



## Robert Murray Van Steenis

October 12, 1935 - June 28, 2020

Robert Murray Van Steenis, 84, a resident of Crystal Heights Care Center in Oskaloosa, went to meet Jesus on June 28, 2020, while being cared for at the Mahaska Hospital for the Corona Virus. Bob was the son of Murray and Velma Spencer Van Steenis. He was born in the Hospital in Oskaloosa on October 12, 1935. He attended Greely Grade School, Oskaloosa High School, and graduated from Elkhart University in Elkhart, Indiana as a dental technician. Bob married Sandra Dunning. To this union five children were born, Mark, Debbie, Bob, Marna, and Christina.

Bob suffered a severe neck and spinal cord injury in a car accident in which he was the passenger, near Boulder, Colorado. As a result, he was unable to continue his career as a dental technician. He then pursued a career in food service working as a chef and liaison to management. Lastly Bob worked at the Dutch Buffet in Pella, and for over 15 years at the Stone Henge in Oskaloosa.

Bob married Mae Price in 1986, together they managed group homes in Des Moines, Iowa and later in Kirkwood, Missouri. In 1990, they opened Van Steenis Care Center, caring for the elderly. Bob enjoyed the Iowa State Fair, and trips to Branson to listen to Southern Gospel Music. Bob was blessed with a voice to sing, and a sense of humor and an ornery side that brought smiles to many.

His family includes his loving wife Mae Van Steenis of Oskaloosa; son and his wife, Bob and Cara Van Steenis of Ankeny; three daughters, Deb (Greg) Braden, Marna Abdulkader, and Christina (Tracy) Wiltse all of Oskaloosa; nine grandchildren; eight great grandchildren; step son, Rodney Price; three step grandchildren; three step great grandchildren; sisters in law, Lucy Van Steenis and Helen Allen.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, son, Mark Van Steenis; and his siblings, Donald (Violet) Van Steenis, Iola (Omer) Fleck, and Norma Jean (Leonard) Allgood.

It was Bob and Mae's prayer that their family and friends have Jesus in their hearts.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests gifts to St. Jude's Children's Hospital or Shriners Children's Hospital, or Bethel Baptist Church Youth Group.

Funeral services will be held Friday, July 3, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. in the Bethel Baptist Church in Oskaloosa with Reverends Steve Cox and David Brown officiating. Burial will be in the Porter Grove Cemetery. The Bates Funeral Chapel is in charge of the arrangements. According to the rules put in place by the Iowa Department of Public Health, proper social distancing and reasonable personal protective equipment is advised for attending a religious public event. The funeral will be live streamed at the funeral home's YouTube Channel for those wishing to support the family from a distance. Visitation will begin Thursday after 12 p.m. in the Bates Funeral Chapel, some of the family will be at the funeral chapel from 5-7 Thursday evening to greet friends and relatives.

# Cemetery

---

## Porter Grove Cemetery

246th Place or G39

Pella, IA, 50219

# Events

---

**JUL** **Visitation - Open** 12:00PM - 05:00PM

**2**

---

Bates Funeral Chapel

114 South 7th Street, Oskaloosa, IA, US, 52577

**JUL** **Visitation - Family Present** 05:00PM - 07:00PM

**2**

---

Bates Funeral Chapel

114 South 7th Street, Oskaloosa, IA, US, 52577

**JUL** **Funeral Service** 10:00AM

**3**

---

Bethel Baptist Church

1407 'A' Avenue West, Oskaloosa, IA, US

# Comments

---



“ The joy of Bob singing praises and in Gods everlasting arms.

Blessings from Harold and Darlene Slagter

**Darlene Slagter** - July 02 at 12:03 PM

---



“ I am so sorry to hear about Bob's passing.... I have so many fond memories of him when I was a young kid and spending so much time at your home.. I remember how he would pay us to clean his car windows and we would do it then head to the candy store..! Makes me smile.. Please know that I hold your entire Family closes at heart and ask that God makes your loss more bearable... Love you all so much! Mindy - Latcham Boender

**Mindy Boender** - July 02 at 11:23 AM

---



“ We will remember Bob helping with the Sunday afternoon church services at the Oskaloosa Care Center where he joined in singing and silliness. Every Sunday we could count on Bob and Mae to both participate and support our service. We will fondly remember him.

Pastor Dwayne and Dixie Poe

**Dwayne Poe** - June 30 at 04:11 PM

---



“ I have so many good memories of working with Bob at the Jemac and Stonehenge. He told a joke one night that the two of us laughed at so hard, we cried! Bob was always very kind and big-hearted; the world has lost a good human being.

**Cheryl Benson** - June 30 at 03:51 PM

---



“ Robert was one of my childhood classmates at Greeley School. He was a few years older, but our family lived just up over the field up the long lane. My older sisters, Marilyn and Nancy, and younger brothers, Tom and Bill, all attended up the road. I have many fond memories of that one room school.

Please accept my sincere sympathy in your loss.

