



Robert August Frykman

September 3, 1955 - May 18, 2024

My love... by Ann

I write this to honor and remember the extraordinary life of my beloved husband, Bobbie. It's already incredibly difficult to live without him by my side, but I am filled with gratitude for the beautiful years we shared, the countless memories we created, and the profound love we experienced. And the laughter...

I first met Bobbie, or Bob or Robert as many of you knew him, in 1991. He was always an enigmatic presence at our friends' dinners, quietly slipping away without a word. This unique quirk became fondly known as "Bob's exit." It was part of his charm, a mystery that only added to the man we all came to love.

In 1992, our paths intertwined in a way I could never have anticipated. Robert, with the help of his good friend Derf, expressed his interest in dating me. Our first date was a memorable adventure, a limousine ride to a casino with friends, which marked the beginning of our journey together. It wasn't long before pizza nights turned into a life filled with deep love and companionship. That first New Year's Eve and for many years after, we would visit Robert's grandmother's home, then the family cabin, and eventually our own. We would cut holes in the ice, brave the frigid waters after saunas, and laugh heartily despite the ice cuts on our bottoms. Those times were filled with joy, card games, cross-country skiing on the beautiful frozen lakes, and the warmth of togetherness.

Our honeymoon set the tone for our life together-at the cabin, grouse hunting, planning deer hunting seasons, and mapping out our next canoe trip to Quetico Provincial Park. Canoeing over 1,800 miles together, these trips were a reflection of Robert's soul and love for nature. His inventive spirit and need to always make things better or easier, much like Rube Goldberg, ensured every adventure was meticulously planned, from meal preparations to the perfect backpack load.

Robert's love of life, kindness, intelligence, integrity, and his easy laugh were the qualities that drew me to him. His hands were strong, his smile warm, and his heart incredibly kind.

Integrity and character were the pillars of Robert's interactions. His mischievous streak was a delightful bonus. He dedicated himself to supporting the elderly in our community, fiercely advocating for those less fortunate with a voice that demanded attention and action. He helped care for his parents in their elderly years and supported me caring for my mom.

Robert was a scientist. His insatiable curiosity knew no bounds, devouring every angle of a subject, reading studies and white papers, and always seeking deeper understanding. He approached every endeavor with curiosity of a scientist, meticulously dissecting each hobby with precision and dedication. Whether it was crafting beer, reloading his own ammo, or studying the stars, he poured himself wholeheartedly into every interest. This same approach was evident in his craftsmanship. He created beautiful furniture, each piece a testament to his dedication and skill. Our home and cabin are adorned with his creations, each a cherished reminder of his talent.

Robert was a Professional Geologist. Sought by many for his expertise and in-depth knowledge he could translate in the simplest of terms for others to understand and embrace. Our earth, the beginnings, the crusts, our earth all dear to him.

Deer hunting for Robert was a year-round endeavor, studying behaviors, habitats, and reloading his own bullets with precision. Later, he found joy in capturing the essence of the wildlife he so respected through his camera lens,

becoming a true whisperer of nature, including his bears that frequented the cabin.

Photography became his air, his true passion. His happiest moments were under the clear night sky, capturing the Milky Way and Aurora Borealis. And too, capturing the spirit of his bears through his lens. His collection of photos is a testament to his talent and a legacy I am honored to care for.

Bobbie was not just a husband; he was a teacher, inspiring many with his approach to life. He taught me to embrace life as it comes, to find positivity in every situation, and to laugh at myself. His lessons were about living fully, accepting the uncontrollable, and striving for the happiest life one could live. Bobbie endured much throughout his life. No matter the new limitation he always assessed the situation and adapted to a new way to live the life he so loved.

Despite the challenges of Interstitial Lung Disease, Bobbie faced each day with hope, positivity, and an unyielding spirit. He read extensively, questioned his doctors, and navigated his health with scientific rigor. We shared many heartfelt conversations about his wishes, often crying, always finding laughter and hope even in the face of uncertainty.

