather came he immediately left the house to spot the clouds for possible tornadoes or impending bad weather. There was a time in a very bad winter storm when he and another man went out on their snowmobiles in search of a farmer who had not returned home during a blizzard. The farmer was found & returned safely to his family.

In 1990 Ron and Peggy moved to Rochester after all the children had finished school to make the commute to Rochester less of a distance. By now they were both working full-time at IBM.

There wasn't anything he could not fix from cars to washing machines. He did most of the wiring, plumbing & carpentry in his home for many years until arthritis took it away from him & he soon learned he had to ask for help or hire someone. His days of helping others had come to an end. Still he continued to plant a vegetable garden for many years and mow the grass and visit with neighbors on his trusty John Deere mower. He also did field tillage for Tumbleson Farms and Elm Creek Acres from 1997-2015, when his body could no longer safely climb into the tractor. He was in his glory driving the JD 8370RT and later the Caterpillar Challenger 865 and talking "farm."

In 2018, they moved to Sherburn in order to be closer to their daughters' families as well as their grandchildren's activities. He used his scooter to attend activities at the school and loved his vantage point from the living room on Manyaska Street, where he faithfully fed the birds, watched the kids walk to and from school as well as viewing Homecoming parades and multiple sports teams that used the street as a training route. He was no rookie in the kitchen as he always cooked his famous breakfasts, made many a stew and grilled countless meals on his Traeger up until the day he went into the hospital.

Left behind to cherish his memory are his four children, **Michael** of California, **Peter** of Sherburn, **Stephanie** (Trace) Tumbleson of Trimont, and **Alice** (Chris) O'Connor of Sherburn; as well as his nine grandchildren: Nathan and Jordan (Peter); Skylar and Sierra (Stephanie); Raelynn, Garrett, Carson, Hayden and Alaina (Alice); older brother Richard Sparks (Arizona); and younger sister, Linda (Sparks) Buck (California). He was preceded in death by his parents, Harry and Vi Sparks; brother, Lowell "Red" Sparks, Plainview; sister, Shelly (Sparks) Zill (Oregon); and his beloved bride, Peggy, as well as their cherished dog, Griffin.



*Celebrating the Life of*

**Ronald "Ron" R. Sparks**

**April 13, 1937- January 14, 2024**



To view Ron's Service or Tribute Video,  
follow this QR code or visit [www.sinnfuneralhome.com](http://www.sinnfuneralhome.com)

# Ronald "Ron" R. Sparks

April 13, 1937 - January 14, 2024

## Visitation

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

## Celebration of Life

11:00 AM

Saturday, April 13, 2024

Sinn Family Celebration of Life Center

Trimont, Minnesota

## Final Resting Place

Elm Creek Cemetery

Ronald "Ron" Royce Sparks, age 86, of Sherburn, MN, and formerly of Plainview, MN, and Rochester, MN, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on Sunday, January 14, 2024, at Mayo Clinic Health System in Fairmont, MN.

Ronald Royce Sparks was born April 13, 1937, and was the 3rd of 5 children born to Harry Lee Sparks & Viola (Barwald) Sparks in Dodge Center, Minnesota. The family moved to Eyota where he attended school until 1945 when the family moved to Plainview. He was only 7 years old when he started delivering the Rochester Post Bulletin in Plainview. "I walked to the Lutheran Church out to Blake Fisk which was past the swimming pool & had the NE & SE corner of Plainview, First Street to the East. I rode my bike regardless of the weather to deliver the paper where my profits were a penny a paper. My dad found a bike from a farmer for \$20. I bought it with my paper route money. It was a Schwinn."

Ron always had a job and kept busy! Some that he recalled included working catching turkeys at a ranch right outside the city limits, where the turkeys were free range and had to be physically caught to put into cages for transport and marketing! He also worked for Bob Johnson's funeral home carrying out body transportation, delivered milk for Anderson, and worked at his Uncle Raeburn and Aunt Gertrude Raddick's farm in Fulda every summer from the ages of 14 to 18 years old.

When he graduated from high school he joined the Air Force. Most of his time in the Air Force, 36 months of the 4 years, was spent in the far east, Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines, Formosa & Taiwan.

He had the honor of being named "Airman of the Month" and also sang in the Air Force Choir which broadcasted on radio. His career in the Air Force was in the secret service where he trained the Army, Marines & Air Force how to break code during the cold war. On several occasions he flew reconnaissance missions with his tiny camera, over unfriendly countries on his stomach in the belly of a plane under the radar.

When his 4 years in the Air Force were up, he went to work for his father at the John Deere Implement store in Plainview. There he learned to repair all the machinery his father sold. At one time he could take apart the entire engine of a John Deere tractor blind folded & put it back together right! When he left John Deere his father hired 2 mechanics to replace him & had to pay them overtime which was a luxury Ron did not receive.

In 1960 he met Peggy Mathewson! "I used to whistle at her as she walked past the dealership to and from her job...she never even looked in my direction! I thought she was stuck up! She rented a room in the house across the street from my parents, and I would try to catch her attention by casting my fishing pole in the street...she took notice and I finally got the nerve to ask her out and our first date was fishing." Only later did he find out that she was partially deaf and never heard the whistles... and in 1961, he married "His bride" Peggy Mathewson, an 'immigrant' from New York. They continued to live in Plainview where they raised their 4 children, Michael, Peter, Stephanie & Alice.

