



Robert Fluchel

July 20, 1946 - December 4, 2015

Bob Fluchel, who died on Friday December 5th, was a model Conservation Educator, a loyal friend, and a man of deep sacrificial love for his family. He left a legacy.

Conservation Educator:

Professionally, Bob found not only a career, but a calling. He studied Biology at The University of Missouri St. Louis, and received a Masters degree in Zoology from Southern Illinois University. Bob's passion was the intersection of nature conservation and education. In an article written about Bob when he won the AIM Professional Conservation Interpreter of the Year Award, Gene Fox called him the Tom Watson of natural history.

Bob's passion was helping youth experience nature. He did this in numerous ways, by working directly with children, and by helping teachers interpret the natural world to their students. Early in his career, he served as the Director at Fontenelle Forest near Omaha, Nebraska for 11 years. Later, he joined the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and served there 24 years before retiring in 2009. Perhaps his crowning achievement with MDC was in helping envision, construct, and manage the Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center adjacent to the Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City. The Discovery Center serves as a living educational experience aimed especially at educating young people whose "Feet have never been off pavement."

Bob was one of those who took action to bring nature to the lives of people living surrounded by concrete, asphalt, and traffic in low-income areas. He said in an article about the Discovery Center:

“You live your life within a few square city blocks. Outside, the sounds of traffic fill your ears. You connect with computers, video games, and television more than nature. Your ideas about conservation have more to do with picking up litter or recycling than fish, forests, and wildlife. If you are this child, or if you care about the future of this child, you are the reason we built the Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center right in the middle of Kansas City.”

After retiring, Bob continued his life’s work in conservation as the manager at Parkville Nature Sanctuary (PNS), working with a special group of colleagues to maintain, give tours, and fundraise so that others could enjoy that little slice of woodland paradise.

Friend:

Bob truly left a legacy of conservation, but he also left a legacy of friendship. Bob was the type of person who never met a stranger. He made friends easily and really cared about how people were doing. Bob had many lifelong friends from his places of work and gathered regularly with retired MDC colleagues at “Old Timers” breakfasts and had coffee every week with the PNS crew. Bob and his wife, Barbara, enjoyed dinner club, travel groups, and the fellowship of their Sunday school class.

Here is a sampling of condolences from friends:

We have all lost a very special person and Nature one of its strongest advocates.

-Andy Saunders

“Bob was the epitome of kindness. Whenever we talked, I could tell he really

listened and cared...I feel truly blessed to have known him.” - Dr. Lisa Nutt

“Your father was a true gentleman. I don't think I ever saw him angry or upset with someone's views, however contradictory they might be to his own.. He treated people the way he would want to be treated. He was a gentle soul, yet a tremendous leader in the conservation world. Maybe that's where he got some of his peace -- through the outdoors that he loved so dearly. We need more people like that in this world. I will miss him.” – Brent Frazee

Family Man:

For those of us who had the privilege to call Bob a member of our family, it is difficult to compose words that articulate just how much he meant to us. Bob and his brothers grew up in St. Louis, and each of them married amazing women. Out of those partnerships came children and grand children who to a person rise up and call them blessed. Bob married Barbara Fluchel, a fellow St. Louis resident, in 1968. They spent their early marriage in both St. Louis and Southern Illinois. Their first summers together they traveled Indiana working with Youth Camps to improve their programs. Barb is retired from her own career shaping the lives of young men and women as an elementary school teacher. Together they gave their lives to the transformation and opportunity that comes through education. They were a true team in every way. More than anything, Bob loved Barb, and loved being with Barb. They loved traveling together, babysitting grandkids together, and going out with friends together - really anything together. They were the embodiment of two people who were not only husband and wife, but also best friends.

Bob and Barb have two children, Amy and Lisa. Together with their husbands, Chuck and Jeff, they have two grand children, Gabriel and Lydia. Amy and

Lisa saw Bob as their rock. Always willing to drop everything to help if either of them were in need. Chuck and Jeff saw Bob as a mentor, teaching them how to love his daughters, by providing an example of his love for them and for Barb. Gabriel and Lydia adored their Paw-Paw.

For Bob, his extended family has always been profoundly important. He would want everyone to know how much he loved them. Bob had two brothers, Ralph and Richard. Their families are included below.

Ralph and Kathy and their children and grandchildren: Brian and Kim (Shawn, Becci, and Matthew); Mark and Nelangi (Tai and Ellie); and Michael and Erin (Walt and June).

Richard and Debbie and their children and grandchildren: Doug and Kari (Jackson and Carter), Greg and Jill (Gwenyth and Celia); and Brad and Sarah.

Barb's family was also part of Bob's extended circle of love and concern. They include her sisters and their families.

Carol and Doug Christian and their child and grandchildren: Laurie and Kris(Justin, Kellen, Sebastian)

Gail and Jerry Boutelle and their child and grandchildren: Kelli and Marc(Owen and Isaac)

As part of his passion for preserving outdoor spaces, Bob worked to create a non-profit organization to benefit Parkville Nature Sanctuary.

In Lieu of Flowers please donate memorial gifts to Friends of Parkville Nature Sanctuary.

