



## Robert Henry Ophaug, Ph.D.

June 5, 1942 - January 23, 2026

Dr. Robert "Bob" Ophaug (83), retired professor of Biochemistry and faculty member of the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry, passed away peacefully on January 23, 2026.

Bob was born in Starbuck Minnesota to Eugene and Hazel Ophaug on June 5, 1942. He attended Starbuck High School and distinguished himself as a standout football and basketball player for the "Bucks". He continued his education and passion for basketball at the University of Minnesota Morris. It was in Chemistry class at UMM that he met his future wife, Judy Nordly. Bob and Judy graduated UMM together in 1964. They were married later that year and moved to the Twin Cities where Bob continued his education and began his research career as a junior scientist under the mentorship of Dr. Leon Singer. Bob earned his Doctorate in 1973 and worked for over 3 decades teaching in the School of Dentistry and conducting scientific research at the University of Minnesota.

Education was of paramount importance in both Bob's personal and professional life. He took great joy in cultivating intellectual curiosity in his students, children, grandchildren, and anyone else who sought his guidance. Bob would never say "no" to anyone who approached him for help. It made no difference if it was graduate level organic chemistry or a fifth-grade science project, Bob would extensively prepare (often purchasing the class textbook

for himself), create detailed notes, and would take as much time as necessary to ensure that the subject matter was mastered. Humble by nature, Bob never sought recognition, monetary compensation or thanks for his contributions but was truly gratified and fulfilled by the impact his efforts had on others. He believed in his heart that through his actions, it was possible to change the trajectory of a young person's life. He viewed his time and attention not as a job or a duty, but as an investment. His legacy lives on in the people whose lives he influenced and supported.

Bob's private life was grounded in his love and support for his family. Bob and Judy enjoyed 62 years of marriage. They were blessed with three children who grew up and still reside within the Twin-Cities Metropolitan area. This allowed Bob and Judy to remain immersed in the lives of their children and their families. Bob cherished his role as a father and grandfather, enthusiastically supporting each child's unique interests, talents and activities. Over the years he became a certified USGF gymnastics judge, a Dance Team aficionado, an expert fisherman, and a football, baseball, hockey, and swim team superfan. Known for his mischievous nature, Bob often had a light-hearted prank up his sleeve. Kindhearted, hard-working, and patient, Bob approached life with integrity and purpose. He was deeply loved and will be greatly missed.

Robert was preceded in death. by his father, Eugene and mother, Hazel Ophaug, his brother-in-law, Clifford Nordly, and sister-in law, JoAnn Nordly, sister-in-law Marcella Hansen and brother-in-law Harlan Hansen. He is survived by his devoted wife of 62 years, Judy Ophaug, his daughter Trudy Bonvino (Chris), his daughter, Kelly Hegarty (Cullen), and his son, Bryan Ophaug (Kristen), his seven grandchildren; Alexandra Loribieki (Lawrence), Matthew Bonvino, Jenna, Joey and Caden Hegarty, Jack and Isla Ophaug, and three great grandchildren; Eloise, James, and Camille Loribieki, and by his sister, Judy Ronnie (Gary) and brother-in-law James Nordly (Jean), and by

companion French bulldog, Baxter.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, June 6, 2026, 11:00am. Visitation 10am in the Chapel at North Heights Lutheran Church, located at 1700 W Hwy 96, Arden Hills, MN, 55112. In lieu of flowers, memorials preferred to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital (<https://www.stjude.org>)

# Tribute Wall



“ I knew Bob from when we started Sunday School in first grade. We graduated in 1960.

Irene - March 22 at 07:49 PM



Best Brother Ever! ❤️

Ronnie Judy - May 22 at 04:42 PM