



Robert E. Witkowski

JAN 9, 1941 - JAN 28, 2024



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Dr. Robert "Bob" Witkowski, a cherished father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and pioneering scientist, passed away suddenly on January 28, 2024, in West Mifflin, at the age of 83. Born in Glassport on January 9, 1941, to the late Edward and Helen (Orzcowski) Witkowski, Bob's inquisitive mind and boundless enthusiasm for learning shaped a life rich with accomplishment and service.

Bob's academic journey was a testament to his dedication to science.

He earned his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry in 1962, followed by a Master's in Chemistry in 1973, and ultimately a Ph.D. in Planetary Science in 1988, all from the University of Pittsburgh. His career began at the Mellon Institute's Micro Analytical Laboratory under the guidance of Dr. William G. Fateley and Dr. Foil Miller. He subsequently joined Westinghouse Electric Corporation in their Liquid Metals Laboratory. Later in his career at Westinghouse, he was instrumental in establishing the Microwave Plasma Enhanced Chemical Vapor Deposition Facility. His innovative work on creating diamond thin-films for commercial applications positioned him as a leader in his field. Bob retired from Westinghouse in 1995, leaving behind a legacy of ingenuity and excellence.

Bob's professional contributions were widely recognized. In 1972, he served as President of the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh (SSP). His collaborative efforts with Dr. Chris Bagnall earned them the Best Technical Paper at the International Metallographic Society annual meeting in 1977 and the prestigious Pierre Jacquet Gold Medal for excellence in Metallography in 1978. His adventurous spirit led him to Antarctica in 1984, where he collected air samples at the South Pole Station for his Planetary Science Research Project. Bob also held positions of leadership, such as Chairman of the American Chemical Society (ACS) Pittsburgh Section in 1985, and received numerous accolades, including a distinguished service award from ACS in 2007 and a 50-year recognition of service in 2010. In 2013 he received 50 year of service SSP award. In 1996 he was elected to the University of Pittsburgh's Sigma Xi Chapter. He contributed significantly to Pittsburgh's scientific community.



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Beyond his professional achievements, Bob was a beacon of knowledge and support in his community. He was actively involved in teaching high school science teachers through the SSP Focus in Spectroscopy Workshops and contributed his time and expertise to numerous Pittsburgh Conference meetings. An advocate for education and exploration, he was a licensed geologist in Pennsylvania and a passionate member of the Monongahela Rockhounds.

Bob's personal interests were as diverse as his professional ones. A devoted father, he supported Boy Scouts of America Troop #31 and cherished time spent with his family at the beach. His hobbies included attending mineral shows, collecting stamps, rocks and minerals, knives, roman coins, antique radio equipment, microscopes, and Bunsen Burners. His zest for life and curiosity were infectious, leaving a lasting impression on everyone he met.

He is survived by his loving sons, Mark (Lorraine) Witkowski and Gregory Witkowski; his adored grandchildren, Abigail, Colin, Patrick, Tara Jean, and Ella Marie; and his sister, Dorothy (the late Dean) Patterson. He also leaves behind his niece, Darlene Patterson. Bob was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 44 years, Anna (Novakowski) Witkowski; his nephew, Darrin Patterson; and his niece, Dalene Patterson; and his parents, Edward and Helen (Orzcowski) Witkowski.

In the words of Galileo, "All truth's are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them. I do not feel obligated to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use. ..." Bob indeed saw further, and his legacy will continue to inspire those who stand on the foundation of his life's work. He will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Family and friends are welcome on Thursday, February 1, 2024 from 12 to 2 pm & 4 to 6 pm at the Jefferson Memorial Funeral Home, Inc., 301 Curry Hollow Road, Pittsburgh.

A Blessing Service will be held in the funeral home's chapel at 6 pm.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in memory of Bob to the Alzheimer's Association Greater Pittsburgh Chapter at <https://www.alz.org/pa>

Online condolences may be shared at www.jeffersonmemorial.com



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Anonymous posted:

I am so sorry for your loss.

