



Robert V. Olson

September 30, 1927 - March 5, 2013

Robert "Bob" Olson of Orleans, Iowa, left his Earthly body on the evening of March 5, 2013, amidst the loving arms and comfort of his wife of 62 years, Delaine, his daughters Jolene, Marsha and Sandra and other close family members, in the home he so skillfully crafted on the beautiful south shore of Spirit Lake.

Bob was born in his farm family home September 30, 1927, in Cherokee County, Iowa near the town of Quimby to Carl Hilding Olson and Clara Brandt Olson. His parents, both recent immigrants from southern Sweden, came to the U.S. to build on their American dream of a successful life and the raising of family in this land far away from their birth home.

Bob embodied that immigrant spirit, surrounded by both older and younger siblings, learning the skills necessary to survive in depression era Iowa, skills that served him well for the remainder of his life as a member of our "Greatest Generation" during his service in both the U.S. Merchant Marine and the U.S. Navy during World War II. He served as a "Plankman", part of the first crew, of the U.S.S. Eversole, DD-789 and proudly traveled with his wife Delaine for many years to ship reunions all across the U.S. They also took many post-retirement trips to places like Hawaii and Colorado and to Florida, Alaska, and Arizona in their fifth-wheel.

He met the love of his life, Delaine Bell Kindwall, in Milford in late 1948, where she was a newly graduated classroom home economics teacher from the University of Northern Iowa. He kept up the new-found relationship even when a better paying job in Orange City lured "Dee" away from Milford in 1949. They married March 24, 1951, in Alta, Iowa at the Methodist Church and lived in the area and on the original Kindwall family farm in Buena Vista County that was to become their home for the next 10 years and the birthplace of their three beautiful girls. Bob worked in many jobs throughout his life but in his heart he was always a farmer first.

An extended period of drought forced them to seek a new life off the farm and in 1961 they purchased "Cottonwood Cottages" on the south-shore of Spirit Lake in Dickinson County and ran the cottages for over 25 years with gusto and created and sustained many new-found friendships both locally and from the families who visited their resort year after year. Bob and Dee trained their girls in the skills for life through the daily tasks necessary to keep the resort in operation and to maintain the relationships that kept customers satisfied with their products and coming back for more.

Bob loved to work with wood and solve those sometimes difficult remodeling projects. Bob Olson Construction became the delivery vehicle for his skills. He toiled in the construction trade in the Iowa Great Lakes area for decades and was fortunate to develop many long time customers in the process. He always tried to satisfy his customers and was pleased with the fact that he virtually always succeeded with that desire. He excelled at tackling those small to medium-sized but difficult to solve home construction and maintenance projects. It was always fun to travel around the area and have him share stories with those of us so fortunate to know him that often started with comments like, "I built that garage and we used" or "that was the most difficult". Notable projects in his works included building Bay Rim Condos on West Okoboji and the Boeke and Klein Eye Clinic in Spirit Lake, remodeling

work at the Central Emporium, and numerous other homes and businesses. And most important of all, being that every one of his grandchildren have at least one item that was hand-built special for them by Grandpa.

Bob loved to fish. In his later years the dock became his favorite secret spot. Catching that "first fish" with Grandpa was pretty much a rite of passage in the family, particularly for his grandchildren. He succeeded in creating and sustaining neophyte family anglers through the abundant availability of rod and reel and bait and boat. If one could use it on the lake to catch a fish, Grandpa probably had at least one of each and often two. We never could figure out why the mosquito's didn't bite him quite as hard as they did the rest of us. Or maybe they did and he just didn't complain as loudly.

Bob worked hard to maintain connections with his Swedish family traveling with his father, wife Delaine and several of his siblings in 1975 to his father's home village of Ysby and surrounding area for a reunion and reinforcement of family roots. The families continue to exchange photographs, stories and news to this day. He most recently joined a genetic genealogy project to help explore his family roots further and enjoyed discussing and learning more about his family ancestry. Those efforts continue in his memory.

His little red tractor and trailer served as principle transportation around the property for many years. He carried the prerequisite complement of tools to aid in his daily chores. Whether it was mowing or moving needed items, Bob had a way of doing it in the easiest and most efficient way possible.

His garden became his surrogate farm and his green beans, potatoes, tomatoes and asparagus were high demand items year in and year out.

Bob and Delaine loved to dance to the "Big Band" sound and traveled often and over many years with friends to swing with the best of them.

He served for several years as Mayor and council member for the City of Orleans (Iowa).

His was a life well lived. He will be missed by family and friends.

Bob is survived by his wife Delaine. His daughters, Jolene (Shawn) Fechter of Boone, Iowa, Marsha (John) Smeltzer of Fort Collins, Colorado, and Sandra Olson of Spirit Lake; six grandchildren, Captain Matthew (LeAnn) Fechter of Albuquerque, New Mexico, Sara (KeKoa) Fechter-Clark of Kapolei, Oahu, Hawaii, Tim Fechter of College Springs, Iowa, Brent Fechter (special friend, Kari and her son, Kaden) of Estherville, Iowa, David Smeltzer of Fort Collins, Colorado, and Katie Smeltzer also of Fort Collins, Colorado. Two great-grandchildren, Eric and Liam Fechter of Albuquerque also survive.

He was preceded in death by his parents Carl and Clara; his brother, Clarence and sisters Doris Smith and Bernice Moritz. He is survived by sister, Ruby Goodell of Milford, and brother, Paul (Phyllis) of Cannon Falls, Minnesota. He also leaves behind many cousins, nieces, nephews and good friends.

