Professor Ramon Rhine arrived at UCR in 1964, where he created a career that stands as a model of the complete professor, one who was respected and enjoyed by everyone with whom he came into contact.

Ray was also a complete husband and father. His family was his foremost passion, and he was loved and respected by his wife, Doris, and his three children, Heather, Anthony, and Jason. He believed in his family and was very proud of them, and he cared deeply about their struggles and their triumphs.

Ray graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 1950, received a Masters of Science degree in psychology from the University of Oregon in 1952, and earned a Doctor of Philosophy in psychology from Stanford University in 1955 with a specialty in social psychology. After a year as an instructor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, he joined the management staff at the System Development Corporations (later RAND) to conduct research in human factors and in classical social psychology. Fortunately for higher education he missed intense contact with students, and he accepted a position as assistant professor at UCR in 1964, where he enjoyed a distinguished career until his untimely death on November 9, 1999.

At UCR, Ray continued his work in the cognitive bases of social psychology and attitude formation an additional seven years. In 1972 his first publication appeared in which Macaca arctoides (stumptailed macaques) were the research subjects. This paper, appearing in the leading journal Primates, marked a sea change in Ray’s research career, during which he became one of the best-known primatologists in the world. For twenty-one years he maintained and studied a successful breeding colony of stumptailed macaques at UCR. Perhaps more importantly, he established a field site to study yellow baboons in Mikumi National Park in Tanzania. This site is still in operation and has provided data for numerous dissertations and research articles. Indeed, Ray continued to analyze and publish data from Mikumi in the years following his formal retirement, and his efforts were instrumental in supporting primate field research and in the preservation of primates in the wild.

The data from Mikumi have added to the cumulative knowledge about primate patterns of behavior and social organization. Ray’s work is most notable for two major contributions to the literature on primates and, more generally, evolutionary biology. One contribution resolves a debate that had emerged in the 1970s on the degree to which baboon troop movements involved a random spatial distribution of troop members, or a highly organized protective progression with males on the perimeter and females along
with their young in the middle of the troop as it moved across open-country savanna. Through careful reanalysis of the critics of the latter position, Rhine demonstrated that multiple statistical errors had led them to the wrong conclusion. Moreover, by careful study of troops in Mikumi, he demonstrated conclusively that the protective progression of troops is an important adaptation to terrestrial life. While the nature of the formation can vary depending on the level of danger, the troop nonetheless moves in formation. In particular, he documented the importance of male distribution in space, with males generally in the front and back of the troop and with dominant males generally in the front and subordinate males bringing up the rear of the troop. Ray’s analysis thus effectively resolved the controversy and supported earlier work by Sherwood Washburn and I. DeVore.

A second major contribution to science comes from Ray’s effort to find a way to estimate the reproductive success of primates without having to follow generations of long-lived animals. Reproductive success is one of the cornerstones of evolutionary biology, critical to understanding the adaptation of primates and all animals to their environments. Ray developed a model of estimating reproductive success by comparing any individual’s rate of reproduction with what would be expected in a population. Because he had long-term data, he was able to test the fit of his models with actual reproductive success, and on the basis of this comparison he was able to demonstrate that the models worked. Such models can provide estimates not only of primate reproductive success but the success of any species.

Because of the importance of his research, he received many grants from important funding sources, including the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Geographic Society, the National Science Foundation, the Leakey Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health.

It was his love of teaching and students that brought Ray back to the university in 1964, and generations of undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral students were the beneficiaries of his passion for teaching. Countless students learned about observational research methodology from participation in his work, and they were all treated and respected as colleagues. It is the mark of a truly inspired teacher that his students enjoyed taking statistics from him, taking their own enjoyment from his delight in helping them to understand.

Nor did he neglect the third obligation of faculty, to serve his colleagues and the university. He was a tireless advocate of the university. He was chair of many UCR and university-wide committees. Ray was passionate about the principle of shared governance in the university and the role of the Academic Senate. He cared deeply about the concerns of the faculty. When he served as Chair of the Riverside Division of the Academic Senate, he liked to hold "office hours" at a coffee table in the commons where individual faculty members would stop at the table and express their opinions and concerns. He was very proud of his "open table" approach to the chairmanship. Within his department, he served in many capacities, including a term as chair, and even in retirement he continued to attend faculty meetings and to bring a quiet voice of wisdom
and reason to the deliberations. His voice was not always quiet, though – those of us with offices in the vicinity of his were quite aware of his ability to express his annoyance when it was truly deserved!

As a professor, Ray was Plato’s “ideal”, embodying and exemplifying the best of scholarship, teaching, and collegiality.

As a person, Ray was different things to different people, but to all he was a caring, committed, and warm human being.

Ray enjoyed life, every part of it.

M. Nachman
P. D. Wilson
A. Maryanski
J. H. Turner
A. R. Stralka
D. H. Warren