



Robert M. Bontrager

December 31, 1956 - October 17, 2014

Bob Bontrager, 57, Corvallis, OR, died of cancer Oct. 17, 2014 at Samaritan Evergreen Hospice House, in Albany, OR. He was born in Sturgis, MI and grew up in Elkhart, IN. Bob married Beth Gerig on Aug. 1, 1981, in Elkhart. Bontrager came to Oregon State University in 1994 as the Associate Director of Enrollment Services after serving as Vice President of Enrollment Management at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia.

His tenure at Oregon State was filled with innovation and achievement. As director of Admission & Orientation, he oversaw an unprecedented enrollment expansion from around 13,000 students to 17,000 in a 4-year span. He was the architect of the Degree Partnership Program, a unique co-enrollment partnership with 17 Oregon community colleges and three Hawaii community colleges.

Bontrager established an enrollment management structure at Oregon State in 2000. In 2004, he helped launch a holistic admissions review at Oregon State including the Insight Resume, which is used by numerous institutions around the world. After serving as Assistant Provost for Enrollment Management, Bontrager joined the Association of American Collegiate Registrar and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) to launch AACRAO Consulting and Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Initiatives.

Bontrager authored numerous journal articles and books and served as editor

for “Strategic Enrollment Management: Transforming Higher Education”. He recently co-authored a book with Don Hossler called Handbook of Strategic Enrollment Management. Bontrager earned a Doctorate of Education from Arizona State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Goshen (IN) College.

Bob and his family enjoyed traveling together. He loved the outdoors; biking, hiking, backpacking, and skiing. Bob always loved planning the next adventure. He is survived by his wife Beth and his children Jesse, (daughter-in-law) Betsy, Erin and Kevin.

A gathering was held Oct. 22 in Corvallis. A second service will be held Nov. 22, at Goshen College Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to one of the following:
Grand Canyon Assoc. (www.grandcanyon.org), Samaritan Evergreen Hospice House, Albany (samhealth.org/Hospice), Goshen College-Bob Bontrager Scholarship (goshen.edu).

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

OCT **22**. 7:00 PM (PT)

First Presbyterian Church
114 SE 8th Street
Corvallis, OR 97333

Tribute Wall

JB

“ For whatever reason, I was thinking about Bob this morning. We were out of the country when he died, and then life happened in my own struggle with cancer.

Bob and I were AACRAO associates for many years. At first, he was the rookie and I a veteran of the emerging enrollment management profession. Later, he helped me to get involved in post-retirement consulting.

In our last telephone conversation, he hinted that he wanted to talk about cancer, and I stupidly did not "take the bait". That failure on my part has been the source of regret for me. We spend too much time talking about professional stuff and too little on the personal side. In retrospect our happiest times were when we talked about family trips and how much he loved Oregon, the state and Oregon State, the university.

A wonderful man and treasure too soon gone from our midst. I hope that his loved ones are fortunate enough to now remember only the good stuff of Bob's time with them.

Jim Blackburn (retired from the California State University and glad to have known Robert Bontrager)

Jim Blackburn - September 30, 2016 at 11:51 AM

SW

“ To the family of Bob Bontrager,
I'm so sorry to learn of the passing of Bob. I'm also sorry I didn't know him personally though I would have been a few years behind him at GC. I do know Jesse and Betsy from Goshen connections and also that Jesse knew my nieces and nephews in Oregon (Hannah, Levi and Joshua Yoder from Hubbard). Jessie also happens to be my trusted bike mechanic in Goshen and Betsy my former Zumba teacher. In reading the many tributes to Bob, I learned of his long tenure in working with several colleges in the areas of marketing, recruitment, and most of all retention. As a current faculty member at GC, I know how important that work is and am grateful for all of Bob's efforts over the years including his service on GC's board. The world of higher ed is SO fortunate to have been the beneficiary of his many gifts. Undoubtedly he was a remarkable person.
May God be near you during this time of grief and sadness.
Sherry Wenger Goshen, IN



Sherry Wenger - October 26, 2014 at 06:49 PM

RA

“ Richard Aguirre lit a candle in memory of
Robert M. Bontrager



Richard Aguirre - October 21, 2014 at 02:43 PM

RA

My condolences to Beth, Jesse, Erin and Kevin. Bob was a colleague, mentor and friend and I will miss him greatly. May he rest in peace.

Richard Aguirre - October 21, 2014 at 02:44 PM