



## Raymond "Ray" F. Bentele

November 22, 1936 - May 31, 2026

Raymond "Ray" F. Bentele, 89, died May 31, 2026. He resided in Town and Country and also wintered on Captiva and Sanibel islands, Florida. He is survived by his dear and loving wife, Deborah (nee Koons) Bentele of 25 years; his daughter Denise Bentele of Creve Coeur; son Douglas Bentele (Karin) of Kirkwood; five grandchildren: Mary Sabrina (nee Bentele) (Josh) Rakoff; Madeline Heintz; Alexander Bentele; Meredith Heintz and Sophia Bentele; as well as his sister Carolyn (Jerry) Snidow of St. Peters, Missouri; as well as many loved nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his first wife and mother of his children, Mary Bentele and son Daniel Bentele. Also, brothers Kenneth Bentele, Norbert Bentele, Ronald Bentele, Leo Bentele and sisters Reta Bentele Cupp, Mildred Bentele Chambers and Elizabeth Bentele Lowe.

He was born November 22, 1936, on the family's small farm in Macon County Missouri. He was the son of Albert Bentele and Dorothy (Modglin) Bentele. His early schooling was in a one-room schoolhouse that required a walk of four miles each way. Later, after the family moved into the town of Macon, he attended the Immaculate Conception elementary school, graduated from Macon High School in 1954, and Northeast Missouri State University (now Truman State University) in 1960, with a bachelor's degree in business administration and a major in accounting. He was the first member of his

family to attend college.

After high school he enlisted in the US Army in the era of the Korean conflict. He already had two brothers serving there, so he was sent to Germany where he was stationed for two and a half years as part of the Cold War defenses near the border with East Germany. While overseas he graduated from the Seventh Army Non-Commissioned Officers Academy in Munich. Immediately after his discharge in 1957 from the Army he enrolled in college.

Upon graduation from college, he joined the accounting firm S.D. Leidesdorf in their St. Louis office. Leidesdorf eventually merged with Ernst & Ernst, later becoming Ernst & Young. After leaving Leidesdorf in 1965 he became Chief Financial Officer of Germania Savings and Loan in Alton, Illinois. In 1967 he joined Mallinckrodt Chemical Works in charge of financial planning and analysis as the start of a twenty-six-year career with the company.

His career at Mallinckrodt involved many management positions from finance to leading operating groups, becoming President and Chief Operating Officer before being named Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board.

His principal operating experience was running the international business which under his leadership grew dramatically from a small export business to having operations based in Canada, most countries of Europe, Mexico, Brazil, Japan and Australia.

The company came under unfriendly takeover attempts as Mallinckrodt was highly prized by many companies who wanted to enter the specialty chemicals and medical products industries. The company had enjoyed spectacular growth in sales and earnings for twenty consecutive years and thus was an inviting target. After a vigorous and lengthy defense trying to stay independent, the company negotiated a merger with Avon Products Company

achieving the highest value to Mallinckrodt shareholders. This began a decade-long struggle to survive and keep the company intact through several owners.

Avon's business prospects began to dim as the door-to-door cosmetics business fell on hard times while Mallinckrodt continued to have excellent growth owing chiefly to new diagnostic products it invented which required expansion capital which Avon was unable to provide. Hence, in 1985, Avon's board decided to sell Mallinckrodt. Ray attempted to construct a buyout but the company was acquired by International Minerals and Chemicals (IMC) of Chicago later to change their name to IMCERA. Once again that parent company struggled to survive as the fertilizer business deteriorated which led to a reorganization and several dispositions. Again, during this time Mallinckrodt continued to prosper. Eventually, IMCERA was collapsed into Mallinckrodt and the entire company was relocated to St. Louis - realizing an important goal of his, to re-establish headquarters here.

At that time Ray chose to retire and turned the leadership of the company over to Ray Holman as his successor.

In addition to the Mallinckrodt Board of Directors Ray served on several Boards pre- and post-retirement including; Avon Products, International Minerals and Chemicals, IMCERA, IMC Global Inc., Kellwood Company, Leggett & Platt, Inc., Boatmen's Bank, Centerre Bank, The Mosaic Company, AMCON Distributing Company and Summit Marketing.

His professional affiliations included the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants; Financial Executives Institute of America; Member of the Corporate assembly of Blue Cross and Blue Shield; Director of the Chemical Manufacturers Association; and Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of

Chemists.

His past community service included; Board of Trustees and Chair of Audit and Finance Committees of Washington University in Saint Louis; Director of St. Luke's Hospital; Director and Chairman of the Board and Chairman of the 1985 annual fund drive of the United Way of St. Louis; Director, Commissioner, co-chair of the annual fund drive and recipient of the Silver Beaver Award of Boy Scouts of America; Ranken Technical College trustee; Civic Progress of St. Louis; Director of Backstoppers; Trustee of St. Louis Art Museum; Trustee of Saint Louis University; Director and chair of annual fund drive in 1984 of the Arts and Education Council of St. Louis; and director of Missouri Research Park.

He established scholarship funds at Truman State University and Washington University. He is a member of the Bogey Club in St. Louis.

For several years after retirement he owned and operated a farm in Pike County, Missouri where he enjoyed working outdoors and had a substantial vegetable garden from which he generously shared the harvest with friends.

Hunting and fishing were great joys in his life particularly when he could include his son and grandson. He did big game hunting on safaris in Africa; upland game shooting in the UK, South Dakota, Argentina, Spain and fishing in Alaska, Canada and many other destinations. Golfing trips with gentlemen friends and wine tours with close friends provided great fun and memories. Traveling to many countries with his wife, Debbie, was especially a great joy. Among their final trips were Israel in 2022, and western Canada for their 25th wedding anniversary in 2025.

Donations are requested to The International Institute of St. Louis - <https://www.iistl.org/> (3401 Arsenal St., St. Louis, MO 63118) in memory of Daniel

Bentele and to The Special Education Foundation - <https://www.sef-stl.org/> (2 Cityplace Dr., Suite 200, St Louis, MO 63141) in honor of Debbie Bentele.  
Direct links below.

Visitation Friday June 19th, 10am until time of Mass of Christian Burial beginning at 11am, both at St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church. 1510 Bopp Rd. St. Louis, Missouri. Interment Private.

# Cemetery Details

## Bellerive Gardens Cemetery

740 North Mason Road  
St. Louis, MO 63141  
(314) 434-3933  
info@bellerivegardens.com  
<https://bellerivegardens.com>

# Upcoming Events

## Visitation

JUN **19**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church  
1510 Bopp Road  
St. Louis, MO

## Funeral Mass

JUN **19**. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church  
1510 Bopp Road  
St. Louis, MO