Sossoman
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Robert James Brown

June 4, 1943 - March 12, 2023

Robert James Brown, 79, of Morganton, NC passed away on Sunday, March 12, 2023. He was born on June 4, 1943 in Chicago, IL to the late Mildred and Royal Nelson Brown. Bob, or "Brown Mountain Man," as he was affectionately known, was a man of many talents. He graduated from the University of Michigan with a Master's degree in Fishery/Biology. Bob was in the Peace Corps in Central America before settling in Morganton. He began his thirty-seven year career as a fisheries biologist with the NC Wildlife Resource Commission. He was also an active member of Trout Unlimited. Bob's love of wildlife often found him traveling to hunt elk, to fish and enjoy nature. He also loved to attend Antique Car Shows and tinkering on his 1936 Ford Pickup truck.

Bob is survived by his sons, Scott Brown (Susan) and Evan Brown (Emily); three beautiful grandsons, Logan and Legrand Brown and Bynum Norris; special friend, Dr. Don Hemstreet.

A memorial service will held 2pm Saturday, March 25, 2023 at St. Mary's / St. Stephen 's Episcopal Church with the Reverends Logan Lovelace and Scott Oxford officiating. The family will receive friends in the Parish Hall following the service.

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2 Corinthians 5:8 “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

So sorry to hear. Bob lived down the street from us, as a kid. He was so cute, so interesting and a good friend.

–Mary Ann McGowan Kain

The photo of Bob is how I remember him back in the 1980's when I started working with the WRC under Joe Mickey. Over several years we sometimes worked together on Lake James cove rotenones, stream electrofishing, and at meetings. Bob was always very generous to me with his time, knowledge, and experience. Yes, he was a legendary character. Passion-filled and even more eccentric than the rest of us fish heads. Yet these very characteristics have etched him into our collective memories. He will live on in the creeks, the woods, and our hearts. God rest your craggy soul, Bob Brown.

–Bennett Wynne

–Hugh Fletcher

–Jacob Rash

Scott and Evan, I have very fond memories of your dad. He was one of a kind, never to be duplicated. He was always adventurous, even in his late teens early twenty's. Even though Bob was six years my senior, he would always take the time to express interest in what I was up to, especially sports. I can remember

hanging around your Uncle Tom and your dad while they worked on Bobs 1957 Ford hardtop convertible (a real rarity), flatting beer caps to fill in rust spots along the rocker panels. Uncle Tom was just learning body mechanics, but your dad let him practice on his car. I can remember your mom and dad heading off to the Peace Corps in Nicaragua, where he set up fisheries for the government. Always remember the good time, because they are all that matter.

–Steve Pearson



Our thoughts and prayers are with family and friends. May God Bless!

–Larry & Linda Andrews

Scott and Evan I am so sorry for your loss. I haven't seen your Dad in a while and when I learned of his passing it hit me hard. Bob was a great man. I have such fond memories of deer hunting on his property over the years. I once scared a deer when I flipped a gun sight that was out of place. Bob was visiting mom and dad and took the time to show me what to do the next time that happened. I still practice that maneuver to this day. Bob loved a lifestyle that many of us wish we could accomplish. My dad also had such fond memories of electro fishing walleye with Bob on Lake James and of helping him construct his cabin. Keeping you all in my prayers.

–Scott McDougal

My thoughts and prayers are with all of you. Bob was a wonderful and special person. I'll cherish my memories of working with him in TU and NCWRC matters. There was no better person.

–Charlie Brady

My late husband , Jack and I enjoyed our visits with Bob when he visited his

relatives in the Glencoe / Appin area on Ontario Canada. I am sorry to hear of his passing and my prayers our with his family at this difficult time. Liz Fletcher Toronto

—Elizabeth Fletcher

I am sorry to hear about Bob's passing. I enjoyed working with him on several occasioons. He was always willing to help in any way he could. And he also was fun to be around whether it was a Wildlife meeting or work. He offered me tips on how to catch mountain trout because I was from the coast.

