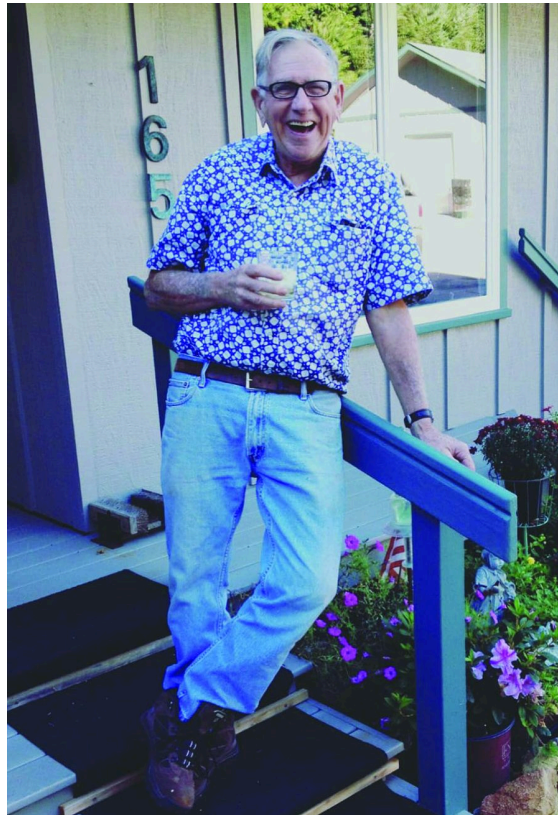


Robert (Bob) Miller

June 16, 2022



Dr. Robert O. (Bob) Miller, former owner of Dahlstrom & Watt Bulb Farm and professor passes at 92.

Bob Miller peacefully passed away at his home in Gasquet, California on May 25, 2022, surrounded by family, after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Bob led a remarkable life. Born in West Virginia, as a teenager he mined coal in the family mine, later serving in the Air Force where he trained as a diesel mechanic. His brother-in-law's small greenhouse and florist business sparked an interest in flowers, and after the Air Force he studied horticulture at West Virginia University in Morgantown. Becoming interested in research, he asked his professor to name the most difficult graduate program in the country. The answer was Cornell University, to which Bob immediately applied. Learning of his acceptance the day before classes began, Bob drove all night to arrive the next day in time for school. As a student, he supported his wife, Dora Alice "Sam" Miller and two young children (Jim and Rob) by delivering trailers throughout the northeast and Midwest while also going to school fulltime. His legendary work ethic would repeatedly bring him success in life and served as a model for his children.

After attaining a PhD in Horticulture, in 1958 Bob started as an Assistant Professor at Ohio State, researching poinsettias and then Easter lilies. In his teaching position he influenced countless Ohio State students who went on to positions of prominence in the industry. In 1959 Bob and Sam had a third child (Bill).

Bob always said he had more authority to spend money as a graduate student at Cornell than as a professor at Ohio. In 1966, he made a dramatic career change and left academia for industry, purchasing a portion of Dahlstrom and Watt Bulb Farms in Smith River, California.

At D&W he was able to directly apply results of his research to the commercial growing of Easter lily bulbs. Bob was a unique individual, having a research degree while developing and modernizing a highly specialized segment of the greenhouse ornamentals industry. Within two years, D&W constructed greenhouses for year-round production of floriculture crops, notably potted poinsettias and flowering Easter lilies. D&W added another nursery to grow azaleas in the early 1970s, Cottage Gardens in Eureka. Additional D&W crops included hydrangeas, Boston ferns, rhododendrons, and various annuals and perennials, sold wholesale to nurseries and stores across the US. For years, D&W was the largest single shipper on United Airlines air freight from Portland, Oregon. In the 1980s Bob began a twice-yearly open house, selling flowers at retail to the public. Smith River became the “Easter Lily Capital of the World.”

At D&W Bob met Alice Kier, whom he married in 1972 and with whom he had two additional children (Brian and Jennifer). Alice became Bob’s partner in work as well as life, running D&W’s office operations for years. Truly a family business, all five of Bob’s children and three generations of Miller’s at one time or another worked on the farm. In 2007 he retired from D&W, selling his portion of the business to his son Rob.

In retirement Bob and Alice lived in Gasquet, California. He built and equipped a woodshop, becoming an expert craftsman making Federal style furniture featuring bell flower and leaf inlay. Crafting the furniture for joy and not money, he refused payment for his work and would donate pieces for local charity auctions.

An inveterate storyteller strong in character, opinion, and joviality, Bob is survived by Alice and his five adult children (Jim, Rob, Bill, Brian, and Jennifer), eleven grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren. As a family, we cherish the memories of an icon in the national and international greenhouse industry, a pillar in the local community, a father who instilled strong values in his children, and a caring husband who provided everything possible.

A celebration of Bob’s life will be held July 23rd from 1-6 PM at Patrick Creek Lodge, 13950 Hwy 199 in Gasquet. If you are so inclined, the family requests donations be made to Coastal Home Health & Hospice, 585 Fifth Street, Brookings, Oregon 97415, to aid their efforts to bring hospice care to Del Norte County; or to The Fred C. Gloeckner Foundation, an organization that supports academic research on ornamental plants, at <http://www.gloecknerfoundation.org/contribu.htm>.