
RAPID CITY | On the afternoon of March 13, 2021, Robert L. "Bob" Varilek peacefully shuffled off this mortal coil after finishing a chocolate malt (thank you Julie) while watching a baseball game. He would say, "Not a bad way to go but the pitching could have been better."

Bob lived a full life by anybody's standard. He started working at a young age delivering papers in Igloo, SD. Finding his way home using the railroad tracks for a guide due to blackouts during WWII. Later, when the POWs arrived, he would trade trinkets with them and deliver Italian newspapers. Bob attended Custer High school and after his dad won a pool hall in a poker game, his dad cut the Quonset hut in-half and moved. Bob elected to stay behind with friends and finished high school in Custer. The draft was still in effect, so Bob joined the Army. A year later he found himself as a midshipman at Annapolis. A year after that he found himself at South Dakota School of Mines. The Army had Honorably Discharged him so he could attend Annapolis and several months later when he found out it wasn't his cup of tea, the Navy sent him back to the Army and Bob produced his Honorable Discharge and asked for his ticket home which they had no choice but to honor their discharge. He attended SDSM&T for a year and a half and decided to go to work for Kraft Foods.

And then he met Barbara Kuckleburg, a 17-year-old NCB student who worked at the bank. On their first date she had to hide on the floorboards pulling out from her apartment. Apparently, she had doubled booked the evening with another gentleman caller.

Things went along swimmingly though, until the highly competitive Kraft Food caramel sales contest at the Red Owl. It was an inside job. Bob was leading the sales of caramels, but Kraft's district manager had a cousin at the Piggly Wiggly, and the manager fixed the tallies in favor of the cousin. This was more than the young couple could take, so they decided to marry and move to Lincoln, NE, so Bob could go to law school. Bob did not have an undergraduate degree, but he was accepted, and they awarded him an undergraduate degree in business administration after he completed his first year. He worked the night shift at the mental hospital and Barb typed theses for grad students. They had three children, Lisa, Lynn, and Tim during the three years of law school. After graduation, Bob was offered a job as an assistant prosecutor in Custer, so they moved, and Susan was born shortly afterwards. A year went by, and Bob was offered a job as an assistant prosecutor in Rapid City, so they moved to Robbinsdale and Rob was born. A year later, dad hung out his shingle, moved to Lance Street and Julie was born.

A new attorney in private practice with six staisstep children was a recipe for lean years. Dad supplemented his income by being a judge at the dog track and considering getting a job with the government.

And then a strange twist of fate, Bill Brady, the established attorney Dad shared office space with was shot dead in the courtroom by a soon to be divorced man and Bob inherited a client base, but it did not ensure success. Bob worked hard at his practice. He earned the respect of his clients, peers, lawyers, and judges alike. He achieved an Av rating in record time and his clients knew they had competent and intelligent representation. He was invited to argue in front of the United States Supreme Court. He did not believe in attorneys advertising and believed that attorneys should inform their clients that they have a weak case far more often...
than they do. Bob did not mince words; he didn't see the point and he was quite colorful at times.

His Achilles heel was Barbara. He loved her with all his heart and mind, and she was his equal. So, when she wanted to have more children Andy, Nate and Margaret were added to the fold. Bob had a wonderful sense of humor and a very quick wit. He taught himself to sail and navigate on Oahu and then talked three of his friends into sailing from San Diego to Hilo, Hawaii. With great confidence of a seasoned captain, they sailed off and not a one of them had ever sailed on the ocean before, and they arrive at Hawaii right on schedule. He taught his children about literature, art, politics, law, human nature, religion, and critical thinking. He provided well for his family and taught them how to provide for themselves. Bob was a unique, tenacious man who loved life, and he lived it to the fullest. And this is just one of many, many stories...

Celebration of Life to be held at a later date. Condolences sent to Kinkade Funeral Home https://www.kinkadefunerals.com of Sturgis.

Published by Rapid City Journal on Mar. 17, 2021.