

Clapp, Robert Allen, Sr. (05/23/1939--09/04/2010). Bob Clapp of the town of Grinnell received his B.A. in Speech from the College in 1961. He nurtured his life-long passion for the theatre at the College by playing leading roles in campus productions and by being a member of the local drama group (Grinnell Players) and the National Collegiate Players.



Bob then obtained a M.A. degree in Theatre at the University of South Dakota. The next stops were St. Peter, Minnesota, and Sheridan, Wyoming, where he was the Director of the Theatre at Gustavus Adolphus College and Sheridan College respectively.

For the next 25 years (1972-1997), Bob found his new and true home in Pendleton, Oregon. There he taught speech, theater and English at the Blue Mountain Community College and was the Resident Director of the College-Community Theater. In his honor, the theatre is being renamed "The Bob Clapp Theatre," and a theater fund is being established in his name. (In addition, after he and his wife retired on the Pacific coast in Waldport, Oregon, he was the Founding President of the nearby Oregon Coast Community College Foundation, which has set up a scholarship in his name.)

Bob's elder son, Robert Allen, Jr. (Rob), who is with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Portland, Oregon, wrote the following moving tribute to his father:

"Beloved. People just flat loved Bob--students, poets, colleagues, actors, family, friends, and anyone who spent five minutes bending his ear over whatever troubled them. Nearly everyone . . . could tell immediately and unquestionably that he truly cared about them and was interested in what they had to say.

Husband. For just over 50 years to Caryl. In all the time they were together, right up to his very last hour, he couldn't believe his incredible good fortune. She was a source of profoundest joy and strength and wonder to him all his days. It was mutual.

Father. To two sons and a daughter. He encouraged them to wander freely, took immense joy in their accomplishments and puckish delight in their pratfalls, and was fiercely proud of the dedication, skill, and intellect they brought to their diverging life paths. Today they are unified in their sorrow for their father, their mother, and each other.

Teacher. Bob taught thousands of us. It was more than his profession, it was his calling. He taught us how to inhabit a moment well enough to really deliver a line, he taught us how to make our voices strong rather than merely loud, he taught us how to call beauty out of thin air, he taught us the importance of silence, he taught us to find our light.

[Ways to memorialize Bob.] Ask good questions. Tell good jokes. Do the New York Times crossword puzzle in pen. Be kinder to a stranger than you think you need to be. Touch a loved one's hand and really, really listen to them. Go have a beer with a dear friend you haven't seen

for a while. And when you get settled and raise your glasses, please do so twice--once for the long absence you have just mended, and once for all the absences that will never be mended again."

After a two-year battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Bob died in Newport, Oregon on September 4, 2010. He is survived by his wife Caryl Wagner Clapp '59, their son Robert, their other son Jeffrey, who is Associate Professor of Theatre at Pacific Lutheran University, their daughter Blakesley A. Clapp '91 who teaches at the Media Arts School of the Art Institute of Portland, Oregon and their grandson Blake. Bob was also survived by his brothers Charles M. Clapp '58 and James E. Clapp '64. Bob's father, Grinnell Professor of Modern Foreign Languages, Harold L. Clapp, died in the Fall of Bob's senior year at the College, and Bob's mother, Laura Clapp, died in 2008.