



## Robert O'Donnell

May 21, 1925 - June 30, 2011

Robert Earl O'Donnell, a former counselor at Crescent Valley High School and developer of an alternative program for struggling learners at Corvallis High School, died Thursday, June 30, in Corvallis with his family at his side. He was 86.

A memorial service will be Wednesday, July 6, 2011, at 2 p.m. at the Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan in Corvallis. Robert was born May 21, 1925, in Chariton, Iowa, to James and Martha O'Donnell.

Raised in an Irish Catholic family during the 1920s and 1930s, Bob was encouraged to set high ideals for himself. His father, James Patrick, modeled this by refusing under pressure to join an Indiana Ku Klux Klan, losing his business and, as a result, was forced to labor in the coal mines to support his family of seven children during the Great Depression. Immediately after high school Bob was drafted into the U.S. Navy and served his country proudly during World War II as a yeoman between 1943 and 1945. After being honorably discharged from the Navy at the end of the war, he dedicated himself to further his education at Indiana University and Evansville College, earning a teaching certificate and bachelor's degree in Physical Education. Later he obtained his master's degree in Education at Oregon State University and doctorate in Education at Sarasota College. Bob also was actively involved in his Lutheran Church as a young adult and, later in life, in the Episcopal Church. Many pastors, parishioners, and friends can attest to his prayerful and Christ-centered lifestyle.

Bob touched the lives of many people. First and foremost, he was a devout family man. With his wife Bernell, he raised three sons (David, Randall, and Kerry) and one daughter (Laura). Several years after Bernell died, he brought great joy to the Rarick family, marrying Deborah and nurtured her three sons (Patrick, Daniel, and Christopher) and daughter (Jeannette). His compassion for others was reflected in his teaching. He taught elementary through high school mathematics, social studies, physical education, and driver's education in four states: Indiana, Washington, California, and Oregon. Bob served as high school counselor at Crescent Valley High School in Corvallis and developed an alternative high school program for struggling learners at Corvallis High School as he had done in California years earlier. His athletic background was deep, including four years of varsity football, a stint as a minor league baseball player, and later as a middle school football, basketball, baseball, and track coach, mostly at Highland View Junior High School in Corvallis throughout the 1960s.

Bob was preceded in death by his first wife, Bernell O'Donnell, and youngest son, Kerry O'Donnell. He is survived by wife of 29 years, Deborah O'Donnell of Philomath; sons David (with Cherie) O'Donnell of North Bend and Randall (with Melva) O'Donnell of Kansas City, and daughter Laura (with Richard) Pohl of Omaha, NE; step-children: Patrick (with Debrah) Rarick of Corvallis, Daniel (with Nancy) Rarick of Springfield, Christopher (with Karol) Rarick of Eugene, and Jeannette (with Jon) Baker of Bellingham, WA; and by thirteen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

# Tribute Wall

DB

“ *Rand -  
My sympathies to you and your entire family. I wish I had the  
opportunity to meet your father - he clearly was an outstanding  
person - and passed on many of the great qualities to his children.*

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**Doug Blowey** - July 07, 2011 at 10:40 AM

MT

“ *I always looked up to Mr.O,Donnell. What a good person. I believe  
he gave me a driving test and was involved with me as a coach as  
well. Michael Thompson Highland View, Cheldelin, then CHS, Class  
of 1972*

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**Michael Thompson** - July 06, 2011 at 11:32 PM

EE

“ *Robert O'Donnell leaves a wonderful legacy in his son, Randall  
O'Donnell. Dr. Randall O'Donnell is a living testament of good  
fathering.*

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**Emma Lou Edwards** - July 05, 2011 at 05:30 PM