



Robert "Bob" Douglas McLaren

April 24, 1938 - March 17, 2020

On Tuesday, March 17, 2020, Robert "Bob" Douglas McLaren, beloved husband, father of three, and grandfather of seven, snuck off to meet up with the people he's been talking about for a good portion of his life, his ancestors.

Bob was born on April 24, 1938 in Rockville Centre, New York, to George Albert McLaren and Dorothy Braham (Wood) McLaren. He received his bachelor's degree from the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, now known as NYU Tandon School of Engineering. His master's degree was earned through the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio. Bob was a Chemical and Nuclear Engineer, serving in the Air Force for 23 years, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Genealogy was a serious "hobby" and so he ran his own business doing just that. He was the Clan Genealogist for both the Clan MacLaren Society of North America and of Scotland, and loved attending conferences all about "the dead folks," as his wife would say. Some of his known places of employment were the Pentagon, Defense Nuclear Agency, Kaman Sciences, ITT Industries, and Tech Source. We actually can't tell you all of what he was up to because of his security clearances. Seriously... we really don't know, and we will probably get in trouble for mentioning this.

While stationed in North Dakota at the end of 1965, Bob was set up on a blind date with Bonnie Ebell. He asked her to marry him on their second date (she

said “no”), but eventually charmed her into a “yes” by June 1966. They raised three INCREDIBLY AWESOME children, Sean, Mary, and Kathleen.

Bob had a passion for Scottish history, genealogy, math, whisky, good food, kilts, good cheese, security clearances, suspenders, local brew pubs, land use, science fiction & fantasy novels, wine from the McLaren Vale in Australia, and the local coffee shop. He was known for his (long) stories, belly laughs, random children mistaking him for Santa (“shhhh! I’m out of uniform!”), wearing his kilt whenever possible, requesting the best Scotch whisky in the establishment, and perhaps slipping into a Scottish accent after a wee dram or two.

Bob showed his love for his family and friends by getting involved in their activities and in the community, some of which were: Lee District Land Use, Chief Timer for the Hayfield Farm Swim Team, Neighborhood Watch, and the Hayfield Citizens Association. He attended and cheered on his children and grandchildren at their games, swim meets, concerts, scouts, and more.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, George & Dorothy, as well as two of his younger brothers Richard and William “Billy.” He is survived by his wife Bonnie, his three children and their spouses, Sean & Elke, Mary & Scott, and Kathleen & Mark, his seven grandchildren Kristina, Connor, Reilly, Logan, Emma, Eileen, and Lilian “Lily,” his younger brother Gerald “Jerry,” and several nieces, and nephews.

Bob will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery Monday, August 31, 2020 at 9 AM. In lieu of flowers, please support Bob’s favorite local businesses, as they will certainly be missing his patronage going forward: Grounded Coffee, Rice and Noodles Thai, Cheesetique, and New Orleans Creole Cafe (in San Diego) or donate to your local genealogical/historical society.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

1 Memorial Drive
Arlington, VA 22211

Previous Events

Graveside Service

AUG 31. 9:00 AM (ET)

Arlington National Cemetery
1 Memorial Drive
Arlington, VA 22211

Tribute Wall



“ *Robert "Bob" Douglas McLaren*

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



I will always miss you at a genealogy event. We loved teasing each other when I tried to look up your "skirt". I'll miss you always! Bev @ Fun Stuff For Genealogists, in Indiana.

Bev Trew Palmer - December 31, 2023 at 09:52 AM



“ *Would live to have know this. I would have driven down. I knew Bob since I first met him at the Coast Guard Club on Telegraph Rd. We were both in the Air Force and I am from a sub sept of Clan MacClaren. My grandfather came to the states in 1909 and he got me involved in the history of the Clan. He also had a came of the good scotch that came from Scotland. He was a very good and funny man and we used to talk about his daughter and my son who were in Hayfield Middle and High school together. He'll be missed.*

William Law - March 01, 2021 at 06:57 PM



Thank you, William

Kathleen McLaren-Hawking - March 16, 2022 at 11:27 AM

PZ

“ I've known Bob since 2005 when I worked at DOE.

