

Robert “Bob” Aitken

Robert “Bob” Aitken passed away peacefully on August 13, 2019 surrounded by his children and their spouses. He played many roles during his life: son, father, grandfather, husband, educator, outdoorsman, animal lover, poet and friend. He believed that a person’s most important responsibility was to family and friends and he worked throughout his life to put that thought into action.

Bob was born in 1934 in Vancouver, the only child of Robert and May Aitken. The family ran a store in Chase, BC for most of the depression and moved several times during the war years before eventually settling on Mayne Island in 1944. Bob’s life on the family homestead, “Glen Echo,” was always his most prized time. He enjoyed the farm work, raising tomatoes and tending the sheep and chickens but his true love was exploring the forests, hills and valley that surrounded him. He attended high school on Saltspring, where he graduated in 1952. He was active in Boy Scouts, attaining the rank of King’s Scout, which earned him a trip to a national jamboree in Ontario.

He then moved to Vancouver to attend UBC where he met his lifelong friend, Eric Foster, and later his future bride, Mary. During the summers and other time off, Bob was able to further his love for the outdoors while working as a timber cruiser on the west coast of Vancouver Island and as a deckhand on a fish boat. He graduated from UBC with a BA in English and a high school teaching credential. Bob and Mary were married in 1959 and moved to Dawson Creek where Bob taught English. They moved back to the lower mainland a few years later and settled in Richmond where they raised their two children, Rob and Regan. Bob taught English at Alpha Secondary in Burnaby where he rose to head the English department while also earning a Master’s degree at SFU. In 1976, Bob was offered a position at the Ministry of Education and the family moved to Victoria. Bob served in a variety of

roles at the ministry and then moved on to work as a senior administrator with the Greater Victoria School District Board Office where he retired in 1994. Bob co-wrote "Making Schools Smarter," bringing his passion for improving school curriculum to others in Canada and the US.

Bob had an adventurous spirit and took on many hobbies through his life. He was an accomplished woodworker, using those skills to build his family's summer cabin on Mayne Island where he also shared his love of nature with his children. His hobbies were many though not all made it to the fixed hobby list – some highlights include snorkeling, motorcycling, bonsai and travel. Travel could be as exotic as with he and Mary being the first Canadians to visit Kamchatka, Russia, or simple, like their many trips to Moclips on the Olympic Peninsula. While Bob loved the adventures, there was perhaps nothing more "Bob" than to be sitting back in his recliner with a cat on his lap and a book in his hand. Bob was extremely widely read, with a personal library of hundreds of volumes. He had a quick wit and his vocabulary was legendary. Bob's mischievous side kept those around him laughing. Even in retirement, he worked hard at keeping up his physical strength, especially his "super grip" handshake. After Bob and Mary divorced, he moved to Cobble Hill. Here Bob created a beautiful home where he spent many years enjoying the company of his family, tending to his home and garden and taking time for his relationship with Jeanne O'Neill. In 2018, Bob moved to a memory care facility where he continued to make people laugh and established himself quickly as a favourite among the caring staff.

Bob is survived by his children, Regan Hansen (David Galbraith) and Rob Aitken (Denise), along with grandchildren, RJ (Amy) and Colin Aitken, Victoria Gervacio (Frank), Alexandra and Kieran Hansen, and Alex and Matt Galbraith, as well as great-grandchildren, Isabelle, Aiden and Camille Gervacio.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held for Bob at 2:00pm on Friday, September 27, 2019 in the Sequoia Centre at McCall Gardens in Royal Oak, 4665 Falaise Drive.

Donations in his honour may be made to the Alzheimer Society.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

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