



Robert R. Dow

August 24, 1928 - December 25, 2023

Robert (Bob) Dow, 95, of Nahant, MA gently passed on December 25. Bob is predeceased by his parents Richardson and Enid (Kenney) Dow, his brother Calvin, and wife of 41 years Elaine (Erskine) Dow. He leaves behind his two daughters Amy of Nahant and Candace Wilusz (Dow) of Georgetown MA.

Bob grew up in Melrose where his father relocated from Vermont to provide better childhood and educational opportunities for Bob and his younger brother Calvin. Bob was an inventor from a young age, building and improving the design of a bicycle at 10 years old and followed by proving out a few race car designs. He was a talented drummer since Jr. high school and after graduating from Melrose High School in 1946, went on to play in the M.I.T. Jazz band, then on to the Linn Village Drum Band of Wakefield MA in the 1960's (once featured on the I've Got a Secret TV show for their performance). He continued with rope tension drumming (on a drum made by Ralph Eames) in revolutionary reenactments that he shared with his family. Bob drummed regularly with the Boxford and Danvers Militia units and participated at the 1981 200th reenactment of the British surrender at Yorktown, Virginia. Bob, Elaine and Candace were also included in several scenes in the 1980's movie 3 Sovereigns for Sarah (starring Vanessa Redgrave) as extras. It is here that he was affectionately referred to as Benney Hill (based on a slight-enough resemblance and his great sense of humor). Bob played percussion with the Tri Town Symphony and occasionally

filled in on the bass drum in the Scottish Highland Band that Amy belonged to for a short time. Bob didn't stop drumming and eagerly picked up whatever instruments his two daughters were learning. He enjoyed many different sized recorders, had basic piano skills, dabbled in writing his own music, and built a clavichord (and most of a harpsichord) as well. He also had a nice sound system, loved to listen to good music of any kind, and had an extensive record collection that he started after college by buying one a month as part of the Columbia Record Club.

As captured in the book "An American Journey of Travels and Friendships" by George William Perkins II, friends from high school, George and Bob worked for a year on a 3-month plan to drive 12,000 miles across country to Alaska and back in the summer of 1949 in a tiny rear-engine Renault. A car not yet known in America. They encountered car troubles (going through 11 tires and having the engine literally fall out of the car), lodging problems, and difficult road issues (5000 miles of dirt and gravel) on the Alcan "Highway". They were featured on the Welcome Traveler show in Chicago and later written up in the Boston globe in October 1949, a day after their return. Bob was later recognized by the Mayor of Fairbanks Alaska at his 90th birthday, nearly 70 years later. Bob took amazing photographs during the trip that must have also sparked his enjoyment of travel. He traveled frequently with his wife (yearly winter season escapes to California, Nevada, and Arizona) and they were joined by friends in journeying to many European destinations once he retired. He also drove across the country with his daughter Amy on one of her college breaks.

One summer in the late 1940's Bob did heavy labor work for the spare gang on the Central Vermont Railroad. He and his two friends shoveled stone ballast and tamped the track ties of the rails for \$33.93 a week with room and board provided. Although not sure how well he enjoyed that job, he always remained a big fan of trains. Bob was drafted into the Army 420th Engineer

Dump Truck Co. in 1951 where he spent time abroad in Toul France, and, after he did his time was honorably discharged as a Sergeant from Fort Devens. He went on to complete his education at M.I.T., graduating in 1954 with a BS degree in electrical engineering and economics. He then worked for GE Aviation in Lynn for 6 years, EG&G for 8 years, and retired as Vice President and Controller of Manzi Electrical Corporation in Lawrence MA.