Friends of Parkville Nature Sanctuary

P.O. Box 12103
Parkville, MO 64152

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 12. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Platte Woods United Methodist Church
7310 NW Prairie View Rd
Platte Woods, MO 64151

Service

DEC 12. 1:00 PM (CT)

Platte Woods United Methodist Church
7310 NW Prairie View Rd
Platte Woods, MO 64151

Tribute Wall



“ *Robert Fluchel*

October 04, 2023 at 10:39 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Robert Fluchel.*



January 19, 2016 at 01:25 PM



“ *How does one reconcile the intellect and heart with the loss of such a friend as Bob Fluchel? We celebrate the honor of knowing and loving him, recalling all the memories of our time together. It brings joy and appreciation.*

But the heart breaks with the realization that our time together was too short. That hurts and is emotionally unacceptable.

I don't have the answer, nor does it exist. For the time being, we accept that this deep sorrow comes because our affection was as great if not more profound. Bob really did well in this life, creating a family masterpiece. We are forever thankful to Barb, Amy and Lisa for sharing him and allowing us to be a part of an extended family. Collectively, even in anguish, he will always be to those fortunate to have known him...a blessing.

Gene and Carol Fox

Gene Fox - December 10, 2015 at 07:49 PM

DG

“ Bob was one of the nicest people I have ever known. He truly listened when he talked with anyone. He always made you feel like he cared about you and he was always glad to see you. I met him through his wife, Barb, who I was privileged to teach with. We all became the best of friends and eventually had dinner group and game club together. We even traveled together, my favorite trip being Disney World. We all saved up our nature questions for him. He would modestly explain what we wanted to know and freely admit if he didn't know for certain, which rarely happened. In 2013, Allen and I retired and made the decision to move to the DC area to be near our grandkids. Barb and Bob were two of the reasons it was hard to leave, but it didn't stop our friendship. They made the trip out to visit us last fall. We won't forget you, Bob, and we will continue to treasure our friendship with Barb.

Donna and Allen Gross

donna gross - December 10, 2015 at 10:46 AM

CS

“ I met Bob through the Missouri Honors Conservation program for interested high school students in conservation. That was 1990 as my oldest son and we were introduced to this wonderful caring gentleman. As time went on, Bob helped me into developing an outdoor classroom for the Grain Valley school district. He was very helpful not only in this endeavor but also convinced me into taking post graduate classes in all types of conservation courses. After my retirement from teaching, Bob was on the interviewing board for a position at the Discovery Center for an Education Specialist. I was thrilled to be hired and worked for Bob as my site manger while there. Bob was truly a great man for conservation, caring for everyone and everything. Bob always told me that family should always be first and your job second. I will always cherish the times Bob and I would sit down talk about our families. The conservation world lost a wonderful man.
Chuck Shroyer

Chuck Shroyer - December 09, 2015 at 11:06 AM

 Ken
Smith

“ Bob was a true gentleman. His caring and kindness will live on through his family and friends. Bob and Barb felt like old friends from the very first time I met them. Our love and prayers for Barb and the entire family.

Ken Smith - December 09, 2015 at 10:11 AM

BW

“ Bob was one of the brightest, kindest and funniest people I've ever known. He was a joy to be around. I had the pleasure of traveling with him and Barbara, sharing lots of New Year's Eve's together, and enjoying his company with a group of couples we called "The Game Club." We met regularly at one another's homes and played various board games. But, mostly we met to enjoy one another's company. Those are memories I will always cherish. I am very saddened by his passing, but I smile when I remember how much fun he was.

Bob Waldh - December 08, 2015 at 04:08 PM

GW

“ I met Bob in high school. He was always a gentleman and truly a good sole. I was so sorry to hear of his passing. At our 50th reunion last year I had the pleasure of sitting and talking with him for quite a while. It was fun catching up. I also enjoyed his Facebook posts. It was obvious that he loved his family and the nature center dearly.

My brother Jim Overy lived in Parkville. When he died this spring, Bob left a nice message on Jimmy's condolences page, even though he had never met Jimmy. He also invited my niece and her family to visit the nature center. I suspect he thought the visit might help sooth their troubled spirits.

*Gloria Overy Woerheide
Norwich, Connecticut*

Gloria Woerheide - December 08, 2015 at 03:06 PM

GW

"and truly a good sole" Bob would have laughed at my accidentally calling him a fish.

Gloria Woerheide - December 08, 2015 at 03:31 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Chuck Russell - December 08, 2015 at 10:06 AM

LI

“ 5 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Lisa - December 08, 2015 at 09:38 AM

LC

“ *At one time, Bob was my direct supervisor at the MDC. When I would drive from St. Joseph to the KC Discovery Center for meetings he would always make sure I was out the door in time to avoid the horrible KC traffic. He worried about me driving home in it. He was so much more than a supervisor. He was always a kind-hearted friend and colleague whose ideas inspired and encouraged me.*

LuAnn Cadden - December 07, 2015 at 08:25 PM



“ I only knew Bob a short time, but he knew our Mother. When she passed in January, we asked for contributions in her memory for the Parkville Nature Sanctuary. Bob took care of purchasing the new picnic tables that are now at the entrance and had plaques made with her name on them. He even orchestrated a cookout when they were dedicated, along with the rest of the very dedicated Nature Sanctuary and City Hall folks. He was so sweet, caring and understanding. I'm sure his loss is going to be felt dearly by his family, friends, co-workers and lovers of the Parkville Nature Sanctuary.

