



Robert Allen Nelson

April 21, 1939 - April 15, 2026

Robert Allen Nelson of Anoka, age 86, passed away peacefully on April 15, 2026. He was preceded in death by parents, Gerald and Evelyn Nelson; and brother, Richard Nelson. He is survived by his loving wife of 63 years, Joan Nelson; children, Jackie (John) Michlig and Scott Nelson; grandchildren, Zoey and Ben; sister, Gloria (Jim) Carver; and extended family and friends.

Memorial service will be held on Friday April 24th at 11 AM with visitation at 10 AM at Zion Lutheran Church, 1601 S 4th Ave, Anoka. In lieu of flowers, memorials to WAWM RAD Program in honor of Bob Nelson are appreciated. WAWM Recreation Center, 2450 S. 68th Street, West Allis, WI 53219. Bob's enthusiasm for staying active with friends and love of his grandson make Ben's Recreational Adult Day program a fitting recipient.

Those who knew Bob recognized his love of storytelling, fondness for pranks, and mischievous smirk, signaling something was about to happen. Many of Bob's stories were set in Bemidji where he was born and raised. He was so appreciative of growing up there and enjoyed sharing tales of the shenanigans he and his buddies had in town, on the lake, or at the reservation with his dear friend Bill. Stories also centered around time spent at his grandparents' farm in Nary. Certainly, he relished sharing his escapades, but central to every tale were the characters in the story with him - the family or friends with whom he shared those memories.

Bob was all about forming and maintaining relationships. His high school classmates and Bemidji State University football teammates became lifelong friends. He met Joan his sophomore year, creating a truly meaningful relationship spanning 67 years. Working at Fred Moore Junior High provided the opportunity for more connections -- and pranks -- with colleagues, as well as more enduring friendships.

His forte for forming relationships was not just reserved for family and friends but transferred to his professional life. His role as a counselor at Fred Moore for 32 years was something he valued greatly. Many a time we would be out and about and be approached by someone saying, "Hi Mr. Nelson, do you remember me?" It was apparent they appreciated the time spent with him. Recently, a former student asked about Bob and said, "He really helped me through some tough times." We know this is just one example of thousands of young people he supported during his career.

Bob and Joan built an idyllic childhood for Jackie and Scott on Rum River Drive. He loved his oak trees, screen porch, and rec room where he could be found engaged in conversation or playing pool all while enjoying some classic country on the juke box. Of course, a bottle of beer was likely in hand.

Upon retiring, he enthusiastically embraced the role of Grandpa. He gave Zoey and Ben the same love, support, and humor he showed Jackie and Scott. They received his affection and guidance - and, on occasion, a prank or two. Just ask Zoey about Jake the Snake.

In between visits with the grandkids, Bob and Joan traveled the country in their "rock star" motor home, before settling and wintering in Surprise, AZ for over a decade. They also took many cruises, a highlight being a trip to Norway. These opportunities fostered new friendships, while maintaining old ones on the courtyard at Happy Trails. The saying, "never met a stranger"

perfectly summarizes Bob's approach to life. His friendship circle continued to expand with people he met at McDonalds for coffee and his frequent trips to the YMCA.

All these examples reflect Bob's values, his caring heart, his sense of adventure and fun, and his desire to connect with others while offering friendship, support, and laughs. Through his love and guidance, our lives have been enriched beyond measure.

For those unable to attend, Bob's service may be viewed starting at 11 AM on Friday April 24 at: https://youtube.com/live/6M8Az4_ZeTs?feature=share

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 24. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church (Anoka)
1601 4th Avenue South
Anoka, MN 55303

Memorial Service

APR 24. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church (Anoka)
1601 4th Avenue South
Anoka, MN 55303

Tribute Wall

JL

“ *Joleen Long purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Robert Allen Nelson.*



Joleen Long - April 23 at 11:09 AM

TS

“ *The Squad purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Robert Allen Nelson.*



The Squad - April 22 at 05:41 PM

MR

“ *So sorry Joan !If you need to share just call me! It is nearly 4 years since Jerry passed. You all were so close in friendship back at BSU college! All such close friendships! Just keep busy ! I am surrounded by memories and they keep me going !! am so happy for family*

Maryann Riewer - April 20 at 10:32 PM

GD

“ Bob was a great colleague and friend. I had a lot of laughs with him and a lot of lessons in teaching, relating to junior high students, collegiately and learning. I don't think that there is a person who doesn't have at least one "Bob Nelson" story. Or perhaps twenty. Thanks, Bob. You enriched my life and professional growth.

Godspeed.

Gary Dunn aka "Mal"

GARY DUNN - April 20 at 06:36 PM

KH

“ Kris, Karen, and I always appreciated Bobby keeping in contact through the years with our Mom and ourselves, Kathe

Kathe Hazelkorn - April 20 at 03:08 PM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Robert Allen Nelson.



April 20 at 02:51 PM

MH

“ Joan, I am so sorry to hear of Bob's passing. He was such a dear friend and part of the best class at BHS. I loved the obit and it surely described him perfectly. He will have many friends in heaven.
Mary Jo Klaers Herr

Mary Jo Herr - April 20 at 09:48 AM

TJ

“ *Tiff, Jenny and Joey purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Robert Allen Nelson.*



Tiff, Jenny and Joey - April 18 at 06:10 PM