Robert made the selfless decision about his last moments, sparing me the burden. His strength and our love guided us through. Our numerous clinic and hospital visits became profound and precious, filled with tears, laughter, and deep connection, knowing they might be our last moments together.

I am blessed with countless memories to carry me forward-our adventures, quiet moments at our picnic table, and the sweet kisses he blew me every day.

Bobbie you are my rock, my touchstone, my confidant, and my greatest champion. Your unwavering support and boundless love sustained me through life's trials and triumphs. You taught me the value of laughter, the importance of embracing imperfection, and the beauty of living each day to the fullest. I will miss your laughter that echoed through our home, a constant

reminder of the joy you brought into my life.

Thank you, Bobbie, for the incredible gift of your love and the life we built together. You will forever be in my heart, guiding me with your spirit. I am filled with gratitude for all the moments we shared and the love that will forever bind us together. Your spirit will live on in our memories we hold dear and the lives you touched along the way. Rest in peace, my dear Bobbie, until we meet again.

In the end, you gave your greatest gift, you gave sight to another. "... get to see life through Bob's eyes."

Robert August Frykman - aka Bob, Bobby, Frykman, Fryk, F---ing Bob Bob distinguished himself in many ways during his tenure at UM Duluth. A rare concoction of EQ, IQ, Finnish sisu and mischief. "Interesting" would be an understatement. For those brave enough to venture into his world, the rewards were rich. Little in Bob's demeanor or dress hinted an Edina upbringing. Inevitably, some element of his attire asserted his esteemed woodsman status. Plaid wool jackets and flannel shirts, high top leather boots, chopper mittens, a Kromer up top, and thermals were a contrast to the sea of rugby shirts, corduroys, Adida's and chukka's around the campus. Moreso, in place of tennis rackets, frisbees and broomball gear, Bob's rec arsenal included skinning knives, traps, Duluth packs, bow and arrows, terrain maps, compasses, and a small but versatile armory. All were accompanied by an enthusiastic if not exhausting knowledge of the origin, proper application, operation and care of each. Bob's penchant for disruption was the ace in his sleeve. Among his friends he quickly gained a reputation as a master of surprises. In any conversation or activity, his unique outlook and creativity were an ever-present threat to homeostasis. Whether nearly suffocating himself by spontaneously attempting to suck a 4" square of Jello off a plate to impress an unfamiliar coed in the cafeteria, bowfishing a brookie out of the campus pond, pulling a friend's stick shift out of the floor of the car at ~60 mph and tossing it into the ditch, or flatly informing the landlady from the other side of his duplex that the problematic "stomping up and down the stairs" was the

unfortunate result of his "wooden leg", Bob loved to mess with people. Likewise, Bob cared deeply about people. He made numerous trips to Eagles Nest Lake to visit his grandmother, usually taking her into Ely for pizza at Sir G's. He was generous and always willing to help his friends. Messing with you was simply his love language. And while he could turn you inside out on a dime, often by merely holding a mirror up to your behavior, he never did it maliciously. He was also quick to laugh off his own follies, and was notorious for stiffly calling out any ill behavior or speech among or in offense to his friends. Along with his studies and recreational pursuits, Bob dabbled in hospitality with Bartlett's Ski, Sky & Stage Show in the Wisconsin Dells, and later in retail at Last Chance Liquors in Duluth. Likely as much for amusement as the pocket money. These offered fresh venues for plying his craft while simultaneously bolstering his resume, which thus far consisted of ~6 years of undergraduate studies. Bob eventually majored in geology (and seemingly, chaos theory). Along with his diploma, Bob departed college with a pile of text books that he actually continued to read, a pretty decent car stereo, a short-list of broken hearts and many friendships that would deepen with time. Bob would later regale these friends with tales of roughnecks and rumbles from his travails throughout the west as an oil well site analyst and create many more new memories with them and an ever-expanding circle of friends. The Ely area remained central to Bob and later his wife Ann, who shared / supported / patiently accepted / occasionally vetoed Bob's interests and creative notions. Along with several professional technical positions, Bob logged an impressive journey of camping, hunting, ammo-loading, fishing, snowshoeing, XC skiing, solo boundary water canoe trips, cedar strip canoe building, furniture building, cooking, beer brewing, conservation and water quality monitoring, bear feeding, wildlife & celestial photography, HOA leadership and any others that cabin and home maintenance might invoke. Bob embraced research and planning, which would further ignite his enthusiasm for whatever he was undertaking.

