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### **Governor Robert D. Ray**

In 1975, when Robert D. Ray first invited Southeast Asians to Iowa, he was in his seventh year in a tenure that would last 14 years.

Ray was born in Des Moines in 1928. After service in the US Army, he graduated from Drake University in 1952 with a BA in business administration. Two years later he received his law degree from Drake. Between 1954 and 1968 he practiced law in Des Moines at Lawyer, Lawyer, Ray and Crouch.

In the mid-sixties Ray chaired the state Republican Party. He was first elected Governor in 1968. During his unprecedented five terms in office, the state made some major changes, including establishing the Commission on the Status of Women and creating the Department of Environmental Quality. Ray also worked on the national stage, including chairing the National Governors' Association from 1975 to 1976. In 1979, he was a member of the U.S. delegation to the Special United Nations Conference on Indochinese Refugees.

After leaving office in 1983, Ray returned to the private sector, including a stint as president and CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa, and as Chair of the Board of Trustees and president of Drake University. In addition, he has continued to be active in Iowa's civic life. He was a founder of the Iowa Peace Institute, Sister States and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation as well as serving as the U.S. Representative to the United Nations. He currently serves as chairman of the Des Moines-based Institute for Character Development, built on the principles of the Character Counts program.

Ray has continued to remain active in the Iowa Asian community and is the Honorary Chairman of the Iowa Asian Alliance. The Robert D. Ray Asian Garden honors his efforts in bringing Southeast Asians to Iowa. It is located on Robert D. Ray Drive.