



## Robert Terry Hiatt

December 6, 1940 - September 14, 2024

Robert "Bob" Hiatt, 83, decided to leave on 9/14/24, from Minneapolis.

Born 12/6/40 on the Great Plains to Claude and Marion (Coombs) Hiatt, Bob was an adventurer in spirit. He grew up in Cedar Rapids, IA, and developed passions for the arts, music, politics, food and travel. He was a Peace Corps volunteer, lawyer and entrepreneur, husband and father, and had many close, lifelong friends.

Bob was an English major at Brown University in Rhode Island, completing his college career with mostly-passing grades and several good pals. He then volunteered for the Peace Corps and spent the next three (?) years in Panama. This led not only to fluency in Spanish, a plethora of fantastic stories and even más amigos, but to meeting the woman who would become his wife of 56 years, Dietrah Chapman.

Bob and Dee ended their Peace Corps stint and moved to her hometown of Washington, DC. After being famously late to their own wedding, they eventually settled close to the National Zoo and had two rotten kiddos. Bob trained volunteers in DC for VISTA before working for the Rural Housing Alliance, then moved to Pierre, South Dakota in 1972 to join the SD Office of Economic Development. This led to his appointment as the first Executive Director of the SD Housing Development Authority.

In Pierre, he was active in local and state politics, with the Governor issuing an official proclamation declaring one wedding anniversary "Bob and Dee Day." (In honor of their chronic tardiness, it was issued two days late.) During this time, he briefly had a business called Hiatt's Flying Lobsters, which flew live Maine lobsters to Pierre, providing the only fresh seafood in town at the time.

After leaving the Housing Authority, Bob switched gears and got his law degree from the University of South Dakota. He opened a law office in Pierre, allowing him to wear his Panama hat and poncho to work, which had been declared unacceptable while working for the state. He later became the Crow Creek Reservation's Tribal Prosecutor, completing crosswords while driving the hour-long route, and began trading commodities, an equally risky endeavor.

Dee took her turn switching gears in the 1990s, so they moved to Minneapolis so she could attend grad school. Bob embarked on a whirlwind of careers and hobbies, some more successful than others: realtor, bartender, long-distance phone service dealer, chad counter, non-profit administrator, Ebay salesman, kickboxer, straw bale gardener. None was the right fit, until he discovered the perfect avocation: retiree.

Once retired, Bob was able to pursue his true passions, with Dee joining in on much of the fun: cooking, eating at local restaurants, carefully (and loudly) following national politics, reading, doing puzzles, listening to (and quizzing his children about) jazz and rock music, taking road trips to visit friends and collecting art.

Though he unfortunately left without realizing a few of his dreams—running a rattlesnake ranch, moving to Belize, creating a line of affordably-priced

modular furniture, writing his memoir, raising capybaras, living to be 120 years old, and voting for Kamala Harris for President-Bob lived a long and full life.

Bob is survived by his beautiful, patient and loving wife, Dee, doting and dutiful children, Stephanie and Benjamin, and surly Shih-Tzu, Willie.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Claude and Marion, his sister and brother-in-law, Sheila and Lance Blakely, and his favorite and smartest child, Charlie the Shih-Tzu.

A gathering to remember Bob will occur in the spring. Meanwhile, a growing and evolving playlist of his favorite music is on YouTube: [https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyV1TpFwDwdRGZ\\_beR0sm\\_7LFAE9gC\\_dE&si=SgLwqdCywbaGQ6su](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyV1TpFwDwdRGZ_beR0sm_7LFAE9gC_dE&si=SgLwqdCywbaGQ6su)

Donations in his memory to charities supporting the arts, environment, animals, science or the Democratic party would have made him happy. Or will make him happy, if he's watching.

# Tribute Wall

JL

“ 3 files added to the album Tribuye Wall



Joe Looby - June 15, 2025 at 12:34 PM



“ A grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Robert Terry Hiatt.

June 13, 2025 at 04:52 PM

CI

“ Dee, Steph, and Ben; my sympathies to you who have lost so much.

*Things I will remember about Bob:*

*The wonderful warmth and support of a high-school friendship that has lasted over time.*

*His sense of humor.*

*His far-ranging intellectual curiosity.*

*His relentless political watch-doggery.*

*Clary Illian*

clary illian - June 09, 2025 at 06:12 PM

SH

“ A gathering to remember Bob will take place 6/15/25:  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s5tUG2jIU222gqgCW\\_Mg\\_phq3RT06zzMCOOa4XMiLNY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s5tUG2jIU222gqgCW_Mg_phq3RT06zzMCOOa4XMiLNY/edit?usp=sharing)

Steph Hiatt - May 26, 2025 at 06:11 PM

ES

“ Earline Simmons purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Robert Terry Hiatt.



Earline Simmons - September 22, 2024 at 02:10 PM

SM

“ With joy in my heart, I will always remember running into Bob as he walked Charlie. He would often need to pull out his ear buds to talk as he was almost always listening to an audio book on history. We had wonderful conversations about the state of the world and especially, politics. I have also been the recipient of Bob's good cooking. Bob was truly one of the good guys. He was smart, kind, curious and mischievous. Dee, you had a special one!

Sadie McKinley - September 21, 2024 at 03:57 PM

SH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Stephanie Hiatt - September 17, 2024 at 06:12 PM

SH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Stephanie Hiatt - September 17, 2024 at 06:11 PM

AB

*What a wonderful tribute, I didn't know you two were such rotten kiddos, Not sure that I'm buying that one. Our condolences to Dee and Ben and you.*

Aaron Burns - September 20, 2024 at 03:23 PM

CB

*Dear Dee, Stephanie and Benji*

*I am reposting the below message that I posted on the "Legacy" website. It was the first or perhaps only one that popped up when I was looking for an obituary for Bob. Maybe you already know, but if not there are other messages left for you on that site, too.*

*Dear Dee: I am so sorry to learn of Bob's passing. I heard about it from the underground RPCV network! I remember fondly spending weekend evenings drinking and partying at your apartment in DC in the late 60s. You and Bob were trail blazers—none of the rest of us had children but we all tried to accommodate Bob's needs to party. We all loved "Stephie" and then "Benji" and your forever patience. Ken, who I married, and I had one of our many "first remembered" meetings at RHA, where there was a fund raiser, partially organized by Bob (?) for the first black man to run for sheriff in some county in Mississippi. Bob was a wild and generous man and you were his rock and together you were perpetually late. To my great regret we did not stay in contact after you left DC. I send you my love and condolences. Cathy Bishop*

Catherine Bishop - September 24, 2024 at 10:47 PM

KS

*Bob lived such a full and varied life - he unfortunately died too soon. I would have loved to see his capybaras.*

*My sister, Kathy Pavlis Porter, adored Bob and Dee - especially their connection over the recent years. Now Bob is up with Kathy up amongst the stars. I imagine them commiserating about mischief at McKinley and Washington High and no doubt planning something for the future. Shine on, Bob. We're watching you.*

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**Karen Sielaff** - October 06, 2024 at 06:14 AM