

MEMORIALS



ROBERT E. FISCHER

By Steven W. Terlecki

In the early morning of May 17, 2017 at the age of 93, Bob Fischer peacefully abandoned his somewhat lugubrious and very well used body. The cause of death was a whole lotta life; to which he took full advantage. His last days were spent in the company of his loving wife, children, and friends.

Bob was raised in the Chicago area along with his older sister, Betty, and younger brother, Tom. We suspect this is when he developed his lifelong love for baseball, which later led him to a brief stint in the minor leagues.

In 1943 Uncle Sam made him an “offer he couldn’t refuse” and “Fish” became a member of the U.S. Army and served in the Pacific Theater, WWII. He was wounded in hand to hand combat, was part of the Battle of Manila that ended the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, and rose to the rank of sergeant through field promotions. We are forever indebted to him and his fellow soldiers for their service in the “war to end all wars.”

His love of the outdoors is probably what drew him to the University of Montana at Missoula where he earned his degree in geology. Early in his career he discovered a major uranium deposit while working for

someone else. It was then he quickly decided that he wasn’t really cut out to have others reap the financial benefits of his hard work. This independence led to a successful career in petroleum geology that spanned the next 54 years.

Bob and Johana were married in 1960; they had 4 children, Jay, Katy, Joan and Barry; 8 grandchildren (Jay) Morgan and Ally, (Joan) Ivy and Ian, (Barry) Tristan, Sophie, Rys and Quinn. Bob and Johana spent the next 57 years together as husband and wife.

He left his family with many indelible memories from vacations that often turned into unplanned adventures, a sample of those experiences include backing a motorhome into a geyser, practicing various golf and racket swings atop a Mexican pyramid, drinking four glasses of milk and finishing four additional meals at the 84th Bomber Squadron restaurant, a multitude of camping trips where he housed his “tribe” in a teepee, schlepping 15 pieces of luggage and 2 sets of golf clubs for 6 people on 3 flights to the Bahamas, forgetting the “wheelie dealie” on a plane, and the time he was “gonna hook ‘em to bits” when he inadvertently grabbed his fishing pole instead of his gun to protect his family. After years of the events described above, Bob’s children are forever thankful that he demonstrated creative problem-solving skills when things didn’t always go as planned and “ya just gotta roll with the punches.”

As if a wife, four children, and being self-employed weren’t enough, Bob always found time to volunteer as a Little League coach, be an Indian Guides leader, hit the links to keep his golf skills sharp, Wednesday bowling league, bird

hunting with one of his beloved hunting dogs many of whom he bred, raised and trained to be field champions and tend to, what we believe to be, the largest field of garlic in southeast Denver.

He leaves family and friends rich with memories, experiences and abs of steel from the laughter that often brought everyone to tears.

As an accomplished golfer, playing well into his 70s and we couldn’t find a duck blind large enough to accommodate his many friends. Please join us to raise a glass, share a memory, a laugh and meet some of the many people who were fortunate enough to be touched by the man we knew as “Fish.”

Because Bob never met a dog he didn’t like and in lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his name to the Denver Dumb Friends League (animal shelter and rescue facility), 303-751-5772.



JOHN SMALL, JR.

1931–2017

By Mike McMurtry

John Small, Jr was born on May 28, 1931, in Connecticut and died at his UK home on May 29, 2017, 86 years and 1 day later. He spent 40+ years in the oil and gas business with GSI, Chevron, Norsk-Hydro, IEDC and KUFPEC.

John's parents married on Black Thursday 1929—the day the United States stock market crashed. His father worked on Wall Street and never had difficulty remembering his wedding anniversary. John was born two years later, while the family moved in and around New York State, eventually ending up in the arts and crafts community in Woodstock, a place John came to love.