—Albert Little

Dear Scott and Evan, I salute you both for taking Bob back home, so he could surrender his spirit with dignity on Brown Mountain at the farm that he loved. This past year Bob and I spent several evenings sitting on the front porch listening to the coyotes at sunset. He really loved you boys and talked about you often. Bob was not only my lifelong friend and fishing buddy; he was my brother. As the biologist Bob and Joe Mickey patrolled Highway US 181 between Morganton and Linville during the reconstruction in the 1970's. They called in the regulators whenever they found that siltation barriers were not properly installed to protect the streams. They were the protectors of the Steele's Creek and Upper Creek watersheds, and without their diligence those streams might have been destroyed. They earned the nick names "Batman and Robin". Bob taught us all about catch and release trout fishing in the 1970's before it became a widespread practice. I'm sure he's up there with A.J. Johnson, Dr. Reid Bahnson, Joe McDade, and Jim Dean smiling down on all of us. Bob, you will be missed. Sincerely, Andy Aretakis (the Shoog)

—Andy Aretakis

This absolutely breaks my heart. For 28 years, this man was my stepdad. I, along with his other grandchildren, Zachary, Brandon, Chastin, Dakota, Dani Jean, and Tristan are also mourning his loss. We all have so many great memories of Bob

Triston are also mourning his loss. We all have so many great memories of Bob. He taught each of us to appreciate the simplicity of mountain life. He taught my son, Zach, his very first word. Not mama. Not dada. Antelope was his first word. All of the grandkids affectionately knew him as PawPaw Bob. He had a great relationship with all of the children mentioned until 2015. Unfortunately his marriage to my mother ended and we lost contact with Bob. My thoughts and prayers go out to my former stepbrothers, Scott and Evan, and their respective families.

–Amber Harlow

Always a great conversationalist. Could spend hours sitting on his front porch talking and hearing his stories. Good neighbor.

–Karl V. Walden

My heart aches for you, Scott and what you have to endure in the coming days, months and years. Please remember ALL the great memories of your Dad and know that I will be praying for you and your family. Thanks for being there when my Dad was called home, 24 years ago!

–Aimee Williams Marler

Many hours and good memories working trout fishing with Bob on the South Toe River. We have lost a good friend and a true sportsman. John Blanton, Retired Major NCWRC

–John Blanton

My sincere condolences to family and friends. I will always remember Bob and his stories around the table during our Fish Division meetings. Certainly was a treasure trove of fisheries tales for younger biologists like myself. May perpetual light shine upon him.

–Kevin Dockendorf

I will miss you greatly my friend. We shared many a night electrofishing on Lake James, Fontana and other mountain reservoirs as well as countless hours sampling NC trout streams. I always enjoyed our times together. God bless you

"Brown Mountain Man". Say "hey" to Bud Ratledge and Cape Cairns in heaven. Love you. Jay

Bob was someone I got know through my father Jim Dean when he and other close friends would celebrate the opening day of the trout season in Edgemont. This tradition started sometime back in the 1970s and continues to this day. He will be remembered for his witty humor, intellect and compassion for preserving nature. He, my father and others were instrumental in stopping the project years ago that would have ended what many have come to know and revere about the peaceful setting in and around Edgemont. Opening days will continue, but they will not be quite the same without him and the wonderful smell of his pipe that he often enjoyed. RIP buddy! And say hello to dad for me when you see him on the creek!

—Scott Dean & Nikki Upah

Bob was always a pleasure to be around and had many good stories to share. I offer my sincere condolences to the Family. The world has lost a great person. Larry Warlick, Retired Wildlife Biologist, NCWRC

—Larry Warlick

Met Bob when he visited Dick Hawes at Western Piedmont Community College. Very nice person and glad I got to meet him. Sorry for your loss.

—Barbara Curtis