



Robert W. Schoning

September 29, 1923 - February 14, 2020

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Longtime Corvallis resident, noted fisheries expert and family patriarch, Robert (“Bob”) Schoning, Colonel, USMC (Ret) passed away on February 14, 2020 at Samaritan Evergreen Hospice in Albany at the age of 96.

He was born September 29, 1923, in Seattle, Washington to Nils Wilhelm and Olive Jeanette (Anderson) Schoning. He grew up in Seattle, attended Stevens Grade School, graduated from Garfield High School and entered the University of Washington, where he began playing handball.

After the United States entered WWII during his second year of college, and knowing he would be drafted, he chose instead to enlist in the U. S. Marine Corps in 1942, mainly because his father had been a Marine during WWI. While in college, he attended boot camp and officer training school. He earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Fisheries in 1944. In May 1945, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and sent overseas to China.

He returned from China in 1946 and chose to stay in the active reserves. He went back to the University of Washington for graduate work in fisheries, but did not finish his master’s studies. Instead, in 1947, he began working for the Oregon Fish Commission (OFC) as a field biologist stationed on the Columbia River. At this time, he was offered an athletic membership at the Multnomah Athletic Club (MAC). For the next 23 years, Bob Schoning became the dominate handball player in the Northwest, winning 59 titles in 90 tournament events.

In August 1950, Bob was recalled to active military duty, and a month later his unit was sent to Korea where he remained for the next year. He was involved in the Chosen Reservoir Campaign and was later awarded the Bronze Star for his courage in action on 14 February 1951. He remained in the active reserves until the mid-1970s when he transferred to the inactive reserves due to his civilian responsibilities in Washington, D.C. He officially retired from the U.S. Marine Corps on 29 Sept 1983 with the rank of colonel.

After returning from Korea in 1952, Bob married Barbara and resumed his work with the OFC. Over the next eighteen years he worked as fisheries biologist, Director of Research and ultimately, Oregon State Fisheries Director. He continued playing handball and received third place in the 1968 national U.S. Handball Association Open Doubles tournament.

In 1971, after twenty-four years with the OFC, Bob moved to Washington, DC and worked as the Deputy Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). In 1973, he became the Director of the NMFS, where he helped formulate the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which established a 200-mile fishery conservation zone buffering the United States' shorelines. This legislation made a massive impact on commercial fishing operations around the world and almost every other fishing country later created a similar law. It was one of his proudest accomplishments.

In 1978, Bob returned to Oregon, joining Oregon State University Department of Fisheries and Wildlife as a visiting professor. He and Barbara had divorced after raising four sons. Bob remained at OSU until June 1982 when he switched to being a private consultant. That same month, he married Sandra. He was named the Fishery Worker of the Year by the Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society in 1985 and returned to Oregon State in Jan 1986 as courtesy faculty with Fisheries and Wildlife. The next year, he received the OSU Distinguished Service Award. He joined the advisory board of the Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station and continued to serve there until finally retiring in 2011 at the age of eight-eight. In 2002, OSU's College of Agricultural Sciences named him a Diamond Pioneer and in 2007, he was inducted into OSU's Hall of Fame. Bob had also been inducted into Garfield High School's "Golden Grads" Hall of Fame in 1994. Bob and Sandra were married for 25 years until their divorce.

Overall, Bob worked for the government at various levels for fifty-three years. He also served for a combined total of fifteen years as a presidentially-appointed commissioner on the International Pacific Halibut Commission and the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission. He was a lifetime member of the Military Officers Association of America (formerly called The Retired Officers' Association or TROAA), a dedicated member of various golf country clubs and an active member of Grace Lutheran Church in Corvallis for many years.

Some of Bob's happiest memories were the many summer vacations his family spent out at Camp on Vashon Island with extended family at what was originally Grandma Anderson's cabin and where he and Bill had spent time in their youth. Throughout his life, Bob participated in various sports and outside activities. He played several sports in high school and college and in addition to becoming a noted handball champion, he was also a lifelong golfer and avid salmon fisherman well into his retirement and beyond. After

retirement, he continued to travel frequently to visit his brother in Seabeck, Washington and one year, Bob and Bill (along with two others) motored Bill's boat up to Alaska on a salmon-fishing trip. The two brothers also enjoyed various golfing trips together. In 2004, two of Bob's sons (Randy and Kerry) took Bob on an once-in-a-lifetime trip to Norway for his 80th birthday to visit his dad's birthplace and cousins Randi and Ingrid. The cousins had also visited with Bob in Corvallis and at Seabeck on several occasions. Bob very actively supported OSU's various sports teams and thoroughly enjoyed being able to attend local games and interact with the coaches and team players. If game night included a trip to the local KFC or some homemade tacos and a rousing game of Mexican Train, that was even better! All were his favorites and he enjoyed having company.

Like many of the "Greatest Generation", Bob remained modest about his many accomplishments and awards and preferred to let the light shine on others. He was always willing to lend a helping hand and firmly believed that anything worth doing was worth doing well. If someone said it couldn't be done, he asked "How could we do it" or "How can I help?" He always credited his parents and Grandma Anderson for his work ethic and willingness to go that extra step without being asked.

His passing leaves an irreplaceable hole in our family tapestry, but his spirit, values and example, his love for family, God and country, his charisma and wonderful stories will live on in our hearts and in our memories. He made a difference in the lives of so many and he will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved him. Rest in peace, Bob!

He is survived by his four sons Randy, Kerry, Jim and Kip; three grandchildren Tiffany, Zane and Chimay; two nieces Cathy and Judy; two nephews Mark and Craig; four maternal cousins Paul, Rolf, Steven and Maren; and paternal cousins in Norway. He was preceded in death by his parents; the mother of his boys, Barbara; a nephew, Gary; his beloved brother, Bill and his sister-in-law, Gayjoy and his cousin Ingrid in Norway. He is also survived by Lynn Edwards and Sandra Schoning.

A celebration of life will be held at Grace Lutheran Church, 435 NW 21st Street in Corvallis at 1:00p.m. on Saturday, February 29th 2020. His ashes will be interred later in Seattle next to his brother at his request. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations may be made in Bob's name to a charity of your choice or to OSU.

Please share your thoughts and memories for the family at www.demossturidan.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB **29**. 1:00 PM (PT)

Grace Lutheran Church
435 NW 21st St
Corvallis, OR 97330

Tribute Wall

UV

“ Dear Bob,
I just found out about your passing in February, 2020. I remember and value your frank advice and your help in connecting me with the northwest fishing community when I was a new director of Northwest Fisheries Science Center. I learned a great deal from you. May you rest in peace!

Usha varanasi

Usha Varanasi - October 31, 2020 at 03:08 AM

MA

“ Dear Bob,

I'm sending this message to you from this orange headed OSU WBB fan. Hope you are sharing your thoughts to all others there in Heaven. For me & others we will miss your sidelines chats before and after the games.

I hope it's OK with you I share a little of your knowledge with those of us who would like to.

I'm placing a link from you telling a bit of it in an hour and half OSU video.

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/schoning/video-schoning.html>

For others who find seeing you a bit too hard to see here is just a storied line adaptation.

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/schoning/biography.html>

Thank you Robert for all that you have done for us.

Best wishes & prayers,

Mark

Mark Avery - February 19, 2020 at 05:11 PM

JE

What an impact you had, Bob, on so many lives...mine just one among many. Your willingness, even eagerness, to mentor others was an outstanding trait. You will be missed! ~Buttons

Jean - July 12, 2021 at 06:48 PM