



# Robert Lee Willett

AUG 28, 1935 - AUG 4, 2023



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# Robert Lee Willett

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**R**obert Lee Willett, known by family and friends as Bob, was born in Takoma Park, Maryland on August 28, 1935, and passed away quietly at home in Ringgold, Georgia on August 4, 2023 surrounded by those who loved and revered him. He was a great man with an inquisitive and brilliant mind.

Bob graduated from Washington Missionary College in 1957, proudly served in the United States Army for two years and was stationed at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, then earned a Masters of Business and Hospital Administration from George Washington University, and completed his Administrative Residency at Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida in 1963.

In 1959, Bob married the love of his life, Crystal Wery. All throughout their seven years of dating and marriage of 55 years, they were described as an iconic and beautiful couple. They loved to travel together and traveled all over the world. Beyond that, they were a team...when those who knew them think of one, it's impossible to remember one without the other.

After Crystal's death, Bob later married Jean Snider of Kettering, Ohio in 2016. She was a long-time and dear family friend, and she brought light and joy back into his life. They enjoyed four years together before she passed away.

In 1963, Bob began his distinguished career at Kettering Medical Hospital (now Kettering Health) in Kettering, Ohio, starting six months prior to the hospital officially being opened and spent his entire career there. Over the course of his 30 year tenure, he progressed from Director of Patient Services to VP and then President and CEO, a position he held for 15 years. He greatly respected Eugene and Virginia Kettering and valued their vision for the hospital and community; honoring that vision was his objective and driving force.



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It was also his goal to help make and keep the hospital fiscally responsible while also being cutting edge and searching for new state-of-the-art technology. This was no easy task during the turbulent times of changing medicine in the 1980's and 90's, but he loved a challenge and his life's motto was: "any success achieved is by answering tough questions".

Bob had many achievements during his years at KMC including the award-winning Verticare Program which eventually became known as Outpatient Surgery, helping to bring Hospice to Dayton, Ohio, obtaining state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment for the hospital including having the first CT Scanner, MRI, and PET Scanner in the region, and helping to facilitate the centralized blood bank system in Dayton. He was also a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives, and was presented twice with the Distinguished Service Appreciation Award from the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association.

At the end of 1993, he retired and spent many happy years enjoying warmer weather in Florida with Crystal.

All throughout his life, he loved to sail, golf, snow ski, water ski, and travel - especially in his motorhome, telling stories, and was a voracious reader who was fascinated with genetics, medical science, geology, Creation, and astronomy.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, Edward Farrand Willett, Sr and Fern Leona Hawkins Willett, his brother Edward F. Willett, Jr., and his beloved wives: Crystal and Jean. He is survived and greatly missed by his sons Jesse (Shana) Willett, Greg (Terri) Willett, grandchildren: Robert (Laura) Willett, Margarett (Donald) Oxentenko, Arthur Willett, and Andrew Willett, and one adored great-granddaughter, Harper.

In October, the family will be honoring his wishes with a quiet family service in Michigan.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to: The Robert and Crystal Willett Endowed Fund for the Preservation of the Kettering Health Legacy and Archives; for more information, please contact Kettering Health Foundation.



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Robert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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