

Trepka, Robert Dale (12/16/1938—07/18/1993). Bob Trepka was born in a sod-brick house on a Nebraska farm. He attended a one-room school until ninth grade. Because his parents wanted him to have a better secondary education, he boarded with a Crete, Nebraska family during his high school years. But even in Crete there were limited course offerings and only 55 in his graduating class. Bob had to supplement his education with correspondence courses. In spite of this, he was a National Merit Finalist and was awarded a full scholarship to Grinnell.

Bob lived in South Younker and was member of the Hall House Council, 1960-61. He played the trumpet in the Grinnell College band and was active in the Math Club. He was elected to Friars, the senior men's honorary society, and Honor G, the men's honorary athletic club. The New York Times on March 22, 1961 published a photo of Bob with five other Phi Beta Kappa members of the Grinnell track team above the caption, "On your mark, get set, think."

Bob majored in chemistry and spent two summers in Grinnell doing NSF research (and corn de-tasseling). He was awarded the Chemistry Alumni prize.

A week after graduation from Grinnell, Bob married classmate Judy Anderson. The couple immediately set off for California; UCLA had awarded Bob a graduate fellowship. In 1963-1964, Bob was research assistant to Professor Donald J. Cram, winner of the 1987 Nobel Prize in chemistry. In December 1964, Bob completed his PhD and received a NATO postdoctoral fellowship to do research at the University of Munich, Germany.

When Bob returned to the United States, he began work at the 3M Company in St. Paul, Minnesota. He spent five years in Central Research, before joining the Photo Products Division. This position involved spending a year at the 3M laboratories in Harlowe, England and Ferrania, Italy.

At the age of 38, Bob was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. During the next 16 years, he experienced remission and recurrence as the disease moved from one area of his body to another. Bob continued to work productively during this time missing only a few weeks for surgeries and treatments. After a valiant struggle, he died at the age of 54.

Bob and Judy have three children who all graduated from Grinnell: Mary Jo '86, Jim '89, and Carolyn '92.

By Judith Anderson Trepka