

A Service of
Remembrance and Thanksgiving
For the Life of

Robert Alan Reitz
September 8, 1926 – March 22, 2023



Skinner Memorial Chapel
Carleton College
Saturday, April 29, 2023, 2:00pm

Prelude

"Rhosymedre" R. Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
"Sonata No. 4 in D Major" G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
1. Adagio 2. Allegro
"Clair de Lune" Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Welcome and Invocation

Carolyn Fure-Slocum

Hymn

"For the Beauty of the Earth"

New Century Hymnal #28

Remembrances

Doug Reitz
Derek Reitz

Reading

Sadie Reitz

Selection from "The Sense of Wonder" by Rachel Carson

Remembrances

Rich Noer
Bob Kolenkow
Bruce Thomas
Cindy Blaha

Hymn "Praise the Source of Faith and Learning"
(Sung to the alternate tune, Hyfrydol)

NCH #411

Remembrances

Steve Obaid '73
David Ignat '63
Patti Dresel Sparks '75

Reading "Epitaph on my own friend, and my father's friend, William Muir in Tarbolton" by Robert Burns

Andrew Baldwin

Closing Words and Benediction

Carolyn Fure-Slocum

Postlude

"Pilgrims' Chorus" R. Wagner, arr. T.D. Williams (from "Tannhaeuser")

Following the service, you are invited to Great Hall for a reception and continued conversations about Bob.

The Reverend Carolyn Fure-Slocum, Carleton College Chaplain
Theo Wee, organist, First United Church of Christ
Andrea Een, violinist, Professor Emerita of Music, St. Olaf College

Robert Alan Reitz

Robert Alan Reitz died in Northfield, MN, on March 22, 2023, at age 96 after a long and productive life as a physics professor, U. S. Navy volunteer, world traveler, Northfield community contributor, gardener and beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

Bob was born on September 8, 1926, in Lakewood, OH to John Christopher and Irma Reitz (nee Volk). Bob graduated as class valedictorian from his Cleveland High School in June 1944 and influenced by his brother John, decided to major in Physics at Case Institute of Technology. College life was quickly interrupted, however, when he volunteered for the U. S. Navy in its Electronics Technician's program in February 1945. After training in sonar, radar and electronic equipment repair, Bob became a lab instructor for U. S. Navy trainees at Navy Pier in Chicago.

Bob graduated from Case as class valedictorian in physics in June 1949. With the assistance of the chairman of the physics department at Case, Bob was awarded a teaching assistantship at the University of Illinois. It is through this initial exposure to the joys of teaching that Bob became interested in a lifetime of teaching and academia.

With a newly awarded Atomic Energy Commission Fellowship, he decided to pursue his Ph.D. in physics. Bob conducted his Ph.D. research in the Betatron Lab under his thesis adviser, Gilberto Bernardini, a distinguished Italian physicist who was visiting the University of Illinois. The research involved analyzing the charged particles emitted from the bombardment of liquefied light elements such as heavy hydrogen or helium.

While analyzing his Ph.D. research data, a former fellow student contacted him regarding a teaching position at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. After visiting and falling in love with the campus, he was offered and accepted a position as an Assistant Professor there for the start of the school year in September 1954. Soon after establishing himself at Carleton, Bob was appointed Chair of the Physics Department, a position which he held until 1971 and then later in the 1980's. He was instrumental in planning and securing funding for a new Biology and Physics building, Olin Hall, at Carleton in 1961. He later chaired the committee that developed Carleton's current governance system that involves students, faculty, and staff at every level. He oversaw the addition of faculty in Physics and incorporated Astronomy to create a combined department of Physics and Astronomy. This resulted in an increased number of majors going on for graduate study and for many years giving Carleton a number one ranking in the country in the number of physics majors at liberal arts colleges subsequently receiving Ph.Ds. in the field.

Over the years, Bob received numerous grants from the National Science Foundation for research in solid-state physics including an NSF Faculty Fellowship for a sabbatical leave at the Physikalisches Institut of the Technische Hochschule in Stuttgart Germany. Additional sabbatical leaves were at Stanford University in 1971, at the University of San Diego in 1979 and the University of Washington in the fall of 1987. Bob was honored for his teaching by a former student who established the Kolenkow-Reitz Fellowship that provides research support for Carleton students working with non-Carleton science and math faculty at another institution during the summer or over winter break.

Bob retired in 1990 after 36 years as a Physics professor at Carleton College and became active in the Northfield community. Bob had been supporting Rotary Club's Ambassadorial Scholarship Program, which he continued to support in retirement. Additionally, he served as President of the Northfield Senior Citizens and was instrumental in development of the Northfield Community Resource Center.

Bob met Joan Nelke (nee Zink) in high school, they married in 1948 while he was at Case Institute of Technology, and they had four children. Bob was devoted to his family, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and shared with them his love for science, travel, camping, German Opera, home grown food from his garden, and the free-flowing discussion of politics at the dinner table during the turbulent 1960's & 1970's. He and Joan were devoted members of the First United Church of Christ in Northfield. They were avid world travelers including trips to Europe, Asia, Australia, Central America, and South America.

Bob was preceded in death by his wife Joan and by his brother John (Patricia) of Ann Arbor, MI and is survived by Bob and Joan's four children and their families: David (Carol Schrader) of Edina, MN and their two sons, Karl and Eric; Janet (the late Ric Boge) of Bothell, WA and their two daughters Kari and Sadie; Linda (Paul Baldwin) of Seattle, WA and their children Amanda and Andrew; Douglas (Charlotte Pavelka) of Libertyville, IL and their children Diedre and Derek. Bob is survived by eleven great-grandchildren.

Memorial gifts can be made in Bob's memory to the Kolenkow-Reitz Endowed Fund for Science Research at Carleton College. Donations can be made by check mailed to the Gift Accounting Office at Carleton College, One North College Street, Northfield, MN 55057.