



Robert F. Carlson

September 22, 1922 - November 4, 2015

9/09/22 - 11/04/15

A defining characteristic of Bob Carlson was the fact that he hiked the whole length of the John Muir Trail in the High Sierras.

As a fourteen year old Bob hiked from Santa Barbara up to the ridge of the Santa Ynez Mountains at East Camino Cielo, climbed down to Gibraltar Dam on the north side, returned to the ridge, then jogged down to Santa Barbara. He then went to a dance that night.

Bob's leadership skills showed up early. He was named an Eagle Scout in 1938, by the Boy Scouts of America. Then his senior year Bob was voted "Outstanding Boy" at Santa Barbara High School in 1940. There Bob served as Student Body President. At Berkeley Bob finished his B.S. in mechanical engineering in 3 1/2 years, graduating with the Class of 1943.

Bob served in the Navy at the end of World War II in the Pacific as the skipper of a sub chaser.

Harvard Business School accepted Bob in 1946 where he joined other classmates who were fortunate GI Bill veterans. In his spare time while there, Bob led friends on ski trips to Vermont, particularly to Stowe.

After graduating in 1948 from HBS, Bob was chosen to be the administrative Director of the Harvard Observatory in Climax, Colorado, a post he held for five years.

Bob's lifelong wish was to live, work, and play in Santa Barbara. Always one to see an opportunity, Bob joined forces with partner Bob Callahan in 1959 to form a corporation called Channel Technologies, in Santa Barbara. As CEO Bob hired highly trained technical men - the best in their field - and soon moved the growing company to Goleta.

Bob shunned publicity - for himself or for the five high technology, manufacturing companies which operated under the umbrella of Channel Technologies. These five companies, Channel Industries, Electro Optical, Sonatech, Channel Products and International Transducer Corporation, are actively operating companies today. Four are in Goleta and one is located in Ohio. Bob stayed as the head of Channel Technologies for 56 years. He sold the last of the operating companies in 2012.

The Santa Barbara Club, Rotary Club, Harvard Business School and Bob's Santa Barbara High School gave him many lifelong friendships. Every January for decades Bob organized a group of his Santa Barbara men friends to share a mini ski vacation at Mammoth Mountain. It became known as the "Carlson Ski Trip".

A active member of the Santa Barbara Club for over fifty years, Bob and his second wife Betsy (Borden) held their marriage reception at the Club on May 5, 1985. Over the years he and Betsy enjoyed delicious meals and good conversation there. Bob's particular contribution to the Club was his endless encouragement of fellow Santa Barbarans to become members.

Bob and Betsy bought their Mediterranean style house across from Santa Barbara's rose garden, park and old Mission in the early 1990's. Surrounded by this historic and beautiful architectural setting, their home has been a source of joy for them.

Bob's daughter, Apieh Claybrook, lives in Solvang. His granddaughter, Anwanur Gielow, her husband Ryan, and Bob's three great grandchildren, Samona, Andrew and Emmett, live in Buellton. Bob's younger son, Harvey Carlson, died in 1994. His older son, Rob Carlson, died in 2003. Rob's son Robert lives in Massachusetts with his mother Margaret Ann Gray.

Born Sept. 9, 1922 in Lompoc, CA to Martha Hanson Carlson and C.G. Fred Carlson, Bob and his family lived on a farm in Lompoc. They moved to Santa Barbara when Bob was 11 years old. Bob's sister, Esther Carlson Finster, lives in Sacramento. His sister, Ruth Carlson Down, and his brother, David Carlson, pre-deceased him.

Services will be private. In lieu of flowers, a donation to the Land Trust of Santa Barbara County or to Visiting Nurse and Hospice Care of Santa Barbara would be welcome.