



Robert Sterling Turner

October 25, 1927 - March 20, 2023

Robert (Bob) Sterling Turner, of Spokane Valley, passed away on March 20, 2023, at the age of 95. Bob was born October 25, 1927, in Pierre, South Dakota, to Helen Elizabeth (Sterling) Turner and Arthur Turner. Bob served in the Army in Korea and then went to college on the GI Bill. He graduated from the South Dakota School of Mines with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering.

Nearing graduation, Bob's mother introduced him to Darlene Glendora Hins and they were married on December 27, 1953. Bob and Darlene lived in Spokane and later Spokane Valley for over 65 years. Together they raised four children, Helen Mary Turner, Robert (Rob) Sterling Turner Jr., Patricia Anne Turner Ramsey, and Barbara Elizabeth (Betsy) Turner. Bob and Darlene loved tennis, sailing on Lake Coeur d'Alene, and summer vacations tent camping with the entire family. Bob enjoyed making up new kid's songs to sing together and encouraged each child to learn a musical instrument to complete his dream of a family band, which included him on clarinet and Darlene on piano. Bob and Darlene purchased several run-down houses and then set about remodeling each of them into rentals. For many years the entire family was consumed every Saturday by this effort and eventually, the rent helped put each child through college.

Bob worked at Spokane County, ultimately as the County Engineer, for over

three decades, and retired in 1987. A Spokesman-Review article published at his retirement stated "He quietly has shaped this community for the better" and "Throughout the county is evidence of his skill - at building roads and bridges, yes... even more remarkably, at tapping the vast, community-transforming power of grass-root politics". During that long career, he introduced three new programs that he was acclaimed for, including concept design for logos and catchy mottos. Protect the Aquifer was a campaign to raise awareness of and reduce pollution impacts on the Spokane Aquifer, which is the source of drinking water for the area. And years before drunken driving became a hot issue, the CARTA (Citizens Against Alcohol-Related Traffic Accidents) campaign focused on the prevention of driving while intoxicated. The program was kicked off by inviting reporters to drive through an obstacle course set up at the airport, first before, and then after enjoying several drinks! America Runs on Local Roads became national in scope and promoted the economic importance of well-designed and maintained local roads.

After retirement, Bob and Darlene operated Sun Tree Books in downtown Spokane for many years. Bob was always an avid reader and Darlene found inspiration in sourcing books for local women's groups. They enjoyed many trips to Independent Booksellers Conventions all over the country and furnishing the bookstore with beautiful antiques and works of art.

Bob wrote many lovely poems throughout his life and enjoyed presenting them to family on occasions big and small. He and Darlene were very active members of Central Methodist church in downtown Spokane and more recently Spokane Valley Methodist. They also loved dressing up and going to big band dances, performing what we knew as "the Turner 2-step"!

Bob was preceded in death by his wife, Darlene on September 9, 2022. Bob is survived by his four children and their spouses, Mark MacDonald, Jane

Opgaard Turner, Dick Ramsey, and Ken Hillers, and his grandchildren Carlisle Rose Turner and Sterling Gust Turner.