

Robert Pierre Ernaut

1929-2021



October 31, 1929 – April 15, 2021

"Give a man a fish, and you'll feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you've fed him for a lifetime." Lao Tzu

To say Robert Pierre Ernaut was an avid fisherman would be an understatement. It would also belie testament of the other things he was during his 92 years on this Good Earth.

Above all, Robert was a father and grandfather. Nowhere was that more evident than in Reno, the fifteenth of April, two thousand and twenty-one. Surrounded by his sons, Stephen, Pete and his wife Wendy, and his grandchildren whom he adored, Bobby, Henry, P.J., and Isabella; Robert passed peacefully and thankfully at home carefully guarded by his grandchildren's loyal protector, Gunther, all 6 lbs. of him. The good Lord smiled upon all of them early that morning and they were, as all God's children should; ever reminded that this journey is everlasting and one of faith.

Born on October 31, 1929, in Elko, Nevada just two days after the stock market crash that signaled the start of The Great Depression; Robert was a loyal son and a first-generation Nevadan. He lived his entire life residing in Elko and Reno. He called both places home. While he lived in Reno most of his life and loved that city and his many friends there, in his heart he was always an Elko boy. A bad day at the Ruby Marshes was better than a good day anywhere else because there are no bad days at the Ruby Marshes. His love of the outdoors, the hunting and fishing in Elko County, and friendship for his Basque brethren, were only outmatched by his love of his family and parents, Pete and Marcelle.

He began life in the sheep camp. He never got a proper haircut in a barbershop until he was 5 years old, an event that was held in two parts. The first part being the start and the escape. The second part, the return, and the rest of the haircut minus the electric clippers. That was his first taste of technology and he tolerated technology, with a suspicious eye upon it, his whole life. But to him the simple things in life were best. Like the friendship he and his best friend, Louie Uriarte, shared their entire lives. Robert attended grade school in Elko. He later graduated from Elko High School in 1948. He went on to study history in Moraga, CA at St. Mary's College and he was a catcher on the St. Mary's Gaels baseball team. A car accident cut short his college career and his dream of eventually playing major league baseball. And it would end his time at St. Mary's.

Robert returned to Elko and worked various jobs. He also joined the National Guard. He was serving as a Corporal on the artillery squad. Embracing technology cautiously, he went to work at Bell Telephone in the late 1950's, eventually being promoted to supervisor. During that time, he met Nancy Jane Webster. They would marry in 1962 and later that year their first son, Stephen, was born. In 1964, they welcomed their youngest son, Peter, into the world. Growing up in the Depression, Robert realized that opportunity might not come often in life. He needed to provide for his young family a better future. That's when he and friend Patrick Sullivan went into business, purchasing a franchise for the Arctic Circle Drive-In restaurant in Elko. That successful partnership would span two decades and launch franchises between Elko, Reno, and in Brookings, SD. Bob and Nancy moved to Reno in 1967 with their sons to operate those franchises and put down roots. They divorced in 1969, Bob and Patrick would part ways in

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the early 1970's; each with half of business they had built. Bob would eventually sell his drive-ins and retire in the early 1990's. But he wasn't finished in business just yet.

Robert went on to start High Desert Flies, a custom fly-fishing lures business in Reno. A hobby and love had turned into a widely successful business with clients all over the world. His flies were legendary and if you are lucky maybe one of the old timers at Pyramid Lake or the Ruby Marshes might let you look at one. If you are really lucky, they might loan you one; because you don't loan Robert Ernaut flies, you give them. And on this Good Earth, just like Robert Pierre Ernaut, you can't get that stuff no more. But fishing in Heaven? It just got a whole lot better.

He was preceded in death by both parents, mother, Augustine Marcelle (Oyharcabal) Ernaut in 2003, and father, Jean Pierre Ernaut in 1986; his aunt Therese (Oyharcabal) Smith also preceded him in 2009. Nancy Jane (Webster) Ernaut preceded him in 2020 as well.

Robert is survived by his loyal, loving, and devoted family; sons, Stephen, Pete and his wife Wendy, grandchildren Bobby, Henry, P.J., and Isabella, all of Reno, NV; and the many friends he had made during his life. He is also survived by the Espil families of Gerlach, Peter Alberro and the Alberro and Conner families of Elko, the Sewell families of Montana and Oregon, and all those who are blessed to be of Basque heritage. Ernaut familiak zure maitasuna bidaltzen dizu.

Robert was a parishioner of Our Lady of Snows Catholic Church in Reno.

A rosary will be held at 6p.m. on Thursday May 13, 2021 at Walton's Funeral Home, 875 West Second Street. Reno, NV 89503

Funeral service will be held at 11a.m. on Friday May 14, 2021 at Our Lady of Snows Catholic Church, 1138 Wright St. Reno, NV.

In lieu of flowers, the Ernaut family suggests a donation to the Center for Basque Studies at the University of Nevada. Memorial gifts should be made payable to "UNR Foundation" with reference to "Center for Basque Studies Quasi Endowment" and mailed to UNR Foundation, Attn: Gift Processing, Mail Stop 0162, Reno, NV 89557.

The family invites you to leave a message of condolence on Bob's Memory Wall at www.waltonsfuneralhomes.com

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