In 1966 he went to work for IBM in manufacturing and later advanced to the maintenance department. He continued his education and became a Safety Engineer and retired in 1993. A year after retirement he went back to IBM & continued to work for another 20 years. Ron could fix ANYTHING...He volunteered to do multiple repairs in the Presbyterian church in Plainview which included wiring, plumbing, anything that needed repair and some carpentry work, too. He also worked part time after he retired, as the maintenance man at the group home his daughters staffed. His talents were always in demand.

Ron loved to play 500 & often won. He & Peg joined a card club with 6 other couples in Plainview and played for many years. They also played golf, bowled, snowmobiled, camped, fished, hunted and enjoyed the activities of their kids in sports, school plays, concerts, the church & other activities. Summers always included a family road trip to visit relatives on the coasts where priceless memories were made at the beach.

While living in Plainview, Ron was president of the local Jaycees, Lions Club & Polar Barons snowmobile club. He was also a member of the "Exhausted Roosters", where the Jaycees went after the old age of 35, which was considered too 'old' to stay in the Jaycees. He was a Scout leader for the Webelo Scouts when his sons were in scouting. He taught gun safety & snowmobile safety classes to young students.

## Great Is Thy Faithfulness

1. Great is thy faith-ful-ness, O God my Fa-ther; there is no  
 2. Sum-mer and win-ter and spring-time and har-vest, sun, moon, and  
 3. Par-don for sin and a peace that en-dur-eth, thine own dear

shad-ow of turn-ing with thee; thou chang-est not, thy com-  
 stars in their cours-es a-bove join with all na-nature in  
 pres-ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to-day and bright

pas-sions, they fail not; as thou hast been, thou for-ev-er wilt be.  
 man-i-fold wit-ness to thy great faith-ful-ness, mer-cy, and love.  
 hope for to-mor-row, bless-ings all mine, with ten thou-sand be-side!

*Refrain*

Great is thy faith-ful-ness! Great is thy faith-ful-ness! Morn-ing by

morn-ing new mer-cies I see; all I have need-ed thy

hand hath pro-vid-ed; great is thy faith-ful-ness, Lord, un-to me!

## 23rd Psalm (KJV)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of  
 righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of  
 death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and  
 thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine  
 enemies: thou anointest my head with oil;  
 my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
 all the days of my life:

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## Because He Lives

1. God sent his Son, they called him Je - sus;  
 2. How sweet to hold a new-born ba - by,  
 3. And then one day I'll cross the riv - er;

he came to love, heal, and for - give;  
 and feel the pride and joy he\* gives;  
 I'll fight life's fi - nal war with pain;

he lived and died to buy my par - don,  
 but great - er still the calm as - sur - ance,  
 and then as death gives way to vic - tory,

an emp - ty grave is there to prove my Sav - ior lives.  
 this child can face un - cer - tain days be - cause he lives.  
 I'll see the lights of glo - ry and I'll know he reigns.

\*Jesus

*Refrain*

Be - cause he lives, I can face to - mor - row;

be - cause he lives, all fear is gone;

be - cause I know he holds the fu - ture,

and life is worth the liv - ing just be - cause he lives.



*Miss You So Much Dad*

Softly out of the shadows,  
There came a gentle call,  
You took the hand God offered  
you and quietly left us all.  
And although we cannot hold you,  
We will never let you go,  
Because in our hearts you  
Will live forever,  
Because we loved you so.



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# "Witness to the Resurrection"

## Order of Service

<b>Entrance Music</b>	Prelude Hymns by Randy Grupe
<b>Congregational Hymn</b>	Great is Thy Faithfulness (Handout)
<b>Call to Worship</b>	Pastor Todd VanZee
Psalm 23	Read by Congregation
<b>Invocation</b>	
<b>Scripture Reading</b>	
John 12:26	
1 Samuel 12:24	
Galatians 5:13	
Philippians 2:4	
<b>Message</b>	
<b>Family Sharing</b>	Michael, Peter, Stephanie, and Alice
<b>Special Music</b>	
How Great Thou Art	Alice and Hayden O'Connor
<b>Memory Sharing</b>	Other Family & Friends
<i>The microphone will also be passed during the the reception</i>	
<b>Congregational Hymn</b>	Because He Lives (Handout)
<b>Benediction</b>	
<b>Prayer</b>	
<b>Recessional</b>	
<b>Military Honors</b>	Taps by Ramona Harper
Thomas P. Saxton American Legion Post 356	
Sherburn VFW Post 8261	
Foster-Bernhardt American Legion Post 373	
Welcome American Legion Post 553	
Grand Forks AFB Honor Guard	

### *Thank You*

In moments of sorrow, it's family and friends who bring us love and peace. God gives us the ultimate comfort. Sharing our prayers today and tomorrow. May His peace be with you. His love never ends. Please accept this as our note of thanks.

*The Family of Ron "Ronnie" Sparks*

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