

# ROBERT "BOB" VOLK HOWELL



Robert "Bob" Volk Howell died with family by his side on September 1, 2023, at the age of 83, in Pittsburgh, PA. He was born to Edith and Charles Howell in Vermont. After graduating from California Polytechnic University, Bob was commissioned in the Army and most notably served in Florida during the Cuban Missile Crisis. After marrying his college sweetheart, Bob found a unique way to satisfy



his love of printing by dedicating his career to specializing in litho-coatings that make tin cans safe for food storage. He spent nearly 50 years in the industry as a member of the International Metal Decorator Association and retired from Can Corporation of America in Reading, PA.

Bob grew up the son of a college biology professor and developed a lasting appreciation for outdoor adventures from backpacking in the High Sierra Nevada Mountains and riding the "Apple Cider Century" on his bike, to camping all across the country and counting birds to aid in migration studies. He taught his children how to canoe and come up so quietly on a beaver that you could get close enough to see its whiskers and how to light a campfire with one match. His backyard feeders were always filled with feathered friends.

In his lifetime he lived in 9 different states from the east to the west coast and back again. He always wanted to "leave things better than you found it" and contributed to his community wherever he was. He was a founding member of the Calumet Crank Club in Indiana in 1981, a bike club that continues to sponsor community events today and still sports the logo he designed. The Reading Philharmonic counted him as a long-time member as he played violin with them for many years through tree lighting festivals and summer outdoor concerts and he played in the pit orchestra for the annual high school musicals long after his children graduated. His rich singing voice brought a warmth to the camp sing-a-longs that outmatched the warmth of the campfire and he was always welcome in the church choir. He also often assisted in writing newsletters and making programs for church or community events and served as a deacon of the Bern Reformed United Church of Christ, in Leesport, PA. In recent years, Bob tutored English as a second language with Pittsburgh Literacy.

Bob's annual garden was lush and the yearly harvest always produced enough tomatoes, beans, and zucchini to share with friends and neighbors, whether they wanted them or not. When he wasn't gardening he was woodworking in his garage or tinkering with his bikes.

Bob always said, "Give a firm handshake, look 'em in the eye, and smile." His advice proves true and his direct manner and deep interest in the lives of his children and grandchildren and his care and love for his family and community will be missed but not forgotten.

Bob is survived by his wife of 59 years, Karen H. Howell; sister, Anne V. Howell; daughter, Laura Anne Howell and her two children, Karen and Izora; and daughter, Edith Boteler, her husband, Mike and their children, Abigail, Samantha, Mark, and Jessica Boteler.

Bob will be honored on SATURDAY, September 9th, 2023 at the **WILLIAM F. CONROY FUNERAL HOME, INC.**, 2944 Chartiers Ave., Sheraden. Family and friends are welcomed from 1 to 4 p.m. followed by a Celebration of Life Service starting at 4 p.m.

You may express your condolences to the family through our online Tribute Wall at [www.wfconroyfuneralhome.com](http://www.wfconroyfuneralhome.com).

Send condolences [post-gazette.com/gb](http://post-gazette.com/gb)