



Robert G. Bailey

March 14, 1939 - January 14, 2019

Robert G. Bailey passed away January 14, 2019. Robert, known as Bob to friends, was a remarkable man known for his passion and intellect. He was a world-renowned geographer who served 53 years with the US Forest Service. Bob's work for the Forest Service began in 1966 on the San Dimas Experimental Forest near Los Angeles. In 1971, he earned his PhD in Geography from UCLA. His career ultimately took him throughout the West, before landing him in Fort Collins in 1978.

During his early career, Bob's work was considered crucial to the battle to save the extraordinary water clarity of Lake Tahoe. Later, Bob developed an ecosystem mapping and land classification system that became well known by geographers and ecologists throughout the world. His system guided land management decisions by the Forest Service and was adapted as the primary land management and conservation model for other state and federal agencies and conservation groups. He worked with groups in several foreign countries to help develop national systems based on his principles and methods. He also published four books on eco-geography, with one forthcoming, and numerous influential professional journal articles. Bob received several awards and honors for his work both in the US and abroad. Although he retired a few years ago, Bob continued to work as an Emeritus Scientist for the Forest Service.

Bob loved taking to the open road to explore the physical and cultural geography of the US. He particularly loved the grasslands of the Great Plains and the geomorphic and cultural history of the Southwest. In his later years, he frequently explored places like New Mexico and Arizona with his partner of 16 years, Veronica Lim. Together they traveled to the bottom of the Grand Canyon numerous times. He was also an avid outdoorsman and student of American history, often spending weekends hiking, snowshoeing or exploring wildlands and historic sites with friends and his daughter Laura and grandson Matthew. Those who traveled with Bob were always treated to special lessons about geography, ecology and history.

Well known by friends and colleagues for his knowledge of “old things,” Bob was a lifelong train buff, and a VW bug and Model A car enthusiast. Bob also spent time advocating for historic neighborhood preservation in Fort Collins and restoring his 1922 bungalow home to its craftsman style origins. He was particularly interested in the role of smaller, older homes in promoting sustainable living. He put this passion into words by regularly writing about sustainable bungalow living for the architectural magazine *American Bungalow*.

Bob is survived by his daughter, Laura Bailey, his grandson Matthew Bailey-Rodriguez, his partner Veronica Lim, his sister Marilyn Bailey, his former wife and friend Loretta Bailey and his half-sister Susan Bailey. His parents Gale Bailey and Barbara Allen and his beloved son Matthew G. Bailey predeceased him. He also leaves behind numerous friends and colleagues across the country and around the world to mourn his loss. Bob will be buried alongside his son Matt at Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins.

Robert Bailey was a man of honor, principle, and integrity. He will be remembered for a life of great accomplishment, tenacity and intellectual curiosity.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, 1/22/19 at Saint Joseph's Catholic Church, Fort Collins, followed by interment at Grandview Cemetery.

Contributions in Bob's memory may be made to the Matthew G. Bailey Scholarship Fund at the Department of Geography, Arizona State University, in care of Bohlender Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive, Fort Collins, Colorado, 80524.

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

JAN **22**. 9:30 AM (MT)

Saint Joseph Catholic Church
300 W. Mountain Ave.
Fort Collins, 80521

Tribute Wall

DD

“ I worked with Bob a little and we had a common interest in ecoregions and nature. His books are the most clearly written I think I have ever read. I considered him a friend and will miss him.

David Diamond - February 13, 2019 at 07:33 PM

JD

“ I met Rob Bailey a few months ago.

We were helping his daughter, Laura, build a raised garden in her yard. Later that summer, that garden grew a bounty of tomatoes, among other vegetables.

I know Rob Bailey as a man of the US Forest Service. I recall my very first job with the Forest Service in 1995: working alongside Reith Miller and Bob Deitrick in the Engineering Department. Those were some of the fondest memories of my career, and I sometimes think of how Rob would have viewed a similar sense of wonder when he first began his career.