Bob enjoyed conversation and could be quite entertaining. As Ann would caution, "He'll filibuster your ass." While conversations would ramble on, they weren't complaining or self-centered and invariably were generously interspersed with his wry humor and laughter. Even when recounting details of any of the maladies de-jour that plagued his health in recent years, Bob was merely providing observation and analysis with humor sprinkled in to keep it afloat.

Kindly, Bob made it known in subtle ways that he understood the implications of his condition and the limits of science. Still, he marveled at the possibilities while accepting that less favorable outcomes may be probable. In true Bob form, he never let what difficulty might lie ahead prevent him from appreciating what he'd had, or from enjoying the moment at hand.

RIP Bob, Brennan Malanaphy

Memories of Robert August Frykman

By Sue Sorensen

June 2024

Robert (Bob), the oldest of my 3 brothers came into this world September 3, 1955 three months premature with a lusty cry and an iron will to live. He defied all odds and was known as Abbott Northwestern's "Miracle Baby". Most infants born in the 50's weighing well under 2 pounds did not survive.

A night nurse at Abbott's nursery took exclusive charge of baby Robert, holding and rocking him all night for 3 1/2 months calling him "her Bobby". The nickname stuck. "Bobby" came home at 3 1/2 months weighing 5 pounds.

Bobby is in all of my memories as a child. He was my first playmate and being only 18 months when he was born, I can't remember life without him. As young children, our neighborhood was our playground with over 70 kids on our street alone. We spent days playing on swing sets, going to birthday parties, riding bikes, playing games, and catching salamanders in our window wells.

We had our share of illness when we were young. We all got the measles and

the German measles. Strep throat and ear infections seemed to be a weekly occurrence. Since we only had one car, Dr. Tobin would make house calls at night. We received many of the BIG dose penicillin shots!!

Due to his prematurity, Bobby had shortened heel cords. When he was in kindergarten he had surgery to lengthen his heel cords, alleviating his need for orthopedic shoes. The same day Bobby had his heel cord surgery, I had my tonsils out. I remember recuperating with him eating popsicles and watching Yogi Bear, The Flintstones, and Bullwinkle cartoons.

Ebba and Oscar planned a business/pleasure trip to Europe. We all came down with chicken pox and Oscar went alone. With the vacation funds, Ebba bought a piano and signed us up for lesson with Mrs. Collins. I had interest but no talent. Bobby had NO interest. He agreed to play in a recital only if he could play the tune matching the song....."there's a place in France where the ladies don't wear pants....". Bobby's piano playing career was short.

When Bobby was in 3rd grade, Oscar took a job with AC Spark Plug and we moved to Brookfield, Wisconsin. We were each other's confidants and playmates, exploring the new school, neighborhood, an old house we were sure was haunted and wooded areas around our new home. Bobby loved it there. People were very accepting and friendly. Bob often told me he liked it so much better than Edina.

Within the year, Oscar went back to his job at Honeywell in Minneapolis and we moved back to Edina. We started going to Lutheran Church of the Master. Bob and I signed up to sing in the choir. Bob was all excited about joining until he found out he had to

SING?! He quit. We were also in Skijammers together. Each Saturday in the winter months were bused to a different ski resort, spending one hour each week in ski lessons. If I recall, Bob wore blue jeans each week and after all that time and money, neither of us became great skiers!

The sandpit behind our home provided great childhood memories. Bob and I spent hours in the sand pits, building forts, sliding down and climbing sand hills, collecting agates, and avoiding being chased by the caretakers. Our

shoes and pockets were always full of sand or rocks we collected which Oscar polished.

