



Robert Rolfe

October 17, 1928 - May 15, 2024

The open house celebrating the life of Robert "Bob" Rolfe, age 95 of Arizona will be held on Saturday, July 27, beginning at 1:00 p.m. A Time of Remembrance will begin at 1:30. Burial will follow at the Wadena Cemetery.

The following includes excerpts from Bob's writings.

Bob was born on October 17, 1928 at the hospital in Wadena, MN and was adopted by Gertrude (Neal) Rolfe in August, 1929. She was County Superintendent of Schools and saw the opportunity to get into the printing business as schools needed awards such as report cards. As you can see, Bob got his start for writing very early. He wrote about his activities on a daily basis until he became too weak to continue. He left stacks of notebooks in a very small script for us to read.

He became a world traveler at age 6 when his mother took him to Alaska to visit friends. On the way they stopped at Glacier National Park. Bob played with the native American children and their father, the head of the tribe, asked to adopt Bob as an honorary member of the tribe. Theodore Roosevelt was the only other "white" person to be adopted! The next year they toured Mexico with a car and driver.

When he was finishing his sophomore year, he wrote an essay on Conservation in Minnesota, which won him the State prize. At the same time, the University of Chicago started a "Whiz Kids" program for two kids from

each state. Bob tested and was chosen, tested again after he got there and was placed as a junior in college, which left him only two more years of school and he would leave with a college degree. Bob had one class to finish, but he may have been intimidated by the veterans who were discharged and coming to college classes. His time there gave him four lifetime friends. He left college and went to work for General Mills as a mail boy and went to ballroom dancing classes at night.

In 1941 his mother married Alec Rolfe and he adopted Bob. Note: Do you know anyone who was adopted and loved 3 times?!! He loved helping at the Island they had purchased and were developing as a resort that summer.

In Bob's words: "In the fall I started on a teaching degree at St. Cloud College. I fell in love with Pat at college, obtained a degree, bought my first car, and got a teaching job in a small town in Minnesota. I joined the National Guard, and my unit was called up and went to Camp Rucker in Alabama. I never went overseas and was released in 1952 due to the shortage of teachers. Pat and I were married in Hudson, WI that year."

In the fall he got a teaching job at Robbinsdale, MN and went to the University but didn't like the program. So off they went to Madison, WI to get a master's degree in physics.

After all that schooling, they decided to take time off and travel. Pat found a great ocean vessel leaving from Montreal in early August on its maiden voyage. They found out they could buy a new Renault car for \$999, and they were on their way!

"Bob and Pat" "We were complete amateurs about traveling but made great use of a huge book, asked questions, and had a wonderful time. We visited England (and relatives), crossed the channel, got our car in Paris and headed for the Scandinavian lands. Back to Germany to drop a package off for Alec to one of his students who insisted they go to Berlin. He convinced us we would be safe. He would drive their car and we would stay with his mother there. A day in our life will always be remembered - visiting the Russian war memorial in the British sector. It was dark, but we went up the many steps until we were

facing TWO BAYONETS IN our FACES! We raced down the steps, but Bob couldn't drive the car right away he was shaking so much – Bob and Pat were too! Loved our three-month trip, but it was time to head back to the U.S. on the SS Queen Elizabeth on November 10 and back to work."

Bob and Pat moved to Roseville and Bob got a job with General Mills, primarily working on government contracts - fiber optics, high altitude research balloons, deep sea submersibles, etc. In June 1963, Bob got a job in the government contracts division at UNIVAC working with proposals for navy weapons defense systems. He also worked on proposals for U.S. and foreign navy systems, working in Germany and Rome. In early 1960, The Federal Aviation Administration and UNIVAC developed an air traffic control system which would be deployed at 60 airports around the U.S. He was assigned to write a descriptive brochure of the system which could be provided to other countries of interest. The Japanese representative came to the U.S. and purchased the systems for use at the new Tokyo airport. Next, he was off to work with the German proposal. But after the final proposal, he left his job in August and another 4-5 years, and it got boring.

Bob's brother, Jim, wanted Bob to take over his business which he could set up in the basement, so he left UNIVAC and did this for several years. Time for taking extensive travel trips, acquire several loving cats, and, of course, we had our lovely home in Shoreview and enjoyed our sailboat on the St. Croix River at Hudson, Pat's hometown we all could enjoy.

Following a Road Scholar week in Arizona, Bob and Pat drove through Sun City West and decided to buy property there. In 1996 they had a home built and moved to Arizona in January 1997 where, in Bob's words, "we have enjoyed a new life in this incredible area, filled with so many new adventures we couldn't take advantage of them in the 27 years we have lived here."

Bob's interest in photography was well known and at family events he was rarely without a camera in his hands. Unfortunately, he did not take self-portraits.

Bob even kept writing daily notes in his last few days:

"On June 5, 2023, I went to the local hospital and got temporary treatment of a 9.9 mm kidney stone. Couldn't get the help that was required because the hospital had only enough anesthetizes and anthologist to treat cancer and emergency cases. I was discharged the next day. It was broken up in June. On Saturday, December 16, I got a metabolism report from my MD: For me that was another 5 years to life. On December 30, I went to the same hospital with kidney stone pain, and I was discharged. The next morning, I had a temperature of 103.4. I wasn't told anything about my "illness" on discharge, but I had no desire for food, in fact I had a problem getting food down, no desire to get out of bed, no desire to do anything. Nothing had changed. My MD had no comment about this. About 3 weeks after this stay in the hospital, Hospice of the West arrived at our apartment which I thought was usual. They told me I had a life-ending disease. However, the end time depended on how much food/calories I could take in. I eat the best I can, but it is VERY difficult. I also sleep a lot and so this is my life for now: DIFFICULT".

Bob passed away on May 16, 2024, in Sun City West at the age of 95 with his loving wife at his side. He was preceded in death by his parents, Alec and Gertrude, as well as his brothers, Jim and John. He is lovingly remembered by his wife, his many cousins, friends, in-laws, nieces, and nephews.

Cemetery Details

Wadena Cemetery

Franklin Drive & 5th St. SW
Wadena, MN 56482

Previous Events

Gathering of Family & Friends

JUL 27. 1:00 PM (CT)

Johnson-Schuller Chapel
205 4th Street Southwest
Wadena, MN 56482
(218) 631-3632

Time Of Remembrance

JUL 27. 1:30 PM (CT)

Johnson-Schuller Chapel
205 4th Street Southwest
Wadena, MN 56482
(218) 631-3632

Tribute Wall



“ *Schuller Family Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Robert Rolfe* ”



Schuller Family Funeral Homes - July 18, 2024 at 02:12 AM

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“ Captain, oh Captain of the Aphrodite ship,
You taught me so much with each river floating trip.

*With your calm demeanor and your gentle guiding hand,
you instilled confidence in me as we sailed away from land.*

*I'll remember your random chuckles, out from your silent still,
or how your voice muttered expletives, when the weather gave high
thrill.*

*Each weekend I spent sailing, I loved being by your side,
whether winching up a sail or two or just relaxing on the ride.*

*Even though those treasured years, have come and gone away,
the memories growing up with you, are in my heart to stay.*

*Captain, oh Captain of the Aphrodite ship,
I'm missing you so as you have taken your final trip.*

*Bon Voyage my sweet uncle. . .Until we meet again!
Lovingly, Linda*

Linda Jean Dorman - July 24, 2024 at 04:42 PM



“ 48 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Schuller Family Funeral Homes - July 17, 2024 at 10:07 PM