



Robert R. Gentzel

July 7, 1946 - March 16, 2016

Robert R. Gentzel died on March 16, 2016 at his home in New Cumberland following a year-long battle with lung cancer. He was 69.

Known as Bob, he was born in Harrisburg on July 7, 1946 to parents Richard I. Gentzel and Helen (Coffey) Gentzel. He spent his early years in Harrisburg before his family moved to State College. He graduated from State College Area High School in 1964 and earned a degree in journalism from Penn State in 1968.

At Penn State Bob met his future wife Jane Prall. In fall of 1968 they were married at their friends' New York City apartment in a small ceremony. Years later, Bob loved to recount how after the wedding he and Jane walked with their friends to the deli down the street for the post-wedding meal. Bob would smile thinking about the event and comment, "What can you say, it was the 60's!". Bob and Jane went on to have two sons, Matthew and Kevin.

Following college, Bob took a job as a reporter with the Harrisburg Patriot News. He worked there for 13 years, starting with a brief stint as police reporter before moving on to covering the West Shore, and eventually leading the Carlisle Bureau. He later served in a variety of communications and policy roles with state agencies including the offices of the Attorney General, Auditor General, and Treasurer. Bob finished his career in 2011 with the State Employee Retirement System as the Director of Communications and Policy. Bob loved his work, for which he received several awards and recognitions, and is fondly remembered as a mentor by many of his colleagues over the

years.

In addition to work, Bob gave time generously to his community and friends. He served for almost 25 years on the New Cumberland Zoning Hearing Board and was chairman for the last seven. One of his favorite pursuits was keeping up with the news, especially Pennsylvania politics, and he occasionally acted as editor for friends and former colleagues writing books and publications on the topic. Bob also donated time to the Penn State College of Communications as an informal advisor.

Outside of work, Bob loved golf and travel, photography and Penn State football, ancestry research, the natural world and the written word. Perhaps his favorite activity was spending time at the family cabin in Pine Grove Furnace State Park. He and Jane purchased the property in 1990 and spent the next 25 years lovingly maintaining and improving the cabin. There, on any given weekend, he might be seen patching the cabin walls, taking a mountain bike ride with Jane to photograph wild flowers, going fishing with his kids (and later grandkids), or simply sitting by the fire with a good book. The annual Thanksgiving meal and touch football game at the cabin are treasured events for several generations of the family.

He is survived by Jane, his wife of 47 years, his son Matthew and wife Erin, two beloved granddaughters, Isla and Paige (to whom Bob was 'Poppy'), his brother David and wife Terry and brother Thomas and wife Sherrin. Bob was preceded in death by his son Kevin who passed away in 2010.

A memorial service will be held on Sunday March 20th at The Lodge at Liberty Forge 3804 Lisburn Rd, Mechanicsburg. Friends and family will be received from 1:00-3:00 pm and the memorial service will begin at 3:00 pm. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, PO Box 897, Hershey, PA 17033-0897. The family asks that donation be marked for Small Cell Lung Cancer research. Alternatively donations may be made to the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace via the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation at: www.z2systems.com/np/clients/ppff/donation.jsp?campaign=70 Musselman Funeral Home, Lemoyne, is handling arrangements.