



## Robert L. Burton "Bob"

August 9, 1938 - September 22, 2016

Incredible and inspiring people come in all shapes and sizes, but few as large as Robert (Bob) Burton. Bob passed away peacefully on September 22, 2016 in Santa Barbara; surrounded by loving family and many incredible friends. He will always be remembered for his patriotism, razor-sharp wit, love of life, sense of adventure, compassion, generosity and love of animals.

Bob was born in New York City on August 9, 1938 to Helen and Linwood Burton. Linwood was an entrepreneur and chemist; inventing such well-known cleaning products as Mr. Clean. Helen Burton was a Wall Street banker, who refused to allow her gender to determine her success. Bob's early life was largely shaped by his two parents, WWII and a patriotic sense of duty. In 1956, Bob relocated to Santa Barbara with his mother and younger siblings Edward and Evelyn Burton. After serving in the U.S. Marines in the early 60's, Bob returned to Santa Barbara and began cultivating many life-long friendships which still exist today. He later earned his black belt in Shotokan Karate and opened Santa Barbara's first karate school. In the late 60's, Bob's love for Santa Barbara inspired him to campaign for a local City Council seat. Following an unsuccessful bid for Santa Barbara City Council, Bob invested much of his time in his insurance business; until his love for adventure won him over and he decided to pursue his passion for the bail enforcement ("bounty hunting") profession. Always striving to be the best, Bob sought the tutelage of Ralph "Papa" Thorson; widely considered to be the foremost

authority on bounty hunting at the time and subject of the movie "The Hunter" starring the late Steve McQueen. A friendship between Bob Burton and Ralph Thorson quickly grew, until Thorson's passing in the early 90's. During this time, Bob worked tirelessly to change the public perception of Bounty Hunters from "lawless thugs" to disciplined professionals, by establishing the National Association of Bail Enforcement Agents (NABEA). Through this organization, Bob established industry "best practices", professional training and certifications, which elevated the public and media perception of Bail Enforcement Agents worldwide.

Bob's unique blend of quick wit, public presence and ability to communicate across all demographics, led to national and international media engagements. His appearances on 60 minutes, 20/20, Fox News, Larry King, ABC News and many international TV outlets further propelled the Bounty Hunting profession; ultimately paving the way for a new generation of Bounty Hunters and reality TV shows. After establishing himself as the world's foremost authority on Bounty Hunting, Bob transitioned from Bounty Hunting to international child abduction cases until his retirement in 2012.

Bob is survived by his sister Evelyn Walters (Burton), nephew Shawn Walters, grandniece Mary Walters, grandnephew Shawn Walters Jr. and cousins, William Hynes and Joanne Mason (Hynes). In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Visiting Nurse and Hospice Care of Santa Barbara and/or CARE4PAWS of Santa Barbara.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 on Thursday September 29, 2016 at Welch-Ryce-Haider, 15 E Sola St., followed by a burial ceremony at Calvary Cemetery

# Cemetery Details

## Calvary Cemetery

199 North Hope Ave  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
(805) 687-8811  
[http://www.archdiocese.la/directories/cemeteries/info.php?cemetery\\_id=3](http://www.archdiocese.la/directories/cemeteries/info.php?cemetery_id=3)

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

SEP **29**. 10:00 AM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Downtown  
15 E. Sola St.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 965-5145  
[info@wrhsb.com](mailto:info@wrhsb.com)  
<https://www.wrhsb.com>

# Tribute Wall

LZ

“ My Dear friend Bob Burton. I know you made everyone feel they could reach when trouble was near by. A Young Ladies best friend. Well Bob I am going to say " OUR Father" Morning , Noon ,an Night so you may find Your Heavenly Father and give him some assistance please.

My Dear Bob I t was a Golden Time with the Barron Ron Heron, General Tire Ian and the Crew. An of course Julie my then wife. Bob I hate to inform you but stealing / Altering of Heavenly Father 's Gifts have occurred. Keep and I out for Julie ,she might feel lost.

I am still on the job Bob let her know please. The boys are at risk but I am also lost.

Heavenly Father and his " Holy Spirt" must be found an reunited. Bob I will look to the sky and stars for your signal. Bob if anyone was ever owed a thank it's you. I bet you had concerns but it has been my honor to carry on as you wished. Not quite the physical man you are. But even from Heven your strength is felt.

Arise Sir Bob ,  
You serve Magic well. I hope he can finish the fight.

Love

Larry Mendoza an admirer.

Shh Bob let Heavenly Father no I thought I was allowed to use the

*Naughty List. I am sorry.*

**Larry Zuniga** - July 03, 2024 at 03:50 PM

JO

“ *I trained with Bob back in 1999 and got my membership in NBEA as a result. Bob was a great inspiration and friend, and I will always remember his humor and the Suburban he drive with a gold star painted on it. Great memories of Tombstone too.*

**Jack Onorato** - October 12, 2020 at 03:06 PM

TA

“ *Never found out about your death till i seen it online this year.I was very devastated when i found out you were a very good friend and instructor we learned alot from you may god rest your soul with ease and care. From John & Tony Abedrabbo*

**Tony Abedrabbo** - March 30, 2020 at 11:06 AM



Roaddog Rivera

*This is road dog another one of Bob's students would attended his academy in tombstone Arizona and I'm very sorry to hear of his passing my condolences to the family knowing Bob he's hunting and hunting from beyond*

**Roaddog Rivera** - September 25, 2020 at 03:54 PM



*Weather for me track him down on his website I wanna noon or Bob Burton that passed away and left us my name is Raymond Taylor America name is Raymond Rubio I train with him when he was in North Carolina I feel back in 19 I was a 1990 to 2000 is a great trainer is a wonderful man he will definitely be missed sorry to hear that he passed away so late I get my donuts today*

**Soprano Rubio** - June 27, 2021 at 02:36 PM