

IN LOVING MEMORY

Robert D. Hayden

MEMORIAL SERVICE

2:00 p.m. Saturday, July 25, 2026
Broadway Presbyterian Church
Sedalia, Missouri

OFFICIATING

Rev. Rob Hughes

MUSIC

Anne Tempel, pianist
Richard DeFord, vocalist

“The Old Rugged Cross”
“Amazing Grace”

MILITARY HONORS

United States Army
V.F.W. Post 2591
Mid-MO Patriot Guard Riders

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Robert D. Hayden

December 4, 1937 - July 20, 2026

Robert Dean Hayden was born on December 4, 1937 to William E. Hayden and Helen V. Hayden of Kansas City, Missouri. Bob was the oldest of four children whose early years growing up were during WWII where he helped his mom get groceries in his wagon with war ration stamps. Bob grew up on Brighton Street in Kansas City and loved to ride bikes, play ball and sleigh ride at Budd Park.

This same neighborhood is where Bob would first meet the love of his life, Barbara Jo Dishman from Holden, Missouri, when she and her family moved to a house on the same street when he was eight years old. Barbara's family eventually moved back to Holden, but their paths would cross again. Bob loved the outdoors and also became a yoyo expert early on, often doing tricks like around the world and walk the dog. Bob attended Northeast High School and loved playing basketball until a knee injury ended his hopes of playing college ball. An avid outdoorsman, Bob loved to fish and hunt, and would take the bus and then hitch a ride to a small, two-room cabin his parents owned in Gravois Mills on the Lake of The Ozarks.

Bob held several jobs during and after high school including working at a fireworks stand where part of his pay was bottle rockets and cherry bombs, and later, Montgomery Ward and Corn Products. Barbara's family had moved back to Kansas City during high school, and Bob and Barb became an item! Bob soon knew she was the one, and they were engaged as he started an accelerated, full-time mechanical engineering program at Finley College of Engineering in Kansas City. Barbara's dad, Ed, wouldn't give his permission for Barbara to marry Bob until he finished his degree, so Bob graduated on November 18, 1960 and they were married on November 19, 1960.

Bob took an entry-level engineering position at Lake City Army Ammunition Plant in Independence, Missouri, where he began his career path in the firearms industry and ammunition development while also serving his country in the Army National Guard Reserves from 1961-1965. In 1963, their first child, Cathy Jo was born, followed by their son Robert Edward, in 1966. In 1969, Bob was recruited by the Leisure Group, a company who owned several businesses, including a bullet manufacturing company in Santa Fe Springs, California, where Bob would begin a 43-year career at the helm of Sierra Bullets. Bob and Barbara made the move to California in October of 1969 with their two children and a third on the way. They found a home in a growing, nearby city, Downey, California, where Sally Ann was born in January of 1970.

They spent the next twenty-one years in California raising their family and starting a small side business, called Starline Brass which manufactures brass cases for those who reloaded their own ammunition. The manufacturing climate in California became difficult and Bob and Barb decided a relocation to the Midwest was vital for Sierra and Starline to continue to grow and be profitable. The search for a location in their home state of Missouri ended with the move to Sedalia, Missouri in 1991. Bob came first and got Sierra up and running, while living in a small apartment attached to the plant with his dogs, Sissy and Buck. Bob spent his weekends with his dogs down at lake where he had purchased another cabin on the same cove as his parent's cabin. Barb followed in 1993 after wrapping up her term as Mayor of Downey, when Starline's facility had been completed. They purchased a 500-acre property known as WoodDale Farm and built their forever home where they lived from 1994 to the present. In retirement, Bob got into the field trial game with his beloved Golden and Labrador Retrievers, and actively trained and successfully competed in many field trial competitions, many of which are hosted at the farm. Bob and Barbara were pillars in the community, creating the Hayden Freedom Foundation so that their family could give generously to many organizations they felt were vital in their community and across the country. Bob's giving heart is the reason for Retrieving Freedom, Inc. in Sedalia. This organization trains service dogs for Veterans with PTSD and Children with autism. It was built and currently operates on their campus adjacent to WoodDale Farm as an enduring gift from Bob and Barbara Hayden.

Bob's earthly life ended on July 20, 2026, after a short hospital stay and a return to WoodDale Farm where he passed peacefully at home and has joined his beloved "BJ" in Heaven. He was preceded in death by his parents and in-laws, his dear wife, Barbara Hayden, his two sisters, Jan Summers and Connie Barker, and brother and sister-in-law, Larry and Donnie Blair.

He leaves behind his brother Bill Hayden, sister-in-law Barbara Ann Hayden, brother-in-law Tim Barker, three children, Cathy van der Linden, Bobby Hayden and Sally Hayden, son-in-law Jim van der Linden, daughter-in-law Kimberly Hayden, seven grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.