



## Robert L. St. Clair

December 9, 1930 - October 22, 2019

St. Clair, Robert Lee was a remarkable story-teller who understood that no matter how bad things might seem, they could always be worse, and the resulting stories would be better for it. In the fall of 1929, Lee Kimball and Esther St. Clair prepared to start their family by investing in Barley Futures. The market collapsed in October of 1930, and baby Robert Lee was born at home, in Winner, South Dakota, on December 9th that same year. As a child of the Great Depression, his family migrated to Oregon for seasonal work in the orchards, but eventually returned to the Midwest and settled in Binford, North Dakota, where Bob's graduating class totaled 3. He often joked that he was both the highest and lowest ranking male in his class. Using the GI Bill, he studied at Valley City State Teachers College, Valley City, ND, where he met Joanna Francis Lauder (Wahpeton, ND). Upon their first meeting in the cafeteria Joanna asked one of her closest friends, "what do you think of that guy", to which her friend replied, "you can do better." But she saw in him the promise of a life together that would extend for seven decades. Bob and Joanna both graduated with teaching degrees, married, and he and Joanna began working their way across eastern Dakota and west central Minnesota. In 1962 they moved to Hopkins where Bob was hired as an assistant principal. He said that by any measure, his first day of school at Hopkins was the most terrifying day of his life. He had promoted himself as an agent of change, and at the first staff meeting they asked him what changes he had in mind. He recognized that he didn't have enough experience to answer the question, so he asked, "what changes do you think need to be made?" He listened and fell in love with his job and the community he served. In 1967 Bob opened Hopkins West Jr. High. He received his PhD from the University of Minnesota in 1971. West Jr. High was named a National Blue Ribbon School in 1986. In 1987 Bob was elected President of the National Secondary School Principal's Association and received the Outstanding Educator Gordon M.A. Mork Award from the University of Minnesota. Bob also served as Director of the Minnesota State Principal's Association from 1990-1996. Bob is survived by his wife, Joanna, six children Scott (Virginia), Dave (Suzy), Lee (Peg), Rob (Ann), Paul (Jennifer), and Mary, fifteen grandchildren, and nine great-grand-children. He passed away on October 22nd surrounded by family. He will be sorely missed. Memorial Services will be held at 10:30 AM on November 23rd at St. Mary of the Lake, 105 Forest View Lane N,

Plymouth, MN 55441. Celebration of Life to follow at Minnetonka Community Center, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka, MN. In lieu of flowers please send donations to the Hopkins Education Foundation, 1001 Hwy 7, Suite# 243, Hopkins, MN 55305.

# Cemetery

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## **Hillside Crematory**

2610 19th Ave NE

Minneapolis, MN, 55418

# Comments

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“ The Knoblauch Family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Robert L. St. Clair.



**The Knoblauch Family** - November 01, 2019 at 11:05 AM