



## Robert William Bryant

December 22, 1941 - December 9, 2023

Robert William “Bob” Bryant of St. George, Utah passed away on December 9th, 2023. He was 81 years old. Bob was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on December 22, 1941, to Nellie Marie Burnett Bryant and Oscar Roosevelt Bryant. He graduated from Washington High School in Sioux Falls in 1959 and went on to LeTourneau Technical Institute, now LeTourneau University, a small Christian college in Longview, Texas. While at LeTourneau Tech, Bob worked at the R. G. LeTourneau, Inc. factory, which manufactured heavy construction equipment.

Following his freshman year, he worked one year in construction in the East Texas oil fields before transferring to the University of Nebraska – Lincoln where he obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering, graduating in 1965. Bob then spent 50 years working and consulting for consumer-owned electric utilities.

Bob and Barbara Gayle Bates married in 1962. They had one daughter, Cheryl. Patricia A “Patty” Trenkle “rescued” and married Bob in 1980, becoming his life partner.

Bob is predeceased by his parents and brother William Frederick Bryant. He is survived by wife Patty, daughter Cheryl Olivas (Eric) of Amarillo, TX, and grandsons Alekzander and Zachary Olivas.

Bob's education was focused on manufacturing engineering. Following graduation, he was lured into the consumer-owned electric utility industry where he spent his entire career manufacturing and delivering electricity to consumers. Bob began his career at Consumers Public Power District's (now Nebraska Public Power District) Sheldon Station – Hallam Nuclear Power Facility, a combined coal, natural gas, and nuclear electricity generating plant.

In 1968, Bob joined Colorado-Ute Electric Association located in Montrose, Colorado where he was responsible for planning, constructing, and operating large coal-fired generating plants and a few small hydroelectric plants. In 1972, Bob was thrust into the position of restructuring a half-billion dollar, four-owner generating project that had fallen into deep financial difficulties early in the construction phase. Bob completed the project and went on to do workouts, workarounds, and forward-thinking risk management for consumer-owned electric utilities and others. Bob liked helping people and never said no when someone asked for help with a project or a problem.

In 1984 he was appointed president and general manager of Golden Spread Electric Cooperative located in Amarillo, Texas. Bob developed Golden Spread from an association of small rural electric generating cooperatives to an A-rated wholesale supplier to 16 distribution cooperatives serving a large portion of West Texas and the Panhandle of Oklahoma. Golden Spread became the first electric cooperative to be regulated continuously by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. (Buckeye Power was first but surrendered its FERC tariffs when it obtained loans from the Rural Electrification Administration.)

Bob smiled long when he learned that his former boss, who had been general counsel for the state public utility commission, and the in-house lawyer who had previously served as a commissioner on the public utility commission were reported to have said, "Bryant will never get the FERC to accept

jurisdiction of Golden Spread.”

Bob served on and was president of the Amarillo Club and the Rick Husband Amarillo International Airport Advisory Board. He was involved in many committees of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Texas Electric Cooperatives, the Colorado Rural Electric Association, and the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI). He served as a director and secretary on the board of ACES Power Marketing, a nationwide energy management company headquartered in Carmel, Indiana. He was a Rotarian.

Bob represented electric cooperatives as a witness in legal matters before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and state utility commissions in Colorado, Texas, and Arkansas. He appeared as a witness in cases in the United States District Court of Colorado and before state courts and legislative committees in Colorado and Texas.

Among many awards, Bob received the Electric Power Research Institute’s First Commercial Use Award for leading the installation of a modern fabric filter “baghouse” to remove post-combustion particles from exhaust gases before they leave the powerplant gas stack. EPRI is the research arm of the U.S. Electric Utility industry.

Bob’s interest in flying was sparked when, as a high school student, he won a raffle for a flight with Cliff Foss in his Piper Cub. Cliff was the brother of Bob’s high school band teacher Ardean Foss and brother of Joe Foss, a WWII fighter pilot Ace who went on to become Governor of South Dakota.

While at LeTourneau, Bob was invited by Evelyn and R. G. LeTourneau to fly on the company’s aircraft from Longview, Texas to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and back. LeTourneau owned two Douglas A-26 Invader aircraft that

LeTourneau had purchased after the war. Bob rode in the co-pilot's seat.

When Bob learned that the University of Nebraska had a flying club for faculty, employees, and students, Bob told his mother that he wanted to learn to fly. "Absolutely not," was his mother's response. So, Bob being Bob, promptly joined the club and worked to obtain his private pilot's license. Later, when his mother came to Lincoln, he asked her if she would like to go for a Sunday drive, one that ended at Lincoln Municipal Airport with an airplane ride. Afterward, Bob asked his mom how she liked the ride. "The ride was fine," she replied, "but I didn't like you saying whiskey all the time." The airplane was a Piper Cherokee 180 with the tail number N7151W. Bob later concluded he might have selected one of the other club airplanes that didn't have a call sign ending in "whiskey." Bob went on to earn his commercial license with instrument and multi-engine ratings, flew many types of aircraft, and ultimately owned a twin-engine Cessna 421 Golden Eagle.

Bob loved a good spoof whether pulled on him (coworkers pulled many on Bob) or by him in return on some unsuspecting sole. After retirement, he had to hunt for "targets," who sometimes hunting back. Friends Diane and Fred Marshall backed a U-Haul truck up to Patty and Bob's beach house door, sent Bob a picture, and asked if the truck should be there, leading Bob to think the house was being robbed.

A Bob favorite: In 2013, Patty and Bob took MacDougal, their West Highland White Terrier to Alexandria, VA to walk in the Scottish Walk Parade, which is the first weekend in December. The trip began at the beach house in Ilwaco, WA, went to Amarillo, then Alexandria and back through Austin, TX where Patty had state business (She was chair of the Texas Commission on the Arts). Arriving at Washington Reagan Airport, the baggage claim area was packed. Bob got all of the luggage and stacked it on a cart. While waiting for Mac's Sky Kennel, which was checked as luggage, he struck up a

conversation with a nice lady who appeared to be in her early 60s. When the Sky Kennel arrived on the conveyor belt, an airline agent handed it to Bob. The nice lady asked, "Oh, is it a doggie or a kitty"? "He's a doggie," Bob replied. "Oh, I have to see him," said the nice lady. Bob turned the cage so he could see in but she could not and said, "He's missing," "Nooo," said the nice lady. Bob turned the cage so she could see, and she remarked in a loud voice that brought the area to silence except for the running belt, "Oh my God he is missing." "Well, actually he's sitting over by the wall next to his mom (Patty). He rides in-cabin," Bob responded. Bob placed the kennel on top of the luggage and the nice lady remarked, "You have a lot of luggage." We are staying two nights (actually, about six)," said Bob. "I'm not believing ANYTHING you say", said the nice lady with a smile.

It's Bob's hope that any gathering of family and friends will involve stories and laughter about things he did in life.

Yes, as you probably suspect, Bob wrote this himself. As a former Boy Scout, he followed the Boy Scout Motto: Be Prepared. That served him well through life, work, and especially in his flying.

A private memorial service will be held later.