



LAY,
Robert Fredrick (Bob)
June 26, 1944 -
May 17, 2023

Robert Fredrick Lay was born in Canora, Sask. June 26, 1944, the youngest of Annie (Hosaluk) and Frank Lay's three children. He joined older siblings Vivian and George. The family lived on a farm outside Rama where they grew crops and raised animals

– likely the start of Bob's lifelong ability to tackle hard work and see a job through. He attended school in Rama until Gr. 10 and completed his high school in Invermay in 1962, already demonstrating his natural capacity for math and science, as evidenced by high report card marks. This was also where he met his future wife, Gail Thomson.

Following graduation, Bob tried his hand at university in Saskatoon, entering the College of Engineering, but the draw of rural Saskatchewan – and a little blond-haired, blue-eyed beauty – beckoned him home. Bob and Gail were married July 2, 1966 in Invermay and made their first home there, during which time Bob drove fuel truck for the Rama Co-op. The young couple became parents when they welcomed Robin and two years later, Donn. Bob then decided his growing family would be well-provided for by him accepting a job at the newly-opened Noranda Potash Mine located between Young and Colonsay, so in 1970 the Lays relocated to Colonsay before settling into the trailer park in Young.

That move proved fortuitous both for Bob's career and his family's long-term circle of friends, as the trailer park crew grew from a collection of coworkers into a tight-knit group of supportive families, many of whom are still treasured friends to this day. Bob's work at the mine continued through its many name and ownership changes over the decades. What never altered, however, was his dedication, skill and ability to guide his crews with a unique combination of integrity, quiet leadership and true caring. Bob shared very recently that he 'babied' his crews; whatever he might have called it, it was repaid with loyalty and deep respect from those privileged enough to work under him. He was equally valued by his fellow supervisors and other staff at the mine.

Despite years of shiftwork, Bob always had time for his family and home. He coached hockey and ball, attended volleyball games and track events. He fully supported and encouraged his sons' numerous athletic pursuits. The four of them also camped far and wide, often travelling hours to set up the tent trailer for just a

weekend getaway.

Being born June 30, Robin recalls missing many a birthday party because as soon as school was out, the Lays were on the road for another adventure – only occasionally including face-to-face encounters with bears! Back at home, Bob wasn't afraid to put the boys to work around the house and yard, particularly after the family moved to the acreage across the highway from Young. Robin and Donn speak 'fondly' of hours spent mowing, weeding, and helping with any number of chores, and only express a little resentment that when Donn graduated and moved from home, Bob immediately bought himself a riding mower!

Perhaps it was the loss of his two young 'work horses' that encouraged Bob and Gail to pull up stakes and move to Saskatoon in 1989 where they remained until Bob retired (for the first time, the family is fond of teasing!) from the mine in 2005. Their years in the city weren't all that different from the acreage in some ways, as Bob developed the basement, undertook renovations, and turned a good part of the backyard into a productive garden. "You can take a man out of the country, but you can't take the country out of a man" certainly applied to Bob! And perhaps that was the motivation behind Bob and Gail's final move, this time to Watrous in 2006. They enjoyed their first-ever new home, designed by Gail and Donn, sporting a yard and garden to be envied. Bob spent innumerable hours working on the lawn and growing enough food to supply his entire family and half the cul-de-sac! There were many recipients of his generosity over the years. Living in Watrous brought Bob nearer to his boys - Robin in Watrous and Donn in Regina – to watch them raise their sons in the same loving and attentive manner in which he raised his own.

Retirement also allowed Bob to spend time on another activity at which he excelled: construction. There are many a deck, fence and gazebo that exist thanks to Bob and fellow troublemaker, Barry Mensch. Bob and Robin also tackled many projects together, and Robin knew his dad was only a phone call away anytime he wanted a willing partner or sounding board for a job. Although Bob was probably happiest with a tool in his hand, he also knew how to relax and enjoy life. Bob and Gail travelled extensively. They have stayed in nearly every campground in Saskatchewan, been to every province and territory except Nunavut, and spent 12 winters in the USA, primarily in Mesa. They also took bus tours to the Maritimes and Alaska, and enjoyed fun-filled fishing trips and casino outings with special friends. Later years provided the opportunity for excursions to Regina and Saskatoon to visit their grandsons and great-grandchildren.

Back at home, there wasn't a Sudoku or Kakuro puzzle that could outwit him, and countless books of completed

challenges fell in defeat! Bob also loved to follow youth sports and could be found at the hockey arena, ball diamond and football field, first watching his grandson Garrett, and continuing to follow community teams, especially those involving the cul-de-sac kids. Bob was not one just to sit on the sidelines, however! He remained fit and active right into his 78th year. Over a number of years, he ran four half-marathons with one or both sons – once winning first place in his over-70 age category – pounded out countless steps on the road, treadmill and stepper, lifted weights, and put that strength and endurance to good use around the house and yard. His strong legs travelled a million miles, carrying him faithfully right up to his passing.

Bob died Wednesday, May 17, 2023 after a brief stay in St. Paul's Hospital's palliative care unit, surrounded by the constant attention and love of his family. Right to the end, Bob continued to be more concerned about those around him than himself; his selflessness knew no bounds. He is survived by his wife of nearly 57 years, Gail; his son Robin, wife Nicole, their son Garrett, his wife Jaicee and their son Simon; his son Donn, wife Adriana, Donn's sons Andrew and Lane, his partner Jordan and their children Odin and Emberley, and Donn's stepdaughter Justine. Bob is also survived by his sisters-in-law Sharon Lay and Glenelda Thomson-Germain and husband Ray; brothers-in-law Robert Baxter and Graham Thomson, and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews and cousins.

He was predeceased by his mother and father Annie and Frank Lay, sister Vivian Baxter, brother George Lay, mother- and father-in-law Ida and William Thomson, sister-in-law Linda Thomson and recently by his niece Sherri Thomson.

Memorial service was held at Watrous Civic Centre on May 29 conducted by Kristie Pilling.

Urnbearers were Robin Lay and Donn Lay. Lacey Meddins and Rikee Rowan were register attendants. Ushers were Craig Anderson, Jason Pilling and Dean Schlosser. Donn and Adriana gave the eulogy and tributes. Reading was by Pauline Mensch. Becca Goodwin was soloist.

Family interment will take place at a later date.

Memorial donations directed to St. Paul's Hospital Foundation (Palliative Care) or Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan would be appreciated.

To leave online condolences, tributes or to make a donation, please visit <https://fotheringham-mcdougall.com/>


Fotheringham-McDougall
FUNERAL SERVICE