Services will be held at 10:30 am Saturday, March 9 at the Spirit Lake United Methodist Church, 1812 Gary Avenue, Spirit Lake, Iowa with a luncheon to follow at Wesley Place, adjacent to the church. Visitation will be from 5 to 7 pm, Friday, March 8 at Schuchert Funeral Home, 2317 32nd Street, Spirit Lake. Schuchert Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Burial will be in the Woodlawn Cemetery, east of Alta, Iowa, following the service in Spirit Lake.

In lieu of flower contributions can be made to Hospice of Iowa or to the Spirit Lake Protective Association.

Tribute Wall

EH

“ Our sincere sympathy to Delaine and family. I'm sure you will miss him as much as our mother Ella Peterson. We enjoyed the reunions and so did mom. Only the Lord knew that they would see each other in heaven within a few days of each other. We are all having a pretty tough time since losing mom was so unexpected. We will keep you all in our thoughts & prayers.

Elaine & Jim Homolka - March 14, 2013 at 09:00 PM

GM

“ Bob knows. Whatever you needed to know about Spirit Lake, just ask Bob. He was a dear friend and neighbor whose generous spirit will be remembered . Linda and Gary Murdock

Gary Murdock - March 14, 2013 at 07:24 PM

PR

“ Dear Olson family,
So sorry to hear of Bob's passing. I was out of town and she heard about it. I remember Bob on that read mower - we would wave at each other as I mowed across the road and he took care of Cottonwood cottage. You all have so much to be proud of. He will be remembered by many.
My thoughts and pryers go to you all.
Peggy Clayton Rick

Peg Rick - March 13, 2013 at 01:47 PM

MD

“ *Delaine and Family,*

Saddened to hear of the loss of my buddie and neighbor. Looks like he left behind a wonderful family to keep you company and share his memories. What a wonderful life that he had. God bless.

Mark Brown, Center Dr - March 11, 2013 at 02:12 PM

MM

“ *So sorry for your loss... what a full life your Dad had, Jolene! Loved the pictures...such wonderful memories for you to cherish! Thoughts and prayers are with all of you.*

Marcia (Duhn) Morrison - March 10, 2013 at 08:10 PM

MP

“ *Marsha, John and family, We are very sorry to hear about your loss. Our prayers are with you.*

Marc, Karen and Margaret Phelps - March 09, 2013 at 01:27 PM

BS

“ *Dee,*
We are sorry to read of Bob's death. What a beautifully written tribute of his life. We know you will all miss him greatly. We will keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

Bob and Jan Stemme - March 09, 2013 at 01:07 PM

JG

“ Dearest Delaine and family, We will surely be thinking of you tomorrow. The video on the website was so nice to watch. I recognized one of the songs to be "Sentimental Journey". It must have been one of you and Bob's favorites. Our condolences to all of you in your loss. Sincerely, John & Joyce Gossett

John & Joyce Gossett - March 09, 2013 at 01:37 AM

BS

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you Jolene and family. Whenever we seen your Dad in the yard we loved to stop and visit with him. Memories can never be taken away from you. Love Bob and Jacky Samuelson

Bob & Jacky Samuelson - March 08, 2013 at 07:15 PM

SS

“ Uncle Bob was always a lot of fun to be around. I will miss his humor and the stories he told of our Swedish heritage.

Scott Smith - March 08, 2013 at 02:25 PM

CW

“ I remember ALL the work that he did to run the Cottonwood Cottages, with always a welcoming smile on his face. I remember the addition he built on the first home you moved into when you moved to Spirit Lake. He was always kind, a hard worker! My sympathy to all of you!! Sorry I can't be there!!!!

Cathy Wetzeler - March 08, 2013 at 01:11 PM

KH

“ *Katie and family,*

Words cannot even begin to express our sorrow during this difficult time, you are in our prayers. We are praying for friends and family to comfort you and loving memories to help you smile again.

Unfortunately, we did not know Grandpa Olson personally. However, we are fortunate to know his beautiful and bright granddaughter, Katie. She shared stories about her Grandpa Olson and we learned he was a gentle, caring, and loving man. As he watches over you from above, may he strengthen and encourage you in everything you do. Sending warm hugs and lots of love.

Kristy & Heidi

Kristy & Heidi - March 08, 2013 at 12:02 PM

LF

“ *Waking early in the morning when my boys were babies and Grandpa Bob was always up listening to the radio in his flannel shirt and jeans. It sure made those early mornings a little easier on a new mother.*

LeAnn, Eric and Liam Fechter - March 07, 2013 at 08:51 PM

RB

“ *So sorry to hear of your loss. I'm also sorry that I won't be able to attend. Bob was just the nicest person and I was so lucky that he was a cousin.*

Ray & Marlene Brandt - March 07, 2013 at 08:11 PM

JH

“ Gentle, loving, funny, caring, hospitable.....I could go on and on about Bob's personality. I constantly think about those days on the lake when I always seemed to outfish Matt. Lots of love to the family.

Jesse Hitt - March 07, 2013 at 08:07 PM

DS

“ Celebrating three birthdays in one

David and Katie Smeltzer - March 07, 2013 at 08:04 PM

VU

“ Jolene, I knew your Dad because he added an addition onto my parent's house in the 1970's. A very nice man.

Vern Underwood - March 07, 2013 at 06:47 PM

BW

“ Our sincerest sympathy, thoughts and prayers for the Olson family. May you find peace in God's promise that Bob has gone home to his Lord.

Bev and Vern Wittler and Gladys Sauer

Bev Wittler - March 07, 2013 at 04:57 PM

JL

“ I remember Bob well I worked at the lumber yard and sold him material for all his projects he was a kind and gentle man.

Joe Vander Laan - March 07, 2013 at 01:44 PM

DO

“ Thoughts and prayers to Jolene and family during this time of loss.

Dennis Olson - March 07, 2013 at 09:26 AM



“ *Robert V. Olson*

March 06, 2013 at 09:03 PM