Liane Lance - December 07, 2015 at 08:19 PM

SH

“ I work at Parkville City Hall and had the pleasure of meeting and working with Bob. He was such a sweet sweet man and a loving man. He talked about his children and his grandchildren and the things they did together. He was so awesome and I know, me personally, I am going to miss him very much. Sharon Coleman

Sharon - December 07, 2015 at 02:23 PM

BC

“ Bob's daughter Amy and my daughter Joanna were good friends growing up, and I've known Bob for many years but didn't get to know him well until he started at the Parkville Nature Sanctuary. He was always willing to talk and share tales and experiences. I nicer man I'll never meet.



Byron Combs - December 07, 2015 at 01:49 PM

LC

“ I really adored the man that you call husband, father, grandfather. He was a mentor to me with my job, parenting, and so many other aspects of my life. A wise-beyond-his-years man and a kind, patient, and wonderful friend. I'm so extremely sorry for you loss. I will miss him and regret never getting to visit the nature park where he last shared his vision, passion, and love. I will still visit it one day and I know his presence will surround me. I will, however, miss the physical presence of my friend.

Linda Chorce - December 07, 2015 at 01:40 PM

FR

“ We will miss Bob so much and I am so sorry he had to leave you all so soon. What I remember most is his love of his family, his patience, and kindness.

Frank and Gaye Russell - December 07, 2015 at 12:43 PM

DK

“ My previous post was comments from CRAIG HENSLEY, I did not write, just Reposted.

Dianne Kixmiller - December 07, 2015 at 12:37 PM

DK

“ I knew of Bob before I ever met him. He was at Fontenelle forest in Omaha before I got there and then as you know with MDC when I got to BOW. he was one of the most gentle, kind men I to this day have ever meant. I wish I had had the opportunity to work with him. I am so sorry for his loss and the impact it must have on his family and the sanctuary. He made a definite positive impact on the world through his dedication and passion for the environment and the children he connected to it. If I wasn't playing Santa Claus at the local library down here on the 12th I would try to get there. Would be nice to get back to KC for a visit although these would not be the circumstances I would prefer. Tribute by Craig Hensley (reposted to Dianne Kixmiller)

Sent from my iPhone

Dianne Kixmiller - December 07, 2015 at 12:31 PM

JB

It's great to see this Fontenelle Forest reference regarding Bob. He played a big role in the direction my life took as a teenager in the late seventies interested in nature interpretation (and ending up as a biology teacher). I remember with great fondness Bob's gentle humor, a trip to see the Sandhill Cranes, and numerous hikes in the woods. The nature center is very different now, and Bob played a big role putting it on that path.

Jerry Burke, Medford, Oregon

Jerry Burke - April 07, 2016 at 10:31 PM

LP

“ It was such an honor to get to know and work with Bob these past few years. His contributions to the Parkville Nature Sanctuary cannot be overstated. Bob beamed with warmth and positive energy. I was so glad when I would run into him at the Parkville Coffeehouse - it always brightened my day. He had a unique understanding of the importance of preserving outdoor spaces, and he had true vision for the future of the Nature Sanctuary. His leadership will be missed, but I know his passing will compel others to pick up the baton and forge ahead, as Bob would want. I will miss his smile. I can't imagine I'll ever walk through the Nature Sanctuary again without feeling his presence. My heart goes out to his family. -
Lauren Palmer, Parkville City Administrator

Lauren Palmer - December 07, 2015 at 10:22 AM

RW

“ It saddens me to hear of Bob's death. He was a great man and one of the kindest people I will ever know. My heart goes out to Lisa, Amy, their mom and extended family, as well as the entire conservation community.



Ruth Wallace - December 07, 2015 at 10:21 AM

TH

“ Bob was a true gentleman. A soft-spoken hero to many. His example caused those around him to want to be their best. Thank you to God for putting such a beautiful person in our lives.

Tenley Hansen - December 07, 2015 at 09:31 AM

SJ

“ *Bob Fluchel was a mentor to me and I had a lot of respect for him. I am thankful that I had the opportunity to work with Bob at the Discovery Center and in helping him with the summer camp at the Parkville Nature Sanctuary. My thoughts and prayers are with the Fluchel family. -Steve Jacobsen*

Steve Jacobsen - December 07, 2015 at 09:22 AM

LI

“ *1 file added to the album New Album Name*



Lisa - December 07, 2015 at 09:06 AM

DR

“ *What a truly remarkable professional gentleman, husband, family-man and friend to many!
My thoughts and prayers are with all who celebrate his wonderful life of service; yet mourn his passing.
May the peace of Christ be with you.
David R. Reed, friend of Amy, Chuck's & G*

David R. Reed - December 07, 2015 at 07:34 AM