



Robert Bruce Bernhard

January 2, 1941 - March 11, 2021

Robert Bruce “Bob” Bernhard

January 2, 1941-March 11, 2021

Bob Bernhard, 80, of Corvallis, OR, passed away on Thursday, March 11, 2021. Bob was born on January 2, 1941 to Harold and Clara Bernhard in Yonkers, NY. He developed a love for hiking and the outdoors during his summers in high school as a camp counselor for Camp Tohkomeupog in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. He earned a BS in hotel administration from Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, where he was a member of Phi Kappa Tau fraternity. While at Cornell, he “almost” met his future wife, Peggy at a church dance. He had seen her and was finally about to meet her when curfew was called. He found her phone number two weeks later and asked her out. The rest was history. They were married for 56 years and had two children, Bill and Betsy.

After graduating from Cornell in 1962, Bob signed on as an officer in the US Air Force. Bob and Peggy moved to Warner Robins, GA, where he was stationed. At the base, he was responsible for food service and held the unenviable position of mortuary officer. He served a tour in Vietnam. After returning from Vietnam, Bob and Peggy moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, where he managed student cafeterias at the University of Tennessee and earned an M.B.A. He enjoyed a decades long career as the director of food

service at various universities around the country, including the Ohio State University, the College of William & Mary, the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and Northern Arizona University. He earned professional recognition for introducing new approaches to student dining, including short-order options, salad bars, vegetarian dishes, and his personal favorite, self-serve soft ice cream. He and Peggy moved to Corvallis in 1983 when Bob became the director of the College Inn at Oregon State University. While he managed the College Inn, he earned an M.Ed. from Oregon State University and quickly became a fan of Beaver athletics.

Bob's true passions, beside his family, included New York Yankees baseball, the outdoors, and volunteering to help others in the community. Bob was a continuously active Boy Scout leader since 1964. He was excited when his son was born because he would have his own scout. He served as Scoutmaster or Cub Master everywhere he lived. In 1984, he revitalized Troop 170 in Corvallis, serving as Scoutmaster for many years and remaining active with the troop after his retirement. Bob introduced countless boys to the joys of camping and nature. He took his scouts on adventures all over Oregon, from swimming and kayaking along the coast to hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing in the Cascade Mountains. He also led scout trips to Maine, New Hampshire, Virginia, New Mexico, and Minnesota. He believed that every boy he met was a potential Eagle Scout. Over the years, he mentored more than 50 Eagle Scouts. In 1990, he was awarded the Silver Beaver Award by the Oregon Trail Council of the Boy Scouts of America, in recognition of his exceptional character and distinguished service.

Bob was also an active member of Kiwanis, serving as a charter member and president of the local Sunrisers Club, organizing fund-raising drives for local youth activities. He also held the office of Kiwanis Division 72 Lieutenant Governor three separate times.

After his retirement from the College Inn, Bob became even more active in the community. Drawing on his business experience, Bob served as president of the local chapter of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), where he mentored many aspiring small business owners. He coordinated the SMART Reading Program at Mountainview School for many years, which provided schoolchildren with access to reading mentors and gift books.. For this work, he received the Volunteer of the Year award in 2016. Bob was also involved at the Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan, serving as an usher and lay reader. He was elected to the vestry multiple times and served as Senior Warden when asked. For many years, Bob also drove for the Benton County Dial-A-Bus and delivered Meals on Wheels.

In 1999, he received the First Citizen Award from the City of Corvallis, recognizing his many contributions of service to the community. In 2007, he received the Rotary Meritorious Service Award for his work to enrich the lives of area children.

Bob was known for his warm and ready smile, kind heart, and ever-present sense of humor. He was proud of all the young people in his life, especially his children and grandchildren, and took great joy in helping them grow and develop.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Peggy; his “favorite” brother, Dick; his two children, Bill (Jen) and Betsy (Bob) Cooper; and his four grandchildren, Raine, Ben, Ezra, and Joe.

Donations in memory of Bob are encouraged for the Oregon Trail Council Boy Scouts of America, Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, or the charity of your choice.

Service will be held at St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Albany by invitation on March 20 at 1 pm. The service will be streamed on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/stalbans.albany.oregon/>

Tribute Wall

JM

“ It is hard to put into words how much Bob meant to our family. We were fortunate in having both of our sons join Troop 170 when Bob was scoutmaster. He had amazing patience, an incredible willingness to work with all boys and such a positive attitude. I remember spending a week with him at Melakwa in the Cascades when he was already well past retirement age- dealing with a pile of new scouts. I was tried just watching him in action. I doubt our boys (or I) could have found a better role model than Bob- We were saddened to learn of his passing and are sorry that our current roles in Australia will not allow us to attend and memorials but he will always be in our thoughts. Jeff Morrell

J Morrell - March 24, 2021 at 05:04 AM

AL

“ I always enjoyed Bob and having conversations with him. I met him initially as a Scout Master of a troop and then again when I was living at the College Inn in the early nineties. Bob inadvertently introduced me to my wife 27 years ago by encouraging me to go to a Circle K(Kiwanis, not the store!) meeting. At the first and only meeting I went to while attending OSU; I met my wife. Later our paths would cross again while attending the Good Samaritan Episcopal Church. I feel lucky to have been able to cross paths in life so often, and my life is richer for it. Thank you, Bob.

Andy Van Laere - March 22, 2021 at 06:58 PM

SW

“ Dear Betsy,
I met your Dad through the many conversations we've had over the years. I knew immediately he was a gentle spirit, someone I would have liked meeting in person.
I'm grateful our loved ones live in our memories and that his light shines forever
in your heart*
Love
Sunni Walton

Sunni Walton - March 20, 2021 at 12:27 PM

MQ

“ Bob was a Good Scout. I met Bob when I became Scout executive in 2001. He offered sound advice, kind words and a wonderful sense of humor. I enjoyed being with Bob and our regular visits to talk about Scouting and Benton County. Bob was a humble servant leader so many Scouts and leaders looked up to.

Michael Quirk

Mike Quirk - March 20, 2021 at 10:15 AM

RP

“ Sorry for your loss. I lived at the College Inn from 1988-92. On my first day, Bob and I got to talking and he hired me as a late night security guard and later front desk person. Thanks to Bob, I met Kathy Cross while working at the front desk in 1989. Kathy and I became great friends and after our College Inn days were long over, we married in 2001. We will celebrate 20 great years in August and it's all thanks to Bob Bernhard hiring me so I could meet my future wife! We have two girls and they are also thankful that Bob played a role in Kathy (now Kate) meeting at the College Inn front desk nearly 32 years ago.

--Rod Porsche, College Inn rooms N-116, E-304, S-117, 1988-92.
Great memories.

Rod Porsche - March 19, 2021 at 01:42 PM



“ I met Bob when I became the Scout Executive in 1984 and hence began a long term friendship with Bob. I have so many memories of the gentle, loving, compassionate man he was. Bob was a mentor to me always ready with a kind word. I am sorry for your loss.

George Grosch

George Grosch - March 19, 2021 at 01:18 AM

GM

“ Bob was a good friend and a great scouter. I am very fortunate to have known him and enjoyed his friendship.

Guy March - March 18, 2021 at 08:43 PM