We were both attending the 2007 IEEE NSS MIC in Honolulu and coincidentally we were on the same flights from Dulles via SFO. I invited Bob to share a drink with me at our stopover (Bob liked beer don't you know!) so we found the closest lounge to our departure gate. The bartender asked Bob for his driver license! I replied "I realize my young nephew Robert looks a bit young but I can assure you he is of legal age." Fun times and many other stories. Wendy and I will miss Bob. -Peter Zielinski, Potomac, MD

Peter Zielinski - January 05, 2021 at 12:57 PM

KM

Thank you, Peter

Kathleen McLaren-Hawking - March 16, 2022 at 11:28 AM

KB

“ I met Bob at the very first Family Tree DNA conference in 2004. He and I were the only ones who wore our tartans to the conference. I loved to tease him that I was going to bring him a bottle of McGregor whisky which would result in a scowl and a Skean Dhu. Bob was a pioneer in genetic genealogy and could sweet talk nearly anyone into taking a DNA test. I'd just watch and listen to learn from a master. This photo was taken last August 2019 at the FGS conference in DC. I'm glad I got to spend that time with him there and am sure gonna miss him and sharing a dram. He has the Angel's Share now. Sláinte! 🥃



Katherine Borges - August 31, 2020 at 09:33 PM

KM

Thank you, Katherine

Kathleen McLaren-Hawking - March 16, 2022 at 11:28 AM

KA

“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Kathleen - August 21, 2020 at 06:28 PM

AA

In Our Hearts Forever from His Footprints of Knowledge, Kindness and Friendship 💕

Ally Chacon - FTDNA Family Vol Admin - August 31, 2020 at 09:08 AM

KM

Thank you, Ally

Kathleen McLaren-Hawking - March 16, 2022 at 11:29 AM

EC

“ *Boy, my wife Mary and I remember Bob back when we were active in Lee District/FCRC politics. Always smiling, and great to talk to. So sorry for your loss. Ed & Mary Christ*

edward christ - May 25, 2020 at 01:14 PM

KM

Thank you, Edward & Mary

Kathleen McLaren-Hawking - March 16, 2022 at 11:29 AM

SK

“ I served with Bob for years on EQAC (the county’s Environmental Quality Advisory Council). He was a fabulous Chairman and a wonderful mentor. I was sad when he left us a few years ago to spend more time on his genealogy pursuits. He was always a clear sensible voice on the Council.

Stella Koch - May 08, 2020 at 11:13 AM

KM

Thank you, Stella

Kathleen McLaren-Hawking - March 16, 2022 at 11:29 AM

JE

“ I am so thankful that you shared this with me, but so very sad to hear the news. Bob was a constant and cheerful presence at my cheese classes and seeing his smile as he entered the room was something I looked forward to each and every time. I feel honored to have known him and so very heartbroken at his passing. Sending all my love to his family, who clearly adored him (which is no surprise).
-Jill Erber, owner of Cheesetique (proud to mentioned as one of Bob's favorite businesses - what an amazing thing to read)

Jill Erber - May 07, 2020 at 08:37 PM

KM

Thank you, Jill

Kathleen McLaren-Hawking - March 16, 2022 at 11:30 AM

RE

“ *Bob was such an iconic man and a friend to everyone. He will be very sorely missed, and already is. I wrote this tribute to express how the genealogy community feels. <https://dna-explained.com/2020/03/20/bob-mclaren-beloved-clan-mclaren-genealogist-meets-his-ancestors/>*

Roberta Estes - May 07, 2020 at 04:35 PM

KM

Thank you, Roberta and thank you for the beautifully written tribute

Kathleen McLaren-Hawking - March 16, 2022 at 11:30 AM