



## Mr. Robert Andrew "Bob" Middlecamp

November 18, 1938 - March 25, 2023

If you knew Robert (Bob) Middlecamp, an adventure was near or a story waiting to be told. In his 84 years, 48 spent in San Luis Obispo, he had plenty of stories to tell.

Bob was born, along with his twin brother Richard (Dick), in 1938 in Colusa, CA. Two years of devastating floods sent his parents, Lionel and Betty, back to San Luis Obispo. As the twins grew, they were so alike it was difficult to tell who had created the current mischief! For formal learning they walked to the beginning of what is now Righetti Road, to the one room Independence School. One time they took canteens to school and, at the end of the day, they announced to the class that they had dropped lizards in the water tank and everyone else had been drinking "lizard water!" The next scene is the teacher, Helen Desario, reaching for the ever present willow switches.

Bob played guitar and sang songs by the Kingston Trio or Roger Miller, often in harmony with his twin brother Dick and college friends at nearby Avila Beach. He met his wife, Kathleen Noël Hill, in San Luis Obispo and they married at the Mission Santa Barbara, a union of over 62 years. He gave up his motorcycle after barely surviving collision in the era when helmets were the exception. The family grew to include three children and Noël was there, every step of the way, helping everyone find their place in the adventures.

Bob graduated from Cal Poly (SLO) in 1962 with an Ag Engineering degree and immediately went to work for the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture. Much of his work was project management for construction of flood control structures for

the Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) throughout the western United States. He worked in California, Colorado, Washington, D.C., New Mexico and Oregon. He retired from overseeing western SCS construction projects at the Western National Technical Center (WNTC) in Portland in 1995. (His children also remember the many houses he lived in that have concrete patios he framed and poured.) After retiring Bob also spent a summer in Alaska consulting on a flood control project.

His passion for cars and bargaining led him to trade vehicles every few years. When the freeway through San Luis Obispo was new there were stories of late night drag races between bridges exactly a quarter-mile apart. All his children learned to change a car's oil, and he helped them replace engines, also giving them each "birthday present" tools.

Bob's father and uncles loved to hunt and his mother loved to fish, skills Bob would pursue for all his life. Annual hunting trips included his dad, Uncle Ernie, Dick, and Dick's son Brent. Trips ranged from the Channel Islands off the coast of California to snow swept mountains and prairies in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, British Columbia and tree stands in Texas. He also enjoyed mentoring young hunters through the California Deer Association. Bags of home cured venison jerky were always treasured presents.

Robert and brother Richard served as radio operators in the Air Force Reserve, joining after hearing stories of their uncles Elwyn and Maurice Righetti, who flew combat missions in World War II. Bob learned to fly a single engine aircraft from Uncle Maurice but gave it up when smog closed in at the Riverside airport and he had to find a "lucky" hole in the haze to land.

In retirement he was active golfing, farming, and selling olive oil and fruit at Farmers' Market. Bob left us in the early hours of March 25, 2023.

Bob is survived by his wife Noël, son David and wife Linda Middlecamp, daughter

Audrey and husband Tod Berlinger, daughter Heidi Henson and husband Larry Pachtman, Grandchildren Ezra and wife Jaki, Scott, Sienna, and Quinn, great grandchildren Jack and Julian.

He is survived by brothers Richard Middlecamp and wife Yvonne, Mark Middlecamp, sister Merry and husband George Kelley, brother-in-law Ken L. Hill and wife Judy, and sister-in-law Karilyn Gomez and husband Tony, numerous cousins, a niece and seven nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents Lionel H. Middlecamp and Elizabeth "Betty" (Righetti) Middlecamp. Donations can be made in his memory to Cal Poly's Lionel Middlecamp Memorial Scholarship or a charity of your choice. A Celebration of Life will be held later this spring.

# Tribute Wall



“ *This is a big loss, Bob was a super nice guy that I knew forever, it seems. When he and Noel married, I was in their wedding in Santa Barbara... will always remember that special day. When my husband met Bob just a year ago, they connected right away and shared many stories of Vietnam and books too. Please know that my thoughts are prayers are with you Noel.*

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**MaryEllen Lamothe** - April 05, 2023 at 04:34 PM



“ *My Dad was always up for a joke or a smile. He loved his life as a rancher both early and late in life and loved all the people he met through that work. He was never afraid of hard work and it showed all the way through his life time with his career with the Soil Conservation Service or working at the family ranch with his parents, siblings, children, grandchildren and niece and nephews, weather it was branding cattle or picking oranges or learning a new skill like growing olives for olive oil. You will be remembered with love and respect. Your loving daughter Audrey*

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**Tod Berlinger** - March 30, 2023 at 07:24 PM