As a child Bob was quite adventuresome. Some of these adventures had unexpected consequences. Bob "hunted" a skunk ending in a predictable result. His clothing was thrown away and he was given a bath in tomato juice to get rid of the odor. He also chased and caught a gopher at Cornelia grade school during recess. The gopher bit him! Fortunately the gopher was trapped and tested negative for rabies.

Bob could be quite the jokester. When Brett was 15-18 months old, Bob taught him to hold one nostril and say "cocaine Brett". Of course everyone thought that was funny and Brett kept doing it. He also got a kick out of surprising us with unexpected Christmas gifts. We were celebrating Christmas at Ebba and Oscar's. Each of the boys opened their gifts. Ben was 9-10 years old and he opened a 22 rifle. Ben was thrilled, Ebba was thrilled...Ken and I surprised and not so thrilled!

Bob had the uncanny ability to show up out of the blue. He was known to show up by car, bike or on foot never giving advanced notice. When ever he was asked why he didn't call, he would just give a hearty laugh. When we lived in Clinton, Iowa, Brett who was 5 years old, looked out the window and said, "Mom, there's a bum sleeping in our back yard!" It was Uncle Bob who had traveled back from one of his jobs in the oil fields. He spent a few days with us. We spent time together playing with the kids, cooking and making some fantastic lasagna.

His visit that WAS planned was his trip to see us when we lived in Naples, Florida. He was so excited to see the "babes at the beaches"! He found that his sister was the only "babe" under 60 years old. In general, Bob was not fond of Florida!

One of Bob's all time good moves was to marry Ann. He adored her as she shared his love for the outdoors, fishing, hunting, and shooting guns. Not everyone would allow their husband to build a canoe in their living room. Hearing about their Alaska adventure and canoe trips was a treat.

My favorite and most vivid memories of Bob, center around our time together in Ely. Our grandparents Esther and Jacob (Jack) Salo bought the current cabin lot on Eagles Nest Lake through a Finn Co-op in the early 50's. They built a sauna/boat house, outdoor cooking area, and a heavy duty green row boat. When we were very young, our family would drive up to Ely and stay with our grandparents in the tiny upper level of a home on Harvey Street. Most of our time was spent out at the lake.

When Jack retired, he and Esther built the current house with the help of Do-It-Yourself-Books and moved permanently to Eagles Nest Lake. Grandpa Salo taught us how to shoot a gun, whittle sticks, make switches for saunas and enjoy the wilderness. Grandma Salo sewed us all life jackets and tied a long rope to the green rowboat so we could row back and forth to our hearts content. Believe it or not neither of our grandparents could swim.

On January 27, 1964, when Bob was seven, my mother received a yellow Western Union Telegraph telling us that Jack (62) had died of a heart attack. Esther never learned to drive a car. Ebba drove up north every month for over 20 years to buy her groceries and provide company. This gave us monthly "up North" opportunities. On the way to Ely we always ate at Cassidy's (never Toby's). Bob and I always got the hot beef sandwich, bought comics, and threw pennies in the wishing well.

Bob often got a kick out of teasing and causing commotion. One time, Ebba became so angry, she made him get out of the car. She drove ahead one mile and made him walk to the car. I think he was quiet after that.

Ebba took us on many of her favorite Ely adventures. We hiked to Pickerel Lake, took saunas, swam, hiked in the woods, shopped in Ely and went to visit Ebba's favorite childhood place which was "sitting rock" near Essila's lot. If Oscar came, we would take the fishing boat with the small motor to the island for swimming and a hot dog cookout. Winter visits included playing in the snow and jumping in the snow banks after a sauna.

Often Eila (Ebba's sister) and her 4 children would fly from Alaska to

Minneapolis to spend the month of July at Eagles Nest Lake. Ebba and Eila would pile 8 kids into the station wagon, pack up the luggage and away we would go. One time the car top carrier flew off the car while going 80 miles per hour. We had to back up and put it back on! Saunas, sleeping in tents, playing in the attic, and swimming were the high lights.

