



# Robert Vincent Wackell

APR 2, 1934 - NOV 28, 2023



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**R**obert (Bob) V. Wackell, 89, of Punta Gorda, FL passed away Tuesday November 28, 2023 with his family lovingly by his side. Bob was born and raised in Worcester, MA to Vincent J. and Catherine (Connole) Wackell. Bob is survived by two sons David (wife Sumiyo Toribe) Wackell, and James (wife Erin Garwood) Wackell; daughter Pamela (partner Scot Donohue) Wackell; six grandchildren Tacent, Yula, and Koda (David Wackell), Kathryn (James Wackell), Daniel & Quinn (Scot Donohue), as well as countless family members and friends. Bob was predeceased by his wife of 50 years, Jane L (Ryan) Wackell, brother, Richard F. Wackell, and sisters Barbara Wackell and Gayle Mardirossian.

Growing up, Bob lived on Vernon Hill in Worcester, MA where he spent long days playing in the park and dreamt of bottomless milkshakes. He enjoyed skiing the rocky cliff behind Prov Junior High and adventures on his bike to places as far away as Mt. Wachusett. He loved his paper route and earned enough money to buy a Willys Whippet in need of repair from a student at WPI before he could drive. He paid an older kid in the neighborhood to push it home with his car and rented a garage around the corner from his house to begin working on it. Soon he was driving kids around Worcester but had to sell the car when his neighbor needed the garage space, and he couldn't tell his parents about his purchase.

Bob enlisted in the Air Force in June of 1952 and was stationed at Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado for basic training. He spent time in Nevada, Washington and Arizona, where he became a Munitions Specialist, testing nuclear weapons. Although his top-secret clearance prohibited him from leaving the country, he filed paperwork that slipped through and allowed him to embark to Europe and attend the 1955 24 Hours of Le Mans. Serving under General LeMay, a race fan in his own right, Bob was provided leave to attend the race. He visited, England, Italy, France and Scotland. His most significant duty assignment was with the 3918th Supply Squadron APO 194 in Bicester, England. He earned National Service Defense and Good Conduct medals before being discharged in 1956.



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He returned to Worcester to help his family following his father's passing. Bob met his wife, Jane L. Ryan of Webster, MA in early 1963 at the Coronado Hotel Cocktail Lounge in Worcester, MA and was married in 1966. When asked how they met, they would always say, "We met in a revolving door and have been going around together ever since." Upon their wedding day, Jane and Bob settled into the small town of Millbury, MA on Singletary Lake, which was ideally located between both their parents' homes.

Bob opened Grand Prix motors in Webster Square, servicing Porsche, Volkswagen and other foreign makes. Bob and Jane were a great team, marketing Grand Prix Motors by placing flyers on all the sports cars they found at the various college campuses in Worcester. Bob out-fixed and sold the local Atamian Porsche-Audi dealership in his first few years of business and was eventually recruited to work there. He went on to work at numerous Porsche dealerships in Boston and Rhode Island, teaching The Porsche Factory School and working for Porsche of America. He drove the first 914 off the ship onto American soil in NJ and back to Boston. The car was marketed exclusively as a Porsche model in the US, and he had to modify the original Porsche VW badge by removing the VW portion of the logo before it appeared at the dealership.

The 1st of their 3 children was born in 1968, and soon thereafter the demands of family life beckoned Bob to work closer to home. Through the children's formative years, Bob worked at Imported Cars of Worcester, servicing Mazda, Volvo and BMW. He also began to dabble in real estate, buying, renovating and selling multi-family homes in Worcester. This became a family affair where he passed along his knowledge and work ethic to his children. From construction to plumbing to electrical and everything in between, Bob was his own handyman.

Bob opened Sprint Lube & Repair in Worcester, MA with his partner Greg in 1988. They soon expanded and opened a second location in Milford, MA. The shops serviced 50+ cars a day on busy days and employed over a dozen people. Bob and Jane began to snowbird in 2003, living part time in Pompano Beach, FL. The two of them enjoyed the sunshine and taking walks on the beach to Hillsboro Lighthouse. Bob and Jane decided to permanently move to FL in 2011 when Bob retired, settling in Punta Gorda, FL. They joined the Elks Club and enjoyed socializing with close friends and going out dancing on Friday nights. They cherished facetime chats, pictures, videos and visits with their children and grandchildren.

Through the years, family vacations were taken all over the Northeast, including Lake Sebago and The White Mountains with grandparents and extended family. Frequent trips to the races and



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other automotive sporting events were always on the docket. Other memorable summers were spent at Lake George, Story Town and Six Gun City. Water always seemed to be the draw, with frequent trips to Charlestown, RI where the family enjoyed quahogging, crabbing and waterskiing on Ninigret Pond with Jane's side of the family. Bob and Jane purchased a condo on North Topsail Beach, NC in the 80's. This became a vacation spot and place of relaxation for the whole family until 2004 when their interest changed to Belize. Holidays always involved road trips to visit family, frequently leaving one family event to make it to another. Weeknight dinners and Sunday church visits with grandparents were another staple.

Bob will be missed dearly by family, friends and all who knew him. May those he touched continue to hold a piece of him close to their hearts.

A Service and Celebration of Bob's life will be held in Massachusetts in the Spring of 2024.



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Robert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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