

## DR. ROBERT "BOB" WITKOWSKI



Dr. Robert "Bob" Witkowski, a cherished father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and pioneering scientist, passed away suddenly on January 28, 2024, in West Mifflin, at the age of 83. Born in Glassport on January 9, 1941, to the late Edward and Helen (Orzcowski) Witkowski, Bob's inquisitive mind and boundless enthusiasm for learning shaped a life rich with accomplishment and service. Bob's academic journey was a testament to

his dedication to science.

He earned his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry in 1962, followed by a Master's in Chemistry in 1973, and ultimately a Ph.D. in Planetary Science in 1988, all from the University of Pittsburgh. His career began at the Mellon Institute's Micro Analytical Laboratory under the guidance of Dr. William G. Fately and Dr. Foil Miller. He subsequently joined Westinghouse Electric Corporation in their Liquid Metals Laboratory. Later in his career at Westinghouse, he was instrumental in establishing the Microwave Plasma Enhanced Chemical Vapor Deposition Facility. His innovative work on creating diamond-thin films for commercial applications positioned him as a leader in his field. Bob retired from Westinghouse in 1995, leaving behind a legacy of ingenuity and excellence.

Bob's professional contributions were widely recognized. In 1972, he served as President of the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh (SSP). His collaborative efforts with Dr. Chris Bagnall earned them the Best Technical Paper at the International Metallographic Society annual meeting in 1977 and the prestigious Pierre Jacquet Gold Medal for Excellence in Metallography in 1978. His adventurous spirit led him to Antarctica in 1984, where he collected air samples at the South Pole Station for his Planetary Science Research Project. Bob also held positions of leadership, such as Chairman of the American Chemical Society (ACS) Pittsburgh Section in 1985, and received numerous accolades, including a distinguished service award from ACS in 2007 and a 50-year recognition of service in 2010. In 2013 he received 50 Year of service SSP award. In 1996 he was elected to the University of Pittsburgh's Sigma Xi Chapter. He contributed significantly to Pittsburgh's scientific community.

Beyond his professional achievements, Bob was a beacon of knowledge and support in his community. He was actively involved in teaching high school science teachers through the SSP Focus in Spectroscopy Workshops and contributed his time and expertise to numerous Pittsburgh Conference meetings. An advocate for education and exploration, he was a licensed geologist in Pennsylvania and a passionate member of the Monongahela Rockhounds.

Bob's personal interests were as diverse as his professional ones. A devoted father, he supported Boy Scouts of America Troop #31 and cherished time spent with his family at the beach. His hobbies included attending mineral shows, collecting stamps, rocks and minerals, knives, Roman coins, antique radio equipment, microscopes, and Bunsen Burners. His zest for life and curiosity were infectious, leaving a lasting impression on everyone he met.

He is survived by his loving sons, Mark (Lorraine) Witkowski and Gregory Witkowski; his adored grandchildren, Abigail, Colin, Patrick, Tara Jean, and Ella Marie; and his sister, Dorothy (the late Dean) Patterson. He also leaves behind his niece, Darlene Patterson. Bob was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 44 years, Anna (Novakowski) Witkowski; his nephew, Darrin Patterson; his niece, Dalene Patterson; and his parents, Edward and Helen (Orzcowski) Witkowski.

In the words of Galileo, "All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them. I do not feel obligated to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use. ..." Bob indeed saw further, and his legacy will continue to inspire those who stand on the foundation of his life's work. He will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Family and friends are welcome on Thursday, February 1, 2024, from 12 to 4 pm and 2 to 6 pm at the **JEFFERSON MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME, INC.**, 301 Curry Hollow Road, Pittsburgh.

A Blessing Service will be held in the funeral home's chapel at 6 pm.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in memory of Bob to the Alzheimer's Association Greater Pittsburgh Chapter at <https://www.alz.org/pa>. Online condolences may be shared at [www.jeffersonmemorial.com](http://www.jeffersonmemorial.com).



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