

# Robert Ray and the Indochinese Refugees of Iowa: A Story of Compassion and Resilience

In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, hundreds of thousands of Southeast Asians fled their home countries, seeking refuge from violence and persecution. Many of these refugees found a new home in the United States, where they were welcomed by compassionate Americans who helped them to rebuild their lives.



## The Good Governor: Robert Ray and the Indochinese Refugees of Iowa by Matthew R. Walsh



5 out of 5

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One of the most welcoming states for Indochinese refugees was Iowa. Under the leadership of Governor Robert Ray, Iowa became a national model for refugee resettlement. Ray, a Republican, believed that it was America's moral obligation to help those who were fleeing war and persecution.



Ray's commitment to refugee resettlement was evident in his words and actions. In a 1975 speech, he said, "We must not turn our backs on those who are seeking our help. We must open our hearts and our homes to them." Ray also worked tirelessly to secure funding for refugee resettlement programs and to create a welcoming environment for refugees in Iowa.

Thanks to Ray's leadership, Iowa became a welcoming home for thousands of Indochinese refugees. The refugees were grateful for the opportunity to start a new life in Iowa, and they quickly became contributing members of their communities. They worked hard, started businesses, and raised families. Today, Iowa is home to one of the largest populations of Indochinese refugees in the United States.

The story of Robert Ray and the Indochinese refugees of Iowa is a story of compassion and resilience. It is a story that shows the best of what America can be. It is a story that should inspire us all to welcome refugees and to help them to build a better future.

## **Robert Ray's Early Life and Career**

Robert Ray was born in Corning, Iowa, in 1928. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and then earned a law degree from the University of Iowa. Ray entered politics in 1964, when he was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives. He served as governor of Iowa from 1969 to 1983.

Ray was a moderate Republican who was known for his compassion and his commitment to public service. He was a strong supporter of education, healthcare, and environmental protection. Ray also worked to improve race relations in Iowa.



## **The Indochinese Refugee Crisis**

The Indochinese refugee crisis began in 1975, when the Vietnam War ended and communist governments took power in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Hundreds of thousands of people fled these countries, fearing persecution and violence.

The United States accepted more than 100,000 Indochinese refugees in the 1970s and 1980s. The refugees were resettled in communities across the country, including Iowa.

## **Iowa's Refugee Resettlement Program**

Iowa's refugee resettlement program was one of the most successful in the country. The state welcomed more than 10,000 Indochinese refugees in the 1970s and 1980s. The refugees were resettled in communities across the state, including Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, and Sioux City.

The Iowa Refugee Service Center, a non-profit organization, played a key role in resettling Indochinese refugees in Iowa. The center provided refugees with housing, food, clothing, and other essential services. The center also helped refugees to find jobs and to enroll their children in school.

## **The Impact of Indochinese Refugees on Iowa**

The Indochinese refugees who resettled in Iowa made a significant contribution to the state. They worked hard, started businesses, and raised families. Today, Iowa is home to one of the largest populations of Indochinese refugees in the United States.



The Indochinese refugees have also had a positive impact on Iowa's culture. They have brought new traditions and customs to the state, and they have helped to make Iowa a more diverse and vibrant place.

## Robert Ray's Legacy

Robert Ray died in 2018 at the age of 90. He is remembered as a compassionate and dedicated public servant who made a difference in the lives of many people. Ray's legacy of compassion and service continues to inspire Iowans today.

The story of Robert Ray and the Indochinese refugees of Iowa is a story of hope and resilience.



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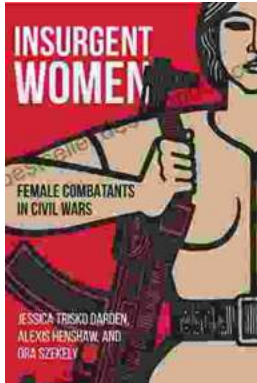






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