When Bob and I were 10-12 and older, Ebba would drive Bob and I to Ely to spend two weeks with Grandma. We were in heaven!!! Grandma would make us milk carton necklaces to collect blueberries. We would head out to the woods for the day hunting for berries in her favorite spots.

Grandma who was not the greatest cook would make amazing pies and bread with us. We taught her how to make Chef Boyardee Pizza from the box.

Mr. Pohianen who lived down the road in a yellow log cabin, would drive the three of us in to Ely. Grandma would grocery shop and let Bob and I pick a toy at Ben Franklin. One time, we picked up sling shots and spent an afternoon slinging rocks at road signs until Mr Pohianen caught us and told us to STOP! The Starkman's, who were Grandma's next door neighbors, had grandkids our age who lived in Ely, Richard and Nancy Kuzma. We became fast friends. Hours were spend playing hide and seek in the woods, making forts, going from the sauna to the lake, hanging out and walking to Olson's Resort to swim and buy candy bars.

After Jack Salo died, Esther was terrified to live alone at Eagles Nest. She was outside one day and "saw" Jack in the yard staring at her and smiling. From that day on, she was no longer afraid. She knew Jack would always be there with her.

I know Bob will always be with us smiling down on us especially when we are up North. I will miss his laugh, smile, feistiness, generosity, love, the spice he added to family gatherings, and the unexpected drop-bys.

By Steve

Robert was born prematurely and right before he was born, they changed the process that dealt with premature babes which could cause blindness. As a baby Robert could sleep in a shoe box. Since he was born early he required

surgery on one lower leg and he was in a cast for several weeks to a month. Robert (Bob) Frykman accomplished much in his life. At a young age he trapped animals in Edina before it was fully developed and there was still some wilderness left. Robert learned to love the outdoors and many outdoor trips especially in the boundary waters canoe area. Deer hunting was a sport he enjoyed especially in the Ely area. Robert said that one year he and our grandmother butchered a deer on the kitchen table. He also shot a small animal (fox martin?) and he and grandmother skinned the animal.

Robert went to college in Duluth (UMD) and got a geology degree . One summer while he was in college he worked for a South African gold mining company in the Ely area looking for gold deposits and lived in a resort while our grandmother was still alive. After college he worked for an oil company drilling in the western United States. After college Robert bought a 7mm Magnum gun for hunting out west and he had to trade in the gun for something else since this gun had a large kick and he tensed up before he shot and could not hit anything.

Robert enjoyed making furniture. The furniture made was very well made and a lot of time and craftsmanship was made on each piece. Several wood strip canoes were manufactured by Robert one of which was made in the upper floor of a house and to remove the canoe, from the second floor, a double window had to be removed.

Robert went on at least one solo biking trip from the Twin Cities to Ely in the 1980s. Several solo canoe trips were made to the boundary waters, on one of the canoes he built.

Steve Frykman, brother

Robert Frykman - RIP

Robert influenced my life in so many ways. His subject knowledge and need to understand minutia, amplified by his enthusiasm, was always an inspiration to me. My love of fishing and the outdoors was definitely fostered by Robert. He became an expert woodsman at a very young age. He was a true mountain man. He and I fished the opener in Ely for over 15 years and deer

hunted together for almost 10 years. He also took me grouse hunting, fishing and many long adventures in the woods. He was a real catalyst for me.

Some of my favorite memories were when we fished for walleyes, northerns and smallmouth bass on the Fishing openers, usually on Eagles Nest, Fall Lake or White Iron. One of Robert's favorite fishing techniques was bobber fishing for big northerns, with giant suckers, over the weed beds on Eagles Nest Lakes 1 and 2. We caught so many huge northerns over the years.

Robert loved deer hunting. He was also one of the luckiest deer hunters alive. Five minutes into his first ever deer hunt, while hungover as a freshman in Duluth, he shot the trophy buck of a lifetime - a 10 pointer that dressed out at 205 lbs. He was walking with his head down when he heard a twig snap. He looked up and 15 feet away was a giant 10 point rack rising above a large dead tree laying on the ground. Some favorite times with Robert were when we spent all day in the woods scouting for good deer hunting spots a couple weeks before the opener.

