

Robert Edward Wilson

March 25, 1933 ~ April 24, 2026

Robert Edward Wilson (Bob) passed away on April 24, 2026, at the age of 93. Bob Wilson has been described as “larger than life.” He had a love of life that was contagious, and connected with people wherever he went. As he enters heaven, instead of a harp, he will probably be handed a ukulele (assuming that’s where he ends up–otherwise, he’ll be given a banjo. Either way, he’ll whistle while he works).

Bob was born in Bartlesville, Oklahoma on March 25, 1933 to Collie Bryan & Gladys Louise (Gray) Wilson. He grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas, until his family moved to New Orleans, Louisiana when he was 12 years old. There he attended Tulane University and joined the U.S. Navy. He worked for two summers at Zion National Park, where he became acquainted with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which he later joined in California in 1957. He served with the Navy on a tour of the Far East, including Japan, Hong Kong and the Philippines (fortunately, during a time of peace).

Bob received a Master’s degree in Labor Relations at U.C. Berkeley, which is where he met Jean Merrill. They were married September 5, 1961, and were blessed with six children. They lived in Berkeley and then Kensington, California, where Bob worked as a labor relations director for the U.S. Postal Service. In 1975 they moved to Eugene, Oregon, where they lived and accumulated an impressive collection of stuff, and friends, for 45 years. If any of their friends needed a tool, or random bicycle parts, they knew they could go to Bob Wilson’s garage (which he called the True Value Hardware Store Annex), and he could help them. He also used his workshop in the garage to help serve many friends by fixing their broken chairs, or building a railing to help them get up their stairs. He loved to serve!

Bob learned a love of music from his mother, and enjoyed playing the piano (especially “Maple Leaf Rag” and “St. Louis Blues”), leading scouts and family in campfire sing-alongs with the guitar, and was amazing on the ukulele. He sang in barbershop quartets and in choirs, and led church congregations in singing for decades. Bob declared himself as a “ham looking for a smokehouse” because he loved to entertain people with his songs, especially the 1920s gems his mother taught him, that he wanted to pass along to future generations.

Bob served in many church callings, serving in bishoprics, the high council, and for 8 years as scoutmaster, which he says was enough to guarantee him entrance into the celestial kingdom of heaven. He was once overwhelmed when preparing to move to Oregon, and put out a call for help to his local church leaders. 35 people showed up and saved the day, and he decided right then that if anyone ever needed help moving, he would join in, which he has done on some 200 occasions.

Integrity and honesty were extremely important to Bob, and he exemplified this in all that he did.

Bob suffered a stroke in June of 2019 that left him partially paralyzed on his left side and bound to a wheelchair. After a year in an assisted living facility, the isolation due to COVID lockdowns drove the family to help them buy a house in West Jordan, Utah, and to perform the miracle of emptying the house in Oregon and making the move to be near family. His wife Jean was his primary caregiver for seven years until he was finally called home.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Collie Bryan Wilson, Jr. (“Cebus”), his sister Anita Wilson, and his granddaughter Jennifer Gates. Bob is survived by his wife Jean, and his six children, Leslie (Jeff) Gates, West Jordan, Utah; Bob B. (Jessica) Wilson, Brownsville, Texas; Randy (Linette) Wilson, Riverton, Utah; Sharon (Roger) Kartchner, Riverton, Utah; John (Kelly) Wilson, West Jordan, Utah; and Joseph (Oriana) Wilson, Laveen, Arizona. He is also survived by 19 other grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren (and growing).

An open house for Oregon friends to share memories will be held on Sunday, May 3, 2026 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints located at 3500 W 18th Ave, Eugene, Oregon.

Bob will be laid to rest on May 4, 2026 at Rest Haven Memorial Park, Eugene, Oregon.

A memorial will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 9, 2026 at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints located at 8825 S 3200 W, West Jordan, Utah.

If you would like to listen to some of Bob’s songs, download his “Life’s Lessons Learned” book, or see a video overview of his life, you can do so at:
https://adventuresandstuff.com/bob