

Robert L. “Bob” Pyle passed peacefully at his home in Morgantown, West Virginia, on December 5, 2017. Bob was a contributor and resource to *Mountain Discoveries* magazine since its inception, and a personal friend to the staff.

Bob experienced his early years in Kitzmiller, Maryland, where the natural world became a playground and mentor, as it led him to discoveries of flora, fauna, and fossils that abounded along the Upper Potomac River valley. The excitement of exploring became central to Bob’s formative years and never diminished with the passing of time. His inquisitive spirit caught the attention of a West Virginia University instructor who provided resources, tutoring, and formal collegiate course work before Bob entered high school. Over the years Bob’s curiosity led to discoveries and acclaim in a variety of academic fields.

Formal work experiences included assignments with the state of West Virginia as a chemist and archaeologist. Private sector employment with natural gas companies added geology to his resume. But it was Bob’s work with petroglyphs in southern West Virginia that caught the attention of *Mountain Discoveries* staff. *All That Remains*, his well known book, summarized the sites and tentative conclusions about the markings. Studies in Ireland and a subsequent television documentary, *Brendan the Navigator*, made Bob a central figure in discussions on the subject.

Bob’s real passion was sharing knowledge of the natural world, archaeology, geology, paleontology



*In Memoriam*  
**Robert L. Pyle**  
 (1943–2017)

and local history with students. An ever present smile and caring attitude captured their attention and made the hands-on activities a memorable experience. His collection of artifacts that were made available for display and discussion seemed inexhaustible—old bottles, glassware, fossils, brachiopods, arrowheads—whatever the lesson, Bob always provided an appropriate collection.

Federal and state sponsored workshops conducted under Bob’s direction trained hundreds of teachers from Maryland, West Virginia, and other states in teaching strategies that remain in use. When asked why he traveled so many miles to serve students and teachers, Bob responded, “I know there

are a lot of little Bob Pyle’s out there who will benefit and enjoy the lessons.”

Bob’s commitment to country was also exemplified by honorable service during the Vietnam War, serving in the Army’s First Cavalry Division.

Caring for family was a commitment that quickly became apparent to anyone who knew Bob. Over the past decade he provided support to several family members who struggled with health issues.

Bob leaves behind two daughters, a sister, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. The family may be comforted in the knowledge that Bob was admired, respected, and sought after as a friend and teacher. His influence will continue for decades.

Everyone who knew Bob would endorse our parting words, “Well done, my friend.”

## Displays of Fossils and Artifacts Remain for Public Viewing

Bob Pyle's passion for work was reflected in the collections of artifacts and fossils he assembled over the years. Ray Garton, longtime friend and colleague, worked with Bob for more than three decades and shared in the excitement of making discoveries. Ray and Bob actively pursued partnerships and venues where they could display their collections and knowledge with interested groups.

One of their displays of fossils and artifacts may be viewed at the West Virginia I-68 Welcome Center at mile marker 31 near Hazelton. According to Ray, "Bob and I stopped at the visitor's center about 8 years ago and noticed there was room for a display case. We discussed the possibilities with the Welcome Center manager and she made it happen. The show case features artifacts and fossils that are in some way related to West Virginia."

A second public display featuring Bob's fossils may be found in the lobby of the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey Museum of Geology and Natural History at Cheat Lake. The facility is closed on weekends.

Articles in *Mountain Discoveries* can be viewed on the website ([www.MountainDiscoveries.com](http://www.MountainDiscoveries.com)) in Past Issues: Spring/Summer 2002, Fall/Winter 2008, Spring/Summer & Fall/Winter 2014, and Fall/Winter 2015.



Bob & Ernie "Turtleman" Brown discuss artifacts; Bob with Dimetrodon dinosaur at WV I-68 Welcome Center; Bob showing some of his marble collection.

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