



Robert Duane Zollinger

December 3, 1930 - November 18, 2023

Robert Duane Zollinger, age 92 of Dayton, TN, was born December 3, 1930, in Loveland, CO, and died November 18, 2023. He was the son of Genoa Zollinger and Ellen (Howe) Zollinger and was the sixth of eight children.

Robert spent his early years near Loveland and Estes Park, CO. His mother died at a young age, and at the age of 12, “Bobby” moved to Knoxville, TN, to attend Little Creek Academy, a Seventh-Day Adventist self-supporting boarding school. At Little Creek he learned to appreciate the purpose and value of true Christian education. It was there he also learned the skills of construction, agriculture, and education. These formative years of his learning set the foundation for all that followed in his life.

Bob graduated from Little Creek Academy in 1948 and then joined the Little Creek staff and worked as a Bible teacher and dean of boys. In 1951 he was drafted into the Army, serving two years stationed in Germany with the occupational troops. Then in 1953, Bob joined the pioneering staff at the Little Creek extension school (Laurelbrook Academy) in Dayton, TN. There he met his future wife, Ruthie Coulter. They married in 1958.

Bob and Ruthie dedicated themselves to Christian education and spent the remainder of their lives at Laurelbrook. During those years they raised three children, two sons and a daughter. He received his BA in Religion from

Southern Missionary College in 1979. Bob served 43 years as President of Laurelbrook, and it was his desire that students who attended Laurelbrook Academy would learn to be mission minded, help make the world a better place, and to finish God's work. Bob and Ruthie's mission was to acquaint young people with God through nature and His Word, to develop in them an appreciation for vocational work, and to instill in them a sense of duty for Christian mission.

Bob retired from Laurelbrook in 2000 and continued to serve Laurelbrook in multiple roles, participated in mission trips, was president of The Layman Foundation, and initiated and fostered the E. A. Sutherland Education Association – an accrediting association for self-supporting schools. He spent his final years mentoring staff, gardening, and spending time with his children and grandchildren. He had multiple talents and hobbies and enjoyed teaching his grandchildren his love of art.

He was an active member of the Laurelbrook Seventh Day Adventist Church in Dayton, TN.

Robert was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Ruthie ('16), of 58 years and his granddaughter, Jessica Zollinger ('22), his eight siblings George Zollinger ('63), Shirley Chastain ('17), Betty Ashlock ('20), Glenn Zollinger ('13), Leland Zollinger ('19), Edwin Zollinger ('92), and Beecher Zollinger ('19). He is survived by three children: Robert Duane Zollinger of Dayton, TN, Russell David (Kristi) Zollinger of Dayton, TN, and Joy Lynne Zollinger of Baltimore, MD; five grandchildren, Thomas and Grace Zollinger, Lauryn, Sarah, and Ava Zollinger; two great-grandchildren, Cameron Rowe and Zoe Richardson; many nieces and nephews; and countless former students, colleagues, and friends.

A service celebrating the life of Robert Zollinger will be held on Saturday, January 27, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. at Laurelbrook Academy Auditorium.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations may be made to the Laurelbrook Alumni Pioneer Memorial Endowment Fund, which assists worthy students in attending Laurelbrook Academy.

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=FY2YESV2GGMD6

Please share your memories and photos of Robert on his online guest register at www.vanderwallfh.com

The family is being cared for by Vanderwall Funeral Home in Dayton, TN.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JAN 27. 3:00 PM (ET)

Laurelbrook Academy Auditorium
114 Campus Dr
Dayton, TN 37321

Tribute Wall

PT

“ Thomas and I will never forget Mr. Bob and Mrs. Ruthie and their impact on our lives. Looking forward to Jesus' return to take us all Home.

Thomas and Paula Chung

Paula and Thomas - January 24, 2024 at 08:05 PM

PC

“ Paula C. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert Duane Zollinger.

Paula C. - January 24, 2024 at 08:02 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Robert Duane Zollinger.



January 24, 2024 at 08:02 PM



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November 23, 2023 at 09:26 PM

MC

“ He told me once that I could discipline the students as much as I loved them.

That was so wise! Thank you mr.Bob!

mario coulombe - November 22, 2023 at 02:59 PM

AT

“ I remember sitting in the Laurelbrook Academy's auditorium listening each school year to him talking about a good name is better than great riches from the book of Proverbs in the Bible. I remember he was always slow to talk about any topic. He was a very patient person, who allowed God to use for His glory.

Annette Thrower - November 22, 2023 at 06:57 AM

CP

He was a very kind and godly man

Carol Bedwell Petry - November 22, 2023 at 08:57 PM

VW

I remember so many times Mr Bob spoke to us. He had so much to teach us an he'll be sorely missed

Vanessa wyrick - December 04, 2023 at 02:37 PM

KL

He used to tell me the names of herbs I found in the forest at Laurelbrook. Whenever I got sick I only trusted him to tell me what to do. I am still sure he knew pretty much everything. I was a staff kid at first, then moved to the dorm. I'll miss just knowing he's out there.

Kathy Lang - December 19, 2023 at 06:37 PM

EC

I remember Bob and Ruthie.Was a rebellious 7th grade student about 1958 ? Got expelled and I now wish I had stuck it out.Was learning so much in construction trades.Godly Man

Ernest B.(Benny) Copley - February 01, 2024 at 02:38 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Vanderwall Funeral Home, Inc. - November 21, 2023 at 12:57 PM