His father persuaded John not to pursue life as a farmer, so John went to Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1948 to study civil engineering. However, in his own words, “was ready for disaster with lathes or drills” and switched to geology. He opted for oil and gas after a traumatic trip down a coal mine and a pleasant summer job with a GSI seismic crew in Louisiana.

He graduated in 1952 with a diploma in one hand and a commission for the Korean War in the other. He was shipped to Japan with the Corps of Engineers for precombat training, during which time he visited Hiroshima and helped build a stage for Marilyn Monroe, only to be sent on maneuvers before her show. John spent two years on the front line in Korea, and was awarded a Bronze Star.

After his active service, John undertook a teaching fellowship at the University of Colorado.

In 1956, John went to work for Chevron for \$325 per month as a field geologist. He mapped the Rio Zulia anticline on which an oil field was subsequently found. He met and married his first wife, Marta, and was soon after transferred to Ecuador. With assistance from Chevron and the University of Colorado, he started and completed a Ph.D. on the petroleum geology of southwest Ecuador.

In subsequent years with Chevron, John had postings in New Orleans, Trinidad, West Texas, the Hague, Spain, and California.

He eventually left Chevron for Norsk Hydro in Oslo, just as Norsk Hydro was becoming an operator. John headed the team that acquired acreage in the Norwegian 4th Round, including three licenses that contained billion-barrel fields. It was here he met and married his second wife, Elisabeth.

When Norsk Hydro gave John an ultimatum—become Norwegian or leave, John left and came to England to join a company called IEDC, a company backed by the World Bank that wanted to help “third-world” countries. The 1986 oil-price crash ended its aspirations.

IEDC was absorbed into a company called KUFPEC and John moved to Kuwait. He was on vacation when Kuwait was invaded by Iraq in 1990. The company opened a London office and John persuaded the Kuwaitis to pay funds into employee accounts, saving many a mortgage and marriage.

He grew a beard to protest the invasion and commuted to an office near Victoria station. When hostages were released from Kuwait, he met them off the plane at Gatwick airport. The Press glanced at those exiting the arrivals gate, went straight past the hostages and asked John “How does it feel to be free?”

The KUFPEC offices in Kuwait were looted, but it was central files and computers that were taken. However, the Iraqis took from John's office 40 years of issues of the *AAPG Bulletin*, which formed a big part of the company's database in those pre-internet days.

John's Middle East adventure came to an end, when after a posting in Dubai, he retired to the UK. By this time, he'd visited at least 64 countries and lived in 11 for more than a year.

His life now settled into a pattern - wintering in the UK, and spending summers in Woodstock.

He turned detective in 2000 when a burglary at his Woodstock house removed many of his mother's sculptures and other artworks. For months, John tracked auctions on the web, alerting the police when stolen items were listed. He recovered many of the artworks this way.

Ten years ago he was diagnosed with cancer of the ear and he endured various treatments ever since. Earlier, there had been concerns over his heart and more recently a broken hip. If these affected his spirit, it didn't show and he remained good-humored, stoic, and defiant of all that was thrown at him.

Liberal in his politics, a book lover, an aficionado of TV detective series, with an encyclopedic memory for geology, proud of the United States, prone to fall asleep instantly (even in company), he completed the London-Brighton cycle ride more than half a dozen times, yet owned a book called *How to Exercise Without Moving a Muscle* and spent much of his time finessing these exercises.

A gentle man, with a sociable nature. Not a risk-taker, but with a penchant for foraging and eating wild mushrooms. One year in Woodstock he ate raw, a mushroom which was only edible when cooked. While he lay there with stomach cramps and perhaps hallucinations, his family decided they would buy organic mushrooms and scatter them along his morning walk.

In the UK he is survived by his wife (Elisabeth), daughter (Amy) and two grandsons (Edouard and Pierre); and in the United States, by children from his first marriage (Valerie, Patty and John Edward), a granddaughter (Evalina), and his sister (Judy).

His compatriot Abraham Lincoln said, “Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.” John was a living example of that.