

# Robert L. Fraley



## Obituary

Robert Leland Fraley was born December 10, 1923, in Akron, Ohio to Mildred (née Pryor) and Herschel C. Fraley. He was the first of three children, Betty Vannoy (née Fraley) and Carolyn Morrison (née Fraley). Robert and his wife of 17 years, Joyce Owens Fraley, passed away peacefully a few hours apart. She in the evening of January 21, and he on the morning of January 22, 2021, after contracting the Covid-19 virus.

Bob grew up in northern Ohio during the years of the Depression. He learned carpentry and construction skills by working alongside his father, learned music skills by accompanying his father to various churches to hold music schools, and learned the art of basic automobile mechanics by working on his Model A Ford. His entire family were committed Christians, his father and grandfathers all serving as elders in their local congregations.

He enlisted in the Army in 1943, took his training in Seattle and served in the India-Burma-China and North African theaters. While in the service Bob narrowly escaped death many times. His regiment loaded onto the HMT Rohna in Oran, Algeria, only to be transferred off the vessel hours before the Rohna left port and was sunk in the Mediterranean by a Luftwaffe Heinkel heavy bomber. These experiences profoundly shaped his theological understanding of the providence of God and cemented his view that "God causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (Mt. 5:45a)

At the end of World War II, Bob met Nila Louise Ervin, and the two fell in love and married on October 17, 1946. Using the G.I. Bill, Bob enrolled at Abilene Christian College in 1947 to pursue an undergraduate degree in Bible. While at ACC, Bob and Louise had Roberta (Bobbi) Louise Fraley in March 1949. In January 1954 they adopted 11 day old Deborah Ann Fraley, and their family was completed when Louise gave birth to their youngest daughter, Rita Lee Fraley in November 1957.





After receiving his degree, Bob became the local minister in Ironton, Ohio. He continued to serve the church as preacher, teacher, deacon, and elder for the next fifty years. He continued his seminary studies at Trinity Lutheran Seminary and at Pepperdine University. Bob eventually served as a minister at churches of Christ in Ohio, California, Tennessee, and Washington state.



In 1967 Bob accepted Norvel Young's offer to work as a student recruiter for Pepperdine University in Los Angeles, California. He became Dean of Admissions when the University moved to the new campus in Malibu and led the admissions department until his retirement in 1989.

Upon retiring, Bob and Louise moved to Woodinville, Washington, to be near Bobbi and her children Jason, Beth, Matt, and Ian. After ten years in Washington, they felt the need to be near their youngest daughter, Rita, and her little girls, Brittany and Kellye, so they relocated to Texas.

Louise was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer which finally took her life March 1, 2003, at their home in Bay City, Texas. Bob was heartbroken at her passing and returned to Washington State to mourn the loss with Bobbi and her family. That summer was spent working as a handyman and "consultant" at Camp Shiloh in New York. At the end of camp, back in Washington, Bob was a guest preacher at the South Whidbey Church of Christ. There he reconnected with Joyce Owens Baxter, a recent widow whom he had met previously. The two decided life was too short to be alone and married in Oak Harbor, Washington.

Bob and Joyce moved to Bay City, Texas to be near Rita, and remained there until Rita passed away from lung cancer in 2015, at the age of 57. Upon Rita's passing, Bob and Joyce moved to Joliet, Illinois, to live with Joyce's daughter, Judy, and her husband Tony Mravle. The temptation to live on a "farm" was too great so Bob and Joyce took up residence with Bobbi in New Jersey where they raised chickens, helped feed and water the horse and ride around in the Cub Cadet.



In 2018 Bob and Joyce moved to a retirement facility in Tampa, Florida, where they remained until their passing. They were lovingly cared for by Judy, Maggie Santana, a host of health aides, nurses, doctors, and cooks.

Bob leaves behind a sister, Carolyn Morrison of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, his daughters Bobbi Isbell of Stillwater, New Jersey and Debbie Fraley of West Milford, New Jersey. Bob is survived by six grandchildren Jason Isbell (Bronx, NY), Elizabeth Baker (Montclair, NJ), Matthew Isbell (Topanga, CA), Ian Vidrine-Isbell (La Mirada, CA), Brittany Acosta (Austin, TX), Kellye Maxie (Hattiesburg, MS), and their spouses, Allison, Brandon, Kelli, Bonnie, Nick, and Seth. Bob leaves behind fourteen great-grandchildren, Levi, Zeke, Sam, Nila, Zoe, Ronan, Isla, Ruby, Rosemarie, Ben, Lucas, Luisa, Magnolia and Mollie.

We join in mourning with the hundreds of thousands of other Americans who have lost family members to Covid-19. We take comfort in Bob and Joyce's peaceful passing together. We shed tears of gratitude for Bob's life, a life lived in humor, integrity, fidelity, service, and most importantly, faith. Because of him, we are confident in the promise of God, that the LORD does not slumber nor sleep, and neither does Bob.