Bob had a great eye along with an assortment of different types of cameras and came to take great pictures (and slides) of bridges, lighthouses, birds, wildlife, flowers, and landscapes (among other subjects). He invented a curved 3-dimensional frame that allowed the pictures to come to life. Bob had a very quick wit and cleverly wrote many verses in rhyme. He never forgot to make a wonderful homemade card for special occasions. Bob also painted proficiently in watercolor and was an early adopter of the Apple/Macintosh computer, as he was very good with technology. He and Elaine regularly played duplicate bridge, collected, and loved antiques, and had an incredible library of well-loved books. Some of which they wrote and published themselves. In both Topsfield and later in Brunswick Maine, Bob had crafted beautiful libraries with built-in shelving on almost every wall.

After college, Bob lived in Melrose at the family home paying room and board to his parents and then with his brother. Together the engineer and the artist crafted elaborate Halloween decorations and costumes. Bob later shared that talent with his family putting on great Halloween shows for the neighborhood (including a visit from the ghost Cousin Dorkas) and working on many family craft projects. He and Elaine also won a competition as the Owl and the Pussycat. In the late 50's Bob had taken a few dance lessons from Helen Gordan which paid off when he and Elaine met at a dance in Boston at the encouragement/introduction from their friends, and after marriage, lived in an old house in Boxford MA for a few years. After also living in a historical house

in Salem MA, Bob and Elaine settled into a saltbox style home in Topsfield MA that was a copy of the Soloman Richardson House of Old Sturbridge Village. Here they raised their children and were very dedicated to supporting the Parson Capen House and the Topsfield Historical Society, where Bob was a director in the 1980's. They co-produced many historical presentations with appearances by their daughters in music and dance. Bob meticulously researched the family's genealogy going back to the Mayflower. He was a dedicated member of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants and the John Howland Society (taking some beautiful and well published pictures of the Tilley Shallop during its' retraced historical sailing journey) was also very involved with the Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Maine. He held the position of Governor and Deputy Governor at different times after he and Elaine retired to Brunswick Maine in the early 1990's where they chose to live close to very dear friends. After Elaine's passing Bob stayed busy with his many interests and did a lot of creative writing with the People Plus group from Brunswick and was key in the publication of their Write On! books. He also began filling in as a TV camera man during the group's ongoing productions and held a leadership position with his condo association where he owned his Maine residence for nearly 30 years. Bob was also a Master Mason for over 55 years with the Wyoming Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Melrose.

A gentle soft-spoken man with sparkling light blue eyes, a very quick wit, and an engaging smile that always made you think he was up to something. He will be sorely missed.

The family plans to have a graveside service at Puritan Lawn Cemetery in Peabody MA at a later date. In memory of Robert Dow donations may be made to any organization of your choosing. Here are some ideas to consider:

- M.I.T., P.O. Box 412926, Boston, MA 02241-2926 or <https://giving.mit.edu>
- The Pilgrim John Howland Society, P.O Box 1479 or <https://pilgrimjohnhowlandsociety.org>

- The General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 18 Winslow St, Plymouth MA 02360 or <https://TheMayflowerSociety.org>
- The Maine Mayflower Society, Treasurer, P.O. Box 359, Topsham ME 04086
- People Plus, 35 Union St., P.O. Box 766, Brunswick, ME 04011-0766 or www.peopleplusmaine.org
- Massachusetts Freemasons Wyoming Lodge A.F. & A.M. Melrose, <https://massfreemasonry.org/donate/> or <https://massfreemasonry.org/lodges/Wyoming/>
- Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, P.O. Box 233 Richmond, ME 04357 or www.friendsofmerrymeetingbay.org
- The American Heart Association, Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 78851, Phoenix AZ 85062-8851 or www.heart.org/life
- Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org
- Topsfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 323, Topsfield, MA 01983 or <https://topfieldhistory.org>

Arrangements by the Remick and Gendron Funeral Home -Crematory. Please visit www.Remickgendron.com to sign Robert's tribute wall and for additional information.

Cemetery Details

Puritan Lawn Memorial Park

185 Lake Street
Peabody, MA 01960

Events

Details are pending.