

OBITUARY

Harry Mason Reid

DECEMBER 2, 1939 - DECEMBER 28, 2021



IN THE CARE OF

Palm Eastern Mortuary & Cemetery

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Harry's memory may be made to Encircle, 331 South 600 East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84102, <https://reid.funraise.org/> Dream Big, <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/dreambigreid> and Nevada Coalition for Suicide Prevention, <https://nvsuicideprevention.org>

Harry Reid never felt the need to be loud or brash. The former U.S. Senate majority leader who passed away after a valiant battle with pancreatic cancer at age 82, on Tuesday, December 28th, 2021, instead often took a soft-spoken approach to politics that resulted in effective, lasting and historic results.

The Searchlight native represented Nevada for 30 years in the Senate, where his even-keeled approach was vital in helping broker the Affordable Care Act, thwarting a proposed nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain and fostering laws to preserve public lands and encourage clean energy investment.

Along the way, Harry Mason Reid became the longest serving U.S. senator from Nevada and majority leader for eight years. On Capitol Hill, Reid long was regarded as a tireless worker. It was not unusual for him to be the first senator to arrive at work in the morning and the last to go home at night. Such dedication certainly played a role in Reid's ascension to leadership positions.

His legendary career in public service was recently memorialized when the name of the Las Vegas airport was changed to Harry Reid International.

Reid's lengthy service started at age 28 in 1968 when he was elected to the Nevada Assembly and served two terms. He was also Nevada's lieutenant governor, chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission who played a major role in driving the mob out of Las Vegas casinos, and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for two terms. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1987, rising to the role of Senate majority leader from 2007 to 2015.

Born Dec. 2, 1939, in Searchlight, 49 miles southeast of Henderson, Reid was the third of four sons of Inez Orena, a laundress, and Harry Vincent Reid, a miner. Reid grew up in a two-bedroom dilapidated shack that had no indoor toilet, no hot water and no telephone.

He attended a two-room elementary school that had just one teacher for all eight grades. It was in that tiny schoolhouse that Reid learned such values as hard work and a sense of independence — characteristics that would pave the way for his success in law and politics.

He attended Basic High School in Henderson, NV where Reid met then-sophomore Landra Gould, who became his high school sweetheart. In his senior year, Reid was elected student body president — his doorway into politics.

Reid earned an associate of arts degree from Southern Utah University in 1959 and graduated from Utah State University in 1961 with bachelor's degrees in political science and history. Reid also minored in economics at Jon M. Huntsman School of Business at Utah State.

In 1959, two years after they graduated from high school, Harry and Landra married. In 1961, their first child and only daughter, Lana, was born. Son Rory was born in 1962, and three more sons — Leif, Josh and Key — followed. The Reids joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1960. Reid is survived by his wife Landra Gould of 62 years, his children Rory (Cindy), Lana Barringer (Steve), Leif (Kristi), Josh (Tamsen), and Key (Maile), 19 grandchildren, and 1 great grandchild.

“The little boy of Searchlight has been able to be a part of a changing state of Nevada,” Reid said in his farewell on the Senate floor in December 2016. “I’m grateful I’ve been a part of that change.”

(excerpts reprinted from The Las Vegas Sun, Nevada Political Giant, Former US Senator Harry Reid Dies at 82, December 28, 2021)

Presidential Tributes

During the two decades we served together in the United States Senate, and the eight years we worked together while I served as Vice President, Harry met the marker for what I’ve always believed is the most important thing by which you can measure a person—their action and their word.

If Harry said he would do something, he did it. If he gave you his word, you could bank on it. That’s how he got things done for the good of the country for decades. I’ve had the honor of serving with some of the all-time great senate majority leaders in our history. Harry Reid was one of them. And for Harry, it wasn’t about power for power’s sake. It was about the power to do right for the people. May God bless Harry Reid, a dear friend and a giant of our history. A son of Searchlight, Nevada, Harry never forgot his humble roots. A boxer, he never gave up a fight—whether in politics or even against cancer. A great American, Harry looked at the challenges of the world and believed it was within our capacity to do good, to do right, and to do our part of perfecting the Union we all love. But above all, Harry was first and foremost the devoted husband to his dear Landra. Over six decades together, they built a remarkable family with their children—Lana, Rory, Leif, Josh, and Key—and all of their grandchildren and great-grandchild. May God bless Harry Reid, a dear friend and a giant of our history.

–President Joe Biden

You were a great leader in the Senate, and early on you were more generous to me than I had any right to expect. I wouldn’t have been president had it not been for your encouragement and support, and I wouldn’t have got most of what I got done without your skill and determination. As different as we are, I think we both saw something of ourselves in each other — a couple of outsiders who had defied the odds and knew how to take a punch and cared about the little guy. And you know what, we made for a pretty good team. The world is better ‘cause of what you’ve done. Not bad for a skinny, poor kid from Searchlight.

–President Barack Obama

Hillary and I mourn the passing of Harry Reid, one of the most effective Senate leaders our country has ever known. He was a canny and tough negotiator who was never afraid to make an unpopular decision if it meant getting something done that was right for the country. Ever the boxer of his youth, he never shied away from necessary political fights, but believed compromise is vital for a functioning democracy. Because of the legislation he masterfully navigated to passage, millions of Americans are living better lives.

We will likely never see another public servant quite like him—in personality, command of strategy and tactics, and assuredness in marching to the beat of his own drum. Hillary was honored to serve with him in the Senate, and I will always be grateful for the opportunities I had to work with him as President.