



Robert "Bob" Joseph Thomas

July 24, 1946 - August 31, 2019

Robert "Bob" Joseph Thomas, age 73, of Lovilia passed away under the care of Care Initiatives Hospice on Saturday, August 31, 2019, at his home in Lovilia, surrounded by his loved ones.

Bob was born on July 24, 1946, in Albia to Joseph and Geneva (Bates) Thomas. He was raised in the Hiteman area of Monroe County. He attended local schools and graduated from the Albia High School with the Class of 1964. He enlisted in the United States Army in 1967 and served his country during the Vietnam War.

Following his tour in Vietnam, Bob returned home and worked at Maytag and later John Deere. During a winter layoff, Bob wanted to travel again and set out for Hawaii to visit relatives. This trip led to Australia where he worked the shrimp boats and manned Danish Freighters in the off-season in and around the Gulf of Carpentaria on Australia's northern coast. From there, Bob went to Florida where he again worked shrimp boats, eventually buying his own 58-footer, the Julie Franks. Bob worked this boat for years until it sank in a storm near Galveston in 1982. He then sought licensing as a sea captain for a 500-ton oil ship. He was employed by the Mexican government for a couple of years to run a shuttle service in and around the Yucatan Peninsula supplying oil rigs in the gulf owned and operated by the Petroleos Mexican-Pemex, the government owned oil corporation. During this time, he was introduced to a

crew from Honduras. After a 2 year stint on the oil ship, Bob went to the Bay Islands in Honduras. There he purchased a hull and built a 40-foot Lobster diving boat. He settled in the area located on the northeastern coast of Honduras. On April 30, 1986, he married Romanita Rosales. Bob and Romanita remained in Honduras until deciding to come home. After a short stay in Florida, they returned to Monroe County, Iowa, where they have remained.

Bob enjoyed being outdoors, camping, and hunting mushrooms. He was an exceptionally talented woodworker and carved many different items, including many walking sticks, people, houses and anything else he put his mind to. He enjoyed spending time with his family and friends. Bob loved to travel and thoroughly enjoyed meeting and visiting with people from all over the world. He was very social, enjoyed visiting with others and never knew a stranger.

Bob is survived by his wife of 33 years, Romanita; a brother, Howard (Lois) Thomas; 2 sisters, Mimi Tharp and Karen "Kitty" (Buddy) Stafford; and a brother-in-law, Matt Watson. Bob is also survived by several nieces, nephews, cousins, and good friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Geneva; and 3 sisters, Gladys VanDolah, Jeanne Frye, and Donna Watson.

Visitation will be held from 11:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. on Monday, September 2, 2019, at the Tharp Funeral Home in Albia, with Bob's family present from 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. to greet family and friends.

A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, September 3, 2019, at the Tharp Funeral Home in Albia, with Dan Smith officiating. Burial with military rites provided by the American Legion of Albia, Melrose and Lovilia will follow services at the Hiteman Cemetery.

An open memorial has been established and will be determined at a later date.

Cemetery Details

Hiteman Cemetery

Hiteman, IA

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 2. 11:00 AM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Tharp Funeral Home
116 Benton Ave.
Albia, IA 52531
(641) 932-3129
<https://www.tharpfh.com/>

Memorial Service

SEP 3. 10:30 AM (CT)

Tharp Funeral Home
116 Benton Ave.
Albia, IA 52531
(641) 932-3129
<https://www.tharpfh.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ Robert "Bob" Joseph Thomas

January 30, 2023 at 05:06 AM



“ Robert "Bob" Joseph Thomas

January 30, 2023 at 02:53 AM



“ Romanita - I just now found out about Bob's passing. I have and always will remember you two coming to Bob's appointments at the VA. I loved seeing both of you. Your love for each other showed so brightly! So many things happened between you two to create a wonderful relationship. When Bob first started wood carving, he made me a black & white cow, which I kept on my desk until I retired from the VA. I also remember you sneaking your little dog in your shoulder bag when you came for Bob's appointment. I hope all is well with you. Keep your chin up & remember all the great times you guys had together! Take care- from the long haired, secretary at the VA, Kelly!

Kelly (Nutting) Langebartels - September 24, 2019 at 07:14 AM



“ I don't have many good memories of my tour in Vietnam, but one of my favorite memories is, one day, in 1968, this GI stuck his head in the window of the 6'x8' mailroom I worked in and said "hi Mickey". It was Bob. It was so great to see someone from home. Bob figured out a way to find me and stopped by to say hi. I am sorry for your loss....Mick Anderson.

Mick Anderson - September 10, 2019 at 12:13 AM

RL

“ We had a great time with our entry "a Rocket" in the Science Fair Project.

Thanks for being a great friend. Will remember you always.

Richard Lewis - "Class of 64"

Richard Lewis - September 02, 2019 at 05:52 PM

PJ

“ Bobby and Romanita would come to visit at least once a month. They almost had homemade fudge or baked goods, with a yorkie or 3 with them. You will be missed Bobby.

Patti Jones - September 02, 2019 at 05:24 PM

YS

“ So sad to hear about this. I remember Bob from when I was young and we came to Iowa in the summers. He was a very sweet guy and I know his family will miss him. Prayers for comfort and peace to all.

Yvonne Tharp Shertzer

Yvonne T Shertzer - September 01, 2019 at 07:19 PM

MS

“ I talked with Bob at our 50th HS Class reunion and our topics were classmates, a little about travel and he asked about my life. I wish I would have asked him more questions about his experi

Marilyn Regina Barron Schnell - August 31, 2019 at 06:37 PM

MS

“ I talked with Bob

Marilyn Regina Barron Schnell - August 31, 2019 at 06:34 PM