February 5 at 1:33 PM



Singh Manocha posted:

A Fellow Scientist I admired

February 5 at 12:16 PM



Singh Manocha posted:

I developed admiration for Bob reading his papers with Bill Fateley and Foil Miller on Far Infrared Studies. Papers were easy to read, well organized and provided me a good understanding of the subject before I started to work in this field. I finally got to meet him when I joined Westinghouse R&D. I was also fortunate to meet his son Mark who also worked very closely with Bill at Kansas State. Both very good industrial scientists and family-oriented down to earth individuals. My sincere condolences to Bob's Family- Singh Manocha

February 5 at 12:08 PM



Maria Mrosko And Family posted:

Our condolences!

February 1 at 8:54 AM



Daniel Terrick posted:

My deepest sympathy to the family. I was a salesman for Fisher Scientific and Bob was one of my customers at Westinghouse. He always gave me time to visit and talk to him about new products. One day I mentioned to him about my collection of Fisher Scientific catalogs, some dating back to the early 30's, and he showed his interest in saving them and preserving them by donating to a museum in Philadelphia. So there they now sit. He was a true gentleman. I am sure the family was very proud of him and he will be missed.

February 1 at 5:39 AM



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LL

Lisa Legters posted:

Mark and Greg and families, our sincerest condolences to you at this time. Your dad was a wonderful person and he lived a full life. We are thinking of you today and praying for all as you honor your dad and lay him to rest. The Legters Family

February 1 at 4:03 AM

JO

Jonathan posted:

I had forgotten what a good looking guy he was. I enjoyed our time together.

January 31 at 3:55 PM

KC

Kari & Jeremy Chucko posted:

With our deepest sympathies and all our love.

January 31 at 3:32 PM



Anonymous posted:

With Deepest Sympathy

January 31 at 5:53 AM

DS

Darlene Salmon posted:

I remember when my Uncle Bob took me to Century III Mall to take me shopping for any outfit I wanted. This was when I around 8 years old & shopping is still my favorite hobby today at age 51. I remember looking at his rock collection & listening to him tell my family & grandparents about his trip to Antarctica. I know he will be missed by many professional, personal friends & relatives. I won't forget my Uncle Bob & his legacy will go on forever! With love, Darlene Salmon

January 30 at 7:43 PM



Anonymous posted:

With deepest sympathy from the Pattersons - Dorothy, Lori, Ethan, and Noah - Melbourne, FL

January 30 at 2:55 PM



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Dorothy Patterson posted:

LITTLE SISTER \"PUDGE\" BOB ALWAYS DELIGHTED WALKING ME TO MONSTER MOVIES, OUR GLASSPORT THEATER. HE COULDN'T WAIT TILL COAL WAS DELIVERED TO OUR HOME, 626 DELAWARE AVE, GLASSPORT. BOB ENJOYED SITTING ON TOP OF THE COAL PILE AND MUNCHING A PIECE OR TWO OF COAL! AS I GREW OLDER (10yrs) BOB WOULD PAY ME PENNIES TO DUST OFF HIS CHEMISTRY SET IN OUR CELLAR. HE WAS LEFT- HANDED: I AM RIGHT-HANDED. YES, BOB DELIGHTED TO SIT ON MY RIGHT SIDE TO ELBOW ME!!!! BIG BROTHER INTROVERT. LITTLE SISTER EXTROVERT. WE WERE A FAMILY OF 4. DAD (EDWARD), MOM(HELEN), BOB, DOROTHY, WALKED TO HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY MORNING. SAT ON THE PORCH. DAY OF REST. TILL WE MEET IN HEAVEN BOB.....HAPPY TRAILS DOROTHY PATTERSON MELBOURNE, FLORIDA

January 30 at 12:15 PM



Janny Kline posted:

Much Loved Neighbors for over 40 years Bob and Annie and family were very special to us We spent alot of time sitting on our back porch together with our beloved pets. We will Miss him allot.They were a part of our family.. Our Dog Dusty was Bob's best Buddy.

January 30 at 10:45 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Robert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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