

ROBERT “BOB” J. ALLEN January 12, 1923 – July 10, 2015

Robert Allen was born in Martinsville, VA. After his father died, when Mr. Allen was but 6 years old, he and his younger brother were raised in the Pythian Home of New Market, VA. He was graduated from New Market High School and continued his education at Ferrum Junior College. After graduation, he attended Virginia Polytechnical Institute for a year and a half. He then sought employment in Washington, DC with Dr. Fields, a dermatologist friend.

Mr. Allen was drafted into the military services (Army). He served during Korean Wartime. He trained in the engineering school, leadership training, cartography, early computers, marksmanship and artillery associated with paratrooper training. He was honorably discharged. Thereafter he sought employment with the federal government.

He began to work for the Department of Interior in the U.S. Geological Survey in the early 1950s. He worked there for 50-plus years as a cartographer, creating and verifying maps all over the globe, branching into Landsat, NASA and mapping of the moon, but his greatest expertise was aerial mapping and studies of Antarctica. His enjoyed his posting was with the SCAR library in USGS Reston, Virginia, which later became the Antarctic Resource Center. He had amassed a great deal of knowledge and skill with the archived data whether photographs, explorations or scientific studies. He knew and assisted many other “Antarcticans” during his long service. However, he did not ever travel to the frozen continent himself. He was honored in the Congressional Record for his achievements and service to the many U.S. researchers and teams that studied Antarctica, particularly at McMurdo.

During his lifetime, Robert enjoyed many hobbies such as vegetable gardening, pastime card games with friends, photography, and bowling. An avid photographer, he had several film-based cameras, included one for producing stereo slides. He was a champion bowler on various teams in the duckpin leagues, particularly the IDRA, and amassed many trophies and awards. His favored position was anchorman. He was a longtime member of the former Mount Rainer United Methodist Church where he taught Sunday school and supported the youth program as well as many other charitable activities.

Mr. Allen was first married to Elizabeth Cox of Philadelphia at Fort Belvoir, Virginia., while he was in the service. Two daughters soon followed. Together, they enjoyed traveling in the USA and visiting historical sites. She predeceased him in January 1980. He married a second time to Priscilla Butler of Reston, Virginia. They both worked at the U.S. Geological Survey where they met. They also enjoyed traveling to New England to visit her family and other gatherings. She predeceased him in December 23, 2001. He is survived by his brother, Francis “Jack” Allen, two daughters, Olivia Heath and Frances Notley, a stepson Geoffrey Butler, four grandchildren, a step-grandson, and four great-grandchildren.

Robert Allen had survived several heart surgeries, bladder cancer and melanoma. In his advancing years he suffered increasingly from dementia and heart failure. A final heart attack exacerbated his condition until he passed away Friday in Maryland. He now rests beside his first wife, at Fort Lincoln Cemetery, in Brentwood, MD.