



Robert Dean Dutton

July 15, 1939 - September 21, 2025

Obituary of Robert Dean Dutton

Robert Dean Dutton died peacefully surrounded by family on Sunday, September 21, in Dallas, Texas.

Bob was born on July 15, 1939, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa to Dr. Dean Alton Dutton and Arlene Dwelle Dutton. Together with his two younger sisters, Bob grew up in a home filled with music, literature and poetry, courtesy of his adoring mother, and all manner of sports, courtesy of his competitive dad, in a farming town of 500, Van Horne, Iowa.

Bob was a double varsity athlete at Coe College – his parents' alma mater – playing both baseball and basketball, the latter under future NBA Hall of Fame coach Bill Fitch. Bob also was a member of the Sigma Nu fraternity, played clarinet in the marching band (marching in JFK's presidential inaugural parade), and sang in the choir. He was legendary for his late-night bridge prowess, majored in math, and even occasionally went to class.

It is at Coe where Bob met the love of his life, Suzann Peterson, after she spotted him from across campus and declared to her friends "I'm going to marry that man." They married on September 30, 1961, after Bob's graduation. The two settled in Florida, where Bob was stationed as an officer

in the Air Force. It was the early days of the Civil Rights movement, and Bob would later recount that it was during this time that he began to become aware of the injustice around him, an awakening that would inform his world view for the rest of his life.

Following his service, Bob was recruited to be a salesman for IBM and the young family, including his firstborn daughter, moved to Omaha, Nebraska. Two more daughters followed. When the national market for credit cards began to take off, Bob joined a fellow IBMer who was starting a credit card processing business, First Data Resources. Bob spent the span of his career in banking and credit card processing. He excelled in all aspects of his work, but his passion and superpower was mentoring. Bob was a principled and beloved boss and colleague and cherished many of those relationships until the final moments of his life.

Movie star handsome, Bob supplemented his professional income throughout the '70's with modeling gigs – including an Old Home Bread commercial on TV and an infamous print ad that featured only his nose and encouraged the reader to “follow your nose where the root beer flows.” He was “discovered” while visiting his client, Omaha Steaks, who asked to use him in a shoot.

In 1973, Bob agreed to take a leap – with extensive prodding from Suzann – and moved to Ginger Cove, a lakeside community near Valley, Nebraska. Bob and Suzann spent more than four decades living in that and the neighboring lake community, Ginger Woods, with a decade stint in Derby, Kansas in between. Bob loved lake living, even though he never actually got in the lake and the family's second hand “speed boat” was the bane of his existence. The early years were filled with tennis tournaments, adult sports leagues and theme parties; the later years piloting the pontoon with grandkids on his lap, feeding the birds and leading the homeowners association.

Bob was an adoring father – and his daughters adored him right back. From “tiger kisses” in the toddler years (involving a five o’clock shadow and smooches in the nape of the neck), to perhaps the most patient coaching in the history of sports, to being the life of the party at collegiate parents weekends (the man could dance!), to quiet listening and good counsel on all manner of personal and professional decisions, Bob relished the challenge and rewards of raising three strong, independent women. Bob’s passion for parenting translated into grandparenthood – nothing gave him more joy than making it to his grandkids’ games and performances.

As the pressures of child raising passed and Bob and Suzann transitioned into retirement, the adventures began. Together they traveled – often with friends and Bob’s beloved sister, Dorothy - to South Africa, China, Australia, New Zealand, the Amazon River and the Galapagos Islands, among other destinations. They toured on bikes throughout the Midwest and piloted a long boat along the canals of England. Bob continued to nurture his friendships and family – with sentimental cards inscribed with personalized messages, long email correspondence, and through a vast network on Words with Friends and online chess playmates. He was known as ruthlessly charming, demolishing the opposition while he chatted them up with warmth and wit.

In the last chapter of his life Suzann and Bob moved to The Legacy to be closer to his children and grandchildren in Dallas, Texas. They were the first people to move into the brand-new Midtown Park campus, built under the leadership of their eldest daughter. It was in the middle of the pandemic and, at 81, Bob went from rural lake life to apartment city living. Bob and Suzann knew not a soul when they moved to The Legacy. They never could have imagined how rich their lives and friendships would be – from captaining his chair volleyball team, to the choir, happy hours, the supportive services and most importantly the people, staff and residents alike. How fortunate to make

such meaningful friendships at this phase in his life.

Bob's life was full into his final days. His wife, daughters and sister, Dor, were a constant presence at his bedside, along with his grandchildren, and an endless string of virtual well wishes from friends. Even in his weakest moments he was good for a wise crack and a wink, perking up at any mention of college football, Caitlyn Clark or the Cubs.

Bob is survived by his wife, Suzann; his daughters, Melissa, Melinda and Michelle; his grandchildren Hannah (Austin), Emily, Clara (Cedric), Carter, Grace and Jackson; his great grandson, Hudson; and his sisters Dorothy and Marjorie.

Bob was a living example of kindness rooted in equal parts empathy, integrity and strength. He cared deeply about his community, his country and the world, and was profoundly concerned about the direction of our country and culture. He gave generously to causes that promote justice and dignity for all.

Those who wish to honor Bob may direct donations to the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas, or the North Texas Food Bank.

A service is planned for Sunday, September 28 at 2pm, at The Legacy Midtown Park in Dallas, Texas. Streaming will be available; contact the family for details.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

SEP **28.** 2:00 PM (CT)

The Legacy at Midtown
8240 Manderville Ln.
Dallas, TX 75231

Streaming will be available but please contact the family for details