Louise Binns Burson

**Louise Burson** - June 29 at 09:19 PM



“ Grandpa Bob was always joking around, or trying to introduce me to a waitress when we went out to eat, and I always had to keep one eye on him pulling his cards playing SkipBo with the family. However, my favorite memory of him was at a family wedding. It was pretty hot and the ceremony was not short. By the time food and drinks were out and dancing had begun, I looked across the room and saw grandma and grandpa and they looked a bit worn out and perhaps a bit overwhelmed by it all. I asked my two friends I brought if they'd go dance with grandpa so I could dance with my grandma and they were more than happy to. He got out on that dance floor with his walker, and they danced along side him on both sides as he tapped around with his walker with a smile on his face. We danced a song or two, and went and sat back down. A song later we heard some excitement and turned around and grandpa had gotten his electric wheelchair out and was heading for the dance floor. I'm pretty sure it was a hip hop song going and grandpa was doing donuts in the middle of the dance floor, just owning the whole party. Next things you know, everyone is chanting, "Go Grandpa! Go Grandpa! Go Grandpa!" He sure did have a big smile on his face!

**Nate Price** - June 29 at 08:21 PM

---



“ So sorry for this as we are never ready for it. Hugs for all of you.

**Theresa Grahek** - June 29 at 05:30 PM

---



“ Shirley Hunt lit a candle in memory of Robert Murray Van Steenis



**Shirley Hunt** - June 29 at 03:45 PM

---



“ So sorry for your loss,,friends with ,Bob for many years...May he Rip!!

**Shirley Hunt** - June 29 at 03:44 PM

---



“ My Favorite memories are the Van Steenis Sunday afternoon get together’s playing music and singing. Bob was always the life of the party and kept everyone laughing. Will always appreciate your sense of humor. Love you and rest in peace uncle Bob...Skip Allgood

**Skip Allgood** - June 29 at 02:06 PM



“ He was a scholar and Gentleman Mae and family  
God bless you

**Betty Grider-Just** - June 29 at 07:46 PM



“ Prayers to your family. I always enjoyed your dad and his ornery ways. He will be truly missed.

**Brenda Long** - June 29 at 08:35 PM



“ I remember his sense of humor

**Blake Baxter** - June 30 at 07:40 AM



“ At a family reunion he showed me how to draw funny characters and faces. To this day I often draw silly faces when ever I can. Thank you, Bob, for your humor and life lesson.

**Jonathan Duff** - July 01 at 10:41 PM



“ My heart aches for everyone. Uncle Bob left us all with some wonderful memories. He was an impeccable dresser, and his hair was always perfect. He also enjoyed music like the rest of the family and had a wonderful sense of humor!

Uncle Bob wasn't loud or boisterous. When coffee time came around and table discussions with the Van Steenis' ever got a little intense, Uncle Bob could flash his crooked little smile, quietly say something ridiculously funny helping everyone forget what was so dreadfully important.

Uncle Bob and my Dad, his brother, had such silly fun together. One time they both went across the Mexican border and got a special haircut and color. I have no idea how they persuaded the stylist to dye both their hair jet black! Not sure who laughed more! That story caused riotous laughter for months!

Uncle Bob was a special comforter and friend for Aunt NormaJean. They had such fun rollerskating together. How did he do that?!

Oh, and card playing. I remember playing with Aunt lola, Omer, Dad, Uncle Bob and NormaJean. It was so fun! Always thought someone was slipping cards to someone, but surely not. Memories are such a cherished treasure!

May we all remember the good that Uncle Bob left behind for all of us, family, love and caring for others, but best of all, a wonderful glorious sense of humor! God is sad for us, but laughing and rejoicing, along with all those that have gone before him, he's home.

**Kathy Van Steenis Duff** - July 02 at 12:18 AM



“ I remember Bob always willing to sing with me Oskey Care Center on Sunday afternoons. Not the best, but we tried ! He always liked to make people laugh.

**Lois Haines** - July 02 at 09:20 AM



“ Well, my son stole my story about the dancing at the wedding. Of course I remember it a bit differently, but the end was the same. Bob got his second wave of energy and was the center of attention dancing and entertaining with his wheelchair. I'm so glad they (Bob and Mae) came to the wedding, it meant a lot.

The other story I can tell is when I visited and we went grocery shopping. Weather wasn't that great, Indian summer had ended and his concern was how to shop and collect the groceries. He didn't want to take his wheelchair in because he couldn't push a basket and wanted to use his walker. We compromised. He used the stores electric wheelchair shopping cart, and I pushed the walker thru the store. His cart was full and we got his watermelon.

I never knew what to expect when I visited. I could always count on his morning trips to McDonalds for coffee, the gym swimming pool workouts, and being shown around the area, especially being introduced to Bob and Mae's favorite restaurants (which gave me some good country drives). Of course those drives caused me a bit of concern, as he was always asking me to check to make sure it was safe to switch lanes (thank goodness it was Iowa roads and not my California freeway parking lots.)

We'll miss him, but I'll join my granddaughter in saying he's happier now being with Jesus. No longer in pain, he can run and sing and experience the joys God has waiting for all his children. Praise God.

**Cynthia Price** - July 02 at 07:37 PM



“ So glad to have been able to meet & get to know Bob (a little) when we attended the Evangelical Church. We know he is enjoying his eternal "visit" with his Heavenly Father in Heaven. While we will miss him here, we look forward to joining him around God's throne someday.

**Alwyn & "Vickie" Hall** - July 03 at 09:39 AM



“ As a child, my mother, Melba RowJean Van Steenis Wilcox, remembers the Sunday afternoon sings at Murray and Velma Van Steenis' home. Grandma playing the piano with a stick to hold up the top, others playing guitars and violins, and everyone singing. She said that she would sneak up behind and join in too.

**Suzanne Wilcox Minor** - July 03 at 12:26 PM