



Robert Whitehall Burns, Jr.

July 5, 1928 - August 13, 2022

Robert W. Burns, Jr., 94, died on August 13, 2022 at Centre Avenue Health and Rehab Facility. Born in St. Louis, MO, Robert called Atlanta, GA home during his youth. Exploring Civil War battlefields and Native American sites with his boyhood friend, artist John Kollock, Robert developed a love of history and art that lasted throughout his life.

Following his service in the United States Army during the Korean conflict, Robert completed a Bachelor's degree in history with an interest in the Middle Ages at the University of Colorado and, in 1955, concluded his education with a Master's Degree in Library Science at the University of Denver. In his initial employment, Mr. Burns served the Omaha Public Library as Chief Reference Librarian, but he soon found his life-long calling in higher education. From 1957 until 1968, he held various posts in the University of Idaho Library system. Robert found his lasting home beginning in 1968 at Colorado State University in Ft. Collins, CO where he rose to the position of Assistant Director of Libraries and retired in 1988 as the William E. Morgan Library Building Proctor and Manager.

During his extensive professional career, Robert, an active member of the American Library Association and American Society for Information Science, published multiple articles, presented papers, and worked actively as a consultant for Emory University, Oberlin College, North Dakota State

University, Oregon State University, and Morehead State College—to name only a few. His editorial work for the ALA Journal, Bibliographical Directory of Librarians, and other periodicals earned him an honorary seat on the Council of Library Resource Fellows. Robert was awarded two research sabbaticals while at CSU. The second, in 1985, was conducted at the University of California, Berkeley during which time he organized a pioneering examination into the use of computer operating systems for library cataloging and research.

Aside from his considerable professional achievements, Robert Burns, Jr. was perhaps most engaged in the active examination of the world and in the vigorous exploration of the mind. A member of the Colorado Mountain Club, he climbed all of Colorado's 14,000-foot peaks. Often serving as a guide and always as an inspiration, he took his climbing activities world-wide. He summited Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, scaled Mont Blanc and other peaks in Europe, and touched the roof of the world ascending peaks in India, Tibet, and Nepal. Robert loved Yeats, Kipling, and his namesake poet, Robert Burns. He could recite "Gunga Din" with a respectful growl or quiet his voice to a whisper when he read one of the many benedictions he was fond of writing. He loved music—glorying in a 40-voice motet by Thomas Tallis or relaxing into a reverie over Ralph Vaughn Williams's fantasies on English folk music, and he was always ready to step to the dance floor when Artie Shaw struck up a tune. An avid lover of stained glass, he admired and collected art across many genres. Simply put, Robert Burns, Jr. lived a life of joyful passion for the out-of-doors and for the arts. We can hear his loud, boisterous laugh even now.

Robert is survived by his beloved wife, Frances "Skip" Burns, his son, Lt. Col. (ret.) Christopher Burns and wife Joy, and by his daughter, Leslie Coats and her husband, Jerry. Robert was preceded in death by his siblings, Frank, Virginia, and Bricker. He is survived by cherished nephews, nieces, and grandchildren through marriage. In his memory, donations may be made to

the National Parks Service or to the American Library Association.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG **19**. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (MT)

Bohlender Funeral Chapel
121 W. Olive Street
Fort Collins, CO 80524

Tribute Wall



“ *It was a pleasure to work for/with Bob in the Research and Development Dept of the CSU Libraries. He and Skip made a great pair. Barb Fraley*

Barbara Fraley - August 18, 2022 at 05:34 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Robert Whitehall Burns, Jr..*



August 16, 2022 at 09:16 AM