



Robert Herron Philp, Jr.

September 10, 1934 - October 5, 2018

Dr. Robert Herron Philp, Jr., age 84, died Friday, October 5, 2018. He was born on September 10, 1934 in Demorest, GA to Robert Herron and Orpha Susannah Thomas Philp. He was predeceased by his parents and brother-in-law, William Brooks. He is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Alice Marie Siebert; and children, Robert David (Beth) of New Hampshire, Laurel Perkinson (Jeffrey) of Mount Pleasant, SC, Julie McKeel (Dale) of Durham, NC, and Amy Philp of Columbia, SC; nine grandchildren; and sister, Elizabeth Philp Brooks of Clayton, GA.

Bob grew up in Rabun Gap, GA, and attended Rabun Gap Nacoochee School, a working farm and boarding school in a rural mountain community. He cared for the animals, helped manage the dairy, and made lifelong friends during his time there. He graduated in 1956 from Wheaton College in Chicago, IL. After surviving summer boot camp at Fort Jackson in Columbia, a city to which he vowed never to return, he completed his military service at the Army Engineering R&D lab in Alexandria, VA. He earned a PhD in Chemistry from Emory University in 1961, followed by post-doctoral research at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, KS. In a wonderful twist of irony, he did return to Columbia and joined the Chemistry faculty at the University of South Carolina in 1963. He collaborated on research with colleagues during sabbaticals at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA, and Geelong University in Melbourne, Australia. Other than these research breaks, Bob spent his entire academic career at the University of South Carolina, retiring in 1991 as Professor Emeritus. He was the first analytical chemist in the Department of Chemistry, which grew to six members and became one of the strongest in the nation under his guidance. He served as Assistant Chair of the department for more than a decade and was a one-person human relations department, performing nearly all administrative tasks for the appointments of more than 150 teaching and research assistants, and post-doctoral researchers. He was always interested in chemical education and wrote the initial syllabi for all the analytical lab courses. Some of the experiments he devised and perfected are still in the curriculum.

During his more than 50 years in Columbia, Bob was an active member of the Young Life

Committee, a volunteer for the Alston-Wilkes Society, and a personal assistant for various friends. He and Alice hosted international students, graduate students, and other young adults who needed a safe place to “land” while sorting through major life changes. He was a member of the Forest Acres Neighborhood Association, always willing to lend a hand to help his neighbors. He was a member of First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, and joined the Church of the Good Shepherd when he and Alice moved to Durham, NC in 2015. Over the years, he served as both an Elder and Clerk of the Session, and actively supported each church’s Missions ministries.

Bob was a fan of all Gamecock athletic sports teams, wearing his ball cap even when watching a game on TV. He loved music of all kinds, and enjoyed traveling on country roads, visiting small towns, trying new restaurants, hiking, camping, reading poetry, vacationing at the beach, and attending the Gilbert Peach Festival every July. He spent many happy hours tinkering around his parent’s homestead in Rabun Gap. Most of all, he loved being with his grandchildren and friends. Despite his boot camp experience, he grew to love Columbia. During the few years he lived in Durham, he enjoyed exploring the state of North Carolina with his Durham family. Bob was a humble, gentle, empathetic, quiet, and generous man, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and brother who will be missed by many.

A Service of Remembrance will be held on Tuesday, October 16th, at 4:00 p.m. at Church of the Good Shepherd, 3741 Garrett Road in Durham, NC, officiated by Pastor Mark Whipple.

Another service will be held on Tuesday, October 30th at 2:00 p.m. in Smith Chapel at First Presbyterian Church, 1420 Washington Street, Columbia, followed by visitation in The Atrium of Jackson Hall. The Rev. Neal Matthias will officiate. Shives Funeral Home, Trenholm Road Chapel, is assisting the family.

Comments



“ I'm on staff with Young Life in Columbia. We continue to build upon the legacy Bob and his generation left to us. I was a YL club kid myself in the 90's and owe a great deal to men and women like Bob and Alice. I regret that I missed the services for this great man. I hope to honor him by continuing to run after Columbia teens with the Good News of Jesus. Our prayers and sympathy are with the entire family. He will be greatly missed. - Jason Blackwell

Jason Blackwell - November 02, 2018 at 11:52 AM



“ Bob Philp was an ultra brilliant person. He made no attempt to draw attention to his many contributions to mankind. He was a great friend that I admired. Charlotte and I would like to express our heart felt sympathy to Alice and all the family. You are in our thoughts and prayers. Malcolm & Charlotte Dillard

Charlotte & Malcolm Dillard - October 18, 2018 at 05:41 PM



“ Bob has always been a wonderful fellow, I most usually do not weep when I know a wonderful Christian person goes on to their heavenly home. For some reason I have tears when I read Bob's obituary. He has always been a very precious person and I am so proud of all of his many accomplishments. He seemed to always care for everyone.
He was a real blessing to everyone and I know each of you, his loved ones are so thankful to have had him in your lives. Now I am smiling just knowing he is now with our precious Jesus. We can only imagine the great reunion he is having with Jesus and each of his loved ones who have gone on before. My love and prayers will be with each of you during the following days. Carolyn Brewer

Carolyn Brewer - October 16, 2018 at 08:25 PM



“ My condolences, especially to Laurel, Julie and Amy -- girls I grew up with who also had a tall father! Sweet memories.
Barbara Smalley
Durham, NC

Barb Smalley - October 15, 2018 at 01:28 PM



“ Bob, you will be missed by so many including me! It's been an honor and pleasure to know you. Wendy Sprintz

Wendy - October 15, 2018 at 01:20 PM



“ Martha Niles lit a candle in memory of Robert Herron Philp, Jr.



Martha Niles - October 15, 2018 at 10:51 AM



“ Debbie McDonald lit a candle in memory of Robert Herron Philp, Jr.



Debbie McDonald - October 09, 2018 at 01:11 PM



“ Ms. Philp, Sorry for your loss, I will keep you and your family in my prayers.

Debbie McDonald - October 09, 2018 at 01:13 PM



“ Sending love. I am so sorry for this loss of such a wonderful human. He was a loved and valued contributor to this world. May we all try to be more like him. Joan Hicks

Joan Hicks - October 08, 2018 at 08:45 PM



“ I have missed seeing Dr. And Mrs. Philp at First Presbyterian and always admired Dr. Philp for his gentle demeanor with his sweet wife. You all are in my prayers.