Then my thoughts turn to Rob's father, who served with a tank battalion during the Battle of the Bulge in WWII. I can only imagine the ferocity of that battle... how it must have shaped Rob's father.. how proud he must have been -- having survived that battle -- when his son was born...

Thank you, Rob, for your contributions as a son, naturalist, and father. Your presence will be sorely missed.

Joel Danforth - January 22, 2019 at 01:52 AM

PE

“ I worked with Bob on ecological classification for several years, particularly while I was in Wash DC where we served together on national Ecomap project in the early and mid 90's. Bob was great to work with and he was highly competent. His presence on the team lifted our credibility and quality of our products in ecosystem management for the US Forest Service. Peter E Avers

Peter EAvers - January 19, 2019 at 01:06 PM

PL

“ It was a great shock and sadness that we read of Bob's passing. We both shared a love for authentic historic homes in Fort Collins. He helped us with research when we restored homes. We both had a passion for keeping houses original and preserving the historic structures in Fort Collins. He would send us a copy of American Bungalow when he had an article printed. We will truly miss him. Our sympathies, Paige and Paula Lunberry

Paige Lunberry - January 19, 2019 at 12:24 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Robert G. Bailey.



January 18, 2019 at 04:31 PM

LL

“ On behalf of the Historic Homes Tour, I am sending our thoughts about Bob and his many years of support and involvement with the Avery House and the Tour. It was ever a joy to welcome him and Veronica to the homes on each year's tour. And his loaning his home for the tour was a gift to all the community. He will be missed.
Lynda Lloyd

Lynda Lloyd - January 18, 2019 at 12:08 PM

RC

“ Bob represented the best of our profession in natural resource management. His pioneering work as a geographer survives as a lasting legacy in the US Forest Service. Public service is a high calling, and Bob rose to that call.

Ray Czaplewski - January 18, 2019 at 10:18 AM

LA

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Laura - January 17, 2019 at 12:58 PM

LA

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Laura - January 17, 2019 at 12:34 PM

LA

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Laura - January 17, 2019 at 11:53 AM

LA

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Laural - January 17, 2019 at 11:49 AM

WD

“ Bob was a dear friend and professional colleague of mine for over 15 years while I worked at Colorado State University in the area of military lands geography and ecosystems. We worked on several research projects together to transfer his work to the U.S. Army, sharing experiences in Yuma, AZ and West Point, NY. We often met for lunch in Fort Collins to catch up on things and saw each other at the annual Association of American Geographers meetings. More importantly, Bob was a "kindred spirit" with whom I shared many interests in landscape paintings, geography of the West and ecosystem management. Bob had a unique eye for nature and the landscape around us, and he was a true Renaissance man in understanding how the natural world is connected with humankind. His legacy lives on in the many books and publications he produced during his time with the USFS. He will be dearly missed by those of us who shared in his professional work as well his personal perspectives on living sustainably with nature.
Dr. Bill Doe, LTC (US Army, RET)

William Doe - January 17, 2019 at 11:38 AM

DH

“ I meet Bob in the Model A Club. He was a great guy, and we all from the Model A club will miss him a lot. Rest in peace dear friend. God Bless. Don Hood

Don Hood - January 17, 2019 at 10:01 AM

RP

I was writing a textbook on Forest Ecology in the late 90s when Bob was scheduled to speak at West Virginia University. It was winter and we had a 30-inch snowstorm that day. I walked the mile and a half from my house to hear his speech and it was well worth it! I used his ecoregion maps as a key part of the book.

Ray Hicks, PhD - June 26, 2021 at 05:35 PM

NH

I sadly just learned of Bob's passing today. Today I came across a copy of American Bungalow that he mailed me in Jan of 2018. Bob was a such a great guy! Always wearing a smile on his face. We would see each other at postcard shows (for over 20 years) or if he was passing through my hometown. I always enjoyed visiting with him. R.I.P. Sir! My condolences to his friends and family.

Nathan Huegel - December 27, 2024 at 06:43 PM