Robert also had many hunting and fishing adventures in Edina as well. Yep, you heard that right - in Edina of all places. Nine Mile Creek ran through an area just West of 70th Street and Hwy 100 that was undeveloped when we were kids. One day he came back with a 4 lb northern pike he shot with his bow and barbed arrow. Another time he trapped a skunk, that was still alive when he arrived, got sprayed several times and came home smelling worse than awful. Ebba and Oscar made him bury his clothes in the sand pits behind our house.

I always loved hearing stories about Robert's time in Duluth, like the time he stole a battery out of a police car right in front of the police station, or when he shot a racoon out of a tree with his bow and arrow and skinned it on the sidewalk. Or, when someone walked into a party and Robert was dancing with a lamp shade on his head. Robert was definitely not a rule follower.

Another favorite Robert story, he was taking a sauna in the middle of the day with a couple college buddies. They went down to the lake in the buff and

when they got to the lakes edge there were 2 young girls in a paddle boat about 100 feet off the shore. Robert's friends didn't realize you had to walk out well over 100 feet just for the water just to get waist deep. Robert quickly laid down in about a foot of water, but his friends kept running and running and running. I was up at the cabin with Robert a couple weeks later. While we were carrying wood to the sauna with the wheel barrel, the girls were out in the paddle boat again and I heard one of them say, "maybe they'll do it again!!"

A classic example of Roberts sense of humor: Kris and I were going to play tennis. Unbeknown to us he had taken the 3 tennis balls out of the can and replaced them with a banana. We waited in line at the tennis court for about 30 minutes before we discovered the prank. We still laugh about it to this day. Robert developed some amazing hobbies over the years - woodworking, photography and feeding the bears. He used to build his own furniture and wood strip canoes. One of the first tables he ever made was an end table made out of cherry. He said, "this is too nice for someone like me" and gave it to Kris and I. It's nicer than most pieces of furniture you would find in a furniture store. He also once built a wood strip canoe in living room of his second story apartment he shared with his friend Derf. I remember visiting him and there was sawdust everywhere. When he finished, the canoe was too long to fit down the stairs, so he lowered it out the second story window. The mail man was walking by when this was happening and said, "That's the first time I've ever seen a canoe be birthed out of a window." He also took amazing photos of the Milky Way at night. But his favorite hobby was feeding and photographing the bears. Dr Lynn Rogers, the local bear expert in Ely, took Robert out in the woods to feed the bears and from that point on he has hooked. One time Kris was sitting at the picknick table at the cabin when she heard a clucking sound behind her. She turned around and there was Solo with her 3 cubs looking for a handout. The clucking is a greeting sound for bears. Another time, Kris and I were walking to the sauna in the dark at around 10 PM and Kris looked down and there was a bear right at her left hip.

She almost bonked it in the head with her flashlight. The bear was obviously looking for more tasty pecans. Robert would buy 3 lb bags of pecans at Costco and pour them in a bowl to feed the bears. Once I was staying at the cabin with a couple friends, we were going on a Boundary Waters trip the next day, and we saw Robert feed a bear by hand. He held the bowl of pecans while the bear chowed down. The rest of us were watching through the window from inside the cabin.

Robert battled his health challenges over the last few years with courage and was very matter of fact about the options facing him. He fought really really hard. He always talked about his hopes for the future. I talked with him a couple days before he passed and he matter of factly told me he thought maybe he had a year to live if he didn't get a lung transplant. Then he told me all about his plans for what he knew might be his last Summer at the cabin. Robert and I could talk for hours about current events, global warming, space exploration, racism and many other topics. We both love to read non-fiction and could talk endlessly about many different topics. There aren't many people that you can do that with. He and I (Steve as well) could put on a "Frykman Filibuster." I always thoroughly enjoyed our conversations. Robert was adventurous, smart, feisty and incredibly funny- I miss him already.

Dave Frykman - younger brother