

In Memory of Robert Thompson: Educator, family man

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By Robert Barlow, staff writer
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Even though Robert Thompson was 67 years old, many of his friends and family still called him “Bobby” as a reflection of his youthful character and personality.

Mr. Thompson graduated from the Rush-Henrietta school district in 1958 and continued to be a tireless advocate for the district and volunteer in the community until he passed away from pancreatic cancer on Aug. 22.

“He was my best friend,” said his wife, Tina Thompson. “He was our family cheerleader — always encouraging us when we needed it the most.”

Mr. Thompson attended Syracuse University after graduating from high school and received a master’s degree from SUNY Brockport. He returned to Rush-Henrietta to teach high school English and soon branched out — working and volunteering for community organizations such as BOCES, the Henrietta Public Library and the Section 5 basketball tournament. He frequently consulted for school districts including Rush-Henrietta, Brockport and West Irondequoit — putting his love of the English language and his skill as a writer to good use.

“We’ve lost a good man,” said West Irondequoit Superintendent Jeffrey Crane. “Bob was so-well liked for his integrity and he made friends with everyone he met. That’s just who he was.”

Bruce Sweet was a close friend of Mr. Thompson and worked alongside him in Rush-Henrietta schools.

“There was more than public relations skill, unusual talent and a gracious spirit to Bob,” said Sweet. “Underneath his tenacious belief in the goodness of young people and his faith in teachers and administrators to do their best, there was a quiet spirituality that imbued all of us without self-consciousness or self-righteousness.”

He enjoyed attending shows at Geva Theatre, performances by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and an occasional movie with his wife. He could play the piano and guitar by ear. Golf was also a passion of his.

“He really loved the game,” said Tina. “Most people count sheep or something if they can’t fall asleep — Bob played games of golf in his head to help him relax.”

Mr. Thompson loved cars, as well. He learned to drive when he was only 9 years old.

Mr. Thompson even got the chance of a lifetime when he was able to drive a convertible around Watkins Glen racetrack for a few laps.

Mr. Thompson is survived by his wife of 41 years, Tina; daughter Rebecca, son Jeffrey; brother Richard; and numerous grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins.

“His family was the most important thing to him,” said Tina. “He was so very proud of his children and especially

loved spending time with his grandchildren.”

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Rush-Henrietta Education Foundation, 2034 Lehigh Station Road, Henrietta, NY 14467 or Monroe No. 2 Orleans Education Foundation, 3599 Big Ridge Road, Spencerport, N.Y. 14559.

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