



Robertson H. Short

January 7, 1929 - September 25, 2021

SHORT, Robertson H.

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Bob Short passed on peacefully at home at the age of 92 after a short illness and a long, rich life surrounded by the love of family and friends. He had the habit of making every place he lived better for his having been there and will be remembered for his intelligence, humor, warmth and limitless generosity. He had an insatiable thirst for knowledge and insight, read widely, and regularly engaged those with opposing views to expand his own understanding. His compassion, willingness to commit, and interest in solving problems led him to a successful business career and many impactful philanthropic and community roles over his lifetime. His life and work have positively influenced countless people and changed the shape of several major cities.

Bob was an optimist who always sought the best in people. He loved his family most of all, including his wife of 53 years, Audrey, who predeceased him, his daughters Barbara Short and Elizabeth Ellsworth, and his son Richard Price, as well as eight delightful grandchildren, with whom he had close and lasting relationships – Robertson, James, Thomas, Alexander, Hannah, Catherine, Martina and Charlie.

Raised in the Philadelphia area, Bob loved everywhere he lived, including Winnetka, IL, Highland Park (Dallas), TX, and Montecito, CA, where he and Audrey retired 32 years ago. Bob graduated from Purdue University with a degree in mechanical engineering and earned an MBA from the University of Delaware. He cherished his earliest work as an engineer at Sun Oil, where he met Audrey, the love of his life. He spent most of his career in commercial real estate development, primarily developing high rise office buildings in Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, Houston, New York and Los Angeles. He was a Professional Engineer licensed in ten states, a licensed Real Estate Broker in three, and served in leadership roles in several professional organizations throughout his career. Bob authored a comprehensive textbook for real estate development that was used at four universities and wrote a rich autobiography to pass his learnings, values and beliefs onto future generations.

Bob was active in civic and philanthropic efforts everywhere he lived. He was committed to enhancing local government and improving the quality of life for all. He believed civic participation to be the cornerstone of democracy and that giving back is both a duty and a privilege. Bob was President of the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Barbara and a mentor for Fighting Back. He served as the Public Commissioner for S.B. LAFCO, was a member of the Grand Jury of Santa Barbara County, and was a Director, Vice President and Land Use Committee member of the Montecito Association. He initiated and chaired a joint Taxpayers Association-Santa Barbara County-League of Women Voters committee that led to adoption by the County of Performance-Based Budgeting and Measurement. He chaired a committee dedicated to modifying and improving the Caltrans design for widening Hwy 101 through Montecito and was an active leader in identifying and supporting local political candidates. He was engaged at Casa Dorinda, serving as President of the Residents Association and on several committees.

He traveled the world and enjoyed golf at home; he was a member of Skokie

Country Club, Burlingame Country Club and Birnam Wood Golf Club. He played bridge and bocce with a competitive verve and was an avid football fan; his love and support of Purdue's football and basketball programs was ever true. He was a remarkable father and grandfather, always ready to have fun, listen, guide and lend a hand. He encouraged his children and grandchildren, through his words and actions, to work hard and be honest, fair, trustworthy, respectful and kind. The twinkle in his eye and his quick smile lit up a room and conveyed his love of life and genuine positive regard for all. He lived with intention and is an inspiration for many. He will be deeply missed.

In lieu of flowers, donations are welcomed for the United Boys & Girls Club of Santa Barbara County (P.O. Box 1485, Santa Barbara, CA 93102 or www.unitedbg.org).