

BOB AND PAT RUF

MEMORIAL AND MEMORIES

AUGUST 2005

Patricia Ann Ruf



Patricia Ann Ruf, 70, passed away at home on Thursday, April 28, 2005 after a prolonged illness. Pat was born in Pittsfield, Mass. to Dan and Francis Carroll. She graduated from Dalton High School in 1952. After high school, Pat graduated in 1956 from Tufts University in Boston where she received her teaching degree. Few people know she competed on the synchronized Swim Team while at Tufts. In June of 1956, Pat wed Robert Henry Ruf, Jr. to whom she was married for 48 years. In 1956 Bob and Pat moved to Reno where she took a teaching position with Washoe County School District. In 1968, Pat, Bob and their sons moved to Somalia, Africa where she worked as a teacher at the American School until 1969 when the family was forced to leave due to civil unrest in the region. Upon returning to Reno, Pat resumed her teaching career and continued her education, receiving a Masters Degree in English from UNR. In 1974, the Ruf family opened Greenhouse Garden Center in Carson City. Pat's particular passions at the nursery were the Christmas Shop and the Gift Shop. During the 1980's Pat reopened, ran and managed Arlington Gardens Nursery in Reno. She retired from Greenhouse Garden Center in 1994. Aside from her love of gardening, Pat had an extensive collection of antique clothing and hat pins which she restored and sold at the antique car swap meets she and Bob loved attending. After retiring, Pat also traveled in the family motor home across the US and Canada, helped raise four grandchildren, assisted Bob in his honey and winemaking endeavors, and authored a book on Victorian lighting. Pat loved reading to and being read to by her four grandchildren. She will be greatly missed. Pat is survived by her son David Ruf of Carson City, son Brian Ruf and his wife Tami of Reno; 2 grandsons; 2 granddaughters; sister Ellen of Massachusetts; sister Jean of New York; and brother Dan. Pat was preceded in death by her parents Dan and Francis Carroll.

Robert Henry Ruf, Jr.



Dr. Robert Henry Ruf, Jr., 72, passed away at home on Thursday, April 28, 2005 after a prolonged illness. Born and raised in Malden, Mass. to Robert Ruf, Sr. and Anna Ruf, the family moved to Ballardvale, Mass. during his teen years. He graduated from Malden High School in 1950. In 1955, Bob graduated from the University of Massachusetts Cum Laude with Department Honors as Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Scholar. During his sophomore year summer, Bob became a gold miner in Alaska and discovered one of the best preserved Woolly Mammoths to date which is now on display at the Smithsonian. Bob received his Masters Degree from University of Massachusetts and went on to receive his doctorate in Horticulture at Cornell University. In 1956, Bob wed Patricia Carroll, to whom he was married for 48 years. In 1956,

Bob and Pat moved to Reno where Bob took a position at UNR as a professor of horticulture. He was later awarded Teacher of the Year by his students. In 1968, the Ruf family moved to Somalia, Africa where Bob taught advanced horticultural practices to the farmers in the region. In 1969, the family was forced to leave Somalia due to civil unrest in the region. Bob returned to his professorship at UNR and between the years 1971 and 1974, he became the leading authority on the propagation of a native endangered plant species called squaw carpet located in the Tahoe Basin. Bob was also one of the first consultants for the Sunset Western Garden Book Series. The demise of the horticultural school at UNR and the loss of his test plots due to the Interstate 80 expansion through Reno forced Bob to change careers. In 1974, Bob, Pat and their sons opened Greenhouse Garden Center in Carson City. After running the nursery, landscape department and gift shop for 20 years, he retired and enjoyed traveling in the family motor home across the US and Canada, collecting antiques, restoring antique automobiles from the 1890-1920 era, and authored a book on Victorian lighting. He was a beekeeper for 50 years and produced his own native honey. Several years ago he began pressing his homegrown grapes and enjoyed trying his hand at winemaking. He will be greatly missed. Bob is survived by his son David Ruf of Carson City, son Brian Ruf and his wife Tami of Reno, 2 grandsons; 2 granddaughters; and nephew Barry Wight and his family of Tewksbury, Mass. Bob was preceded in death by his beloved mother, Anna Ruf; father Robert H. Ruf, Sr. and sister Elizabeth.

MEMORIES

Many of our Club members were privileged to know Bob and Pat very well. They experienced first hand their friendship and passion for collecting. The following are a few stories and memories that they wish to share with you. Perhaps these heartfelt memories will provide some small comfort to the Ruf family and many friends.

The images included in this memorial were provided by Bob and Pat's family. They chronicle just a few of their life's experiences and accomplishments they shared together.



THE TIGERS

The tigers were on the prowl hunting down Fairy Lamp collections to photograph when we met them. Quite by accident. We had been badly bit by the collecting bug a little over a year previously and were searching shops and attending every antique show in the Southern California area, avidly soaking up information about Fairy Lamps from every source. A dealer at one of the shows told us if we were that interested we should visit the Tulare County Historical Museum near Fresno, CA where there was a fabulous collection. We called the museum the following day and were told that, by coincidence, a couple were there photographing as we spoke (see R-791 for evidence). We left our name and phone number to give to them in case they were interested in talking about Fairy Lamps.

A few days later they called and in introducing ourselves we bragged a bit that we had found over 250 Fairy Lamps, mostly Fenton and other contemporary ones, in about 16 months and they oh'ed and ah'ed appropriately before saying they had been collecting a bit longer but restricted their collection to mostly "older ones." We had also recently found a pair of "older ones," white over pink floral cameos on cut crystal standards (U-61), which caused Bob to growl a bit and ask more about them. It seems he had R-536 in his mind's eye and could not quite picture what ours were like so he said they'd drive down to see them the following week. And they did. Grrr.

They drove well over 500 miles in their motor home to spend part of two days getting acquainted. They looked at our Fairy Lamps, studied and critiqued them, and we learned more in that time than we had since we started collecting. They then showed us pic-

tures of some of theirs — mind boggling to new collectors — and invited us to visit them in Reno sometime — which we did soon after. Talk about mind-boggling!!

Bob and Pat were always ready to share information and ideas and help us fill in gaps in our collection. A few times we were able to fill in gaps in their collection as well, such as a pyramid size Burmese lamp cup they needed, but we were rewarded each time with a more than generous trade. They introduced us to other collectors, for which we are continually grateful, and to their favorite antique shows in Hillsborough, CA, Tacoma, WA, and Portland, OR, while always maintaining a spirit of friendly competition. They also talked us into getting on-line (which has been a mixed blessing).

Always in back of our relationship was the competition, the thrill of the hunt and outscoring each other. Even with their motorized wheelchairs we were weak competition at a big show such as Hillsborough. When the doors opened the first day they would

head off to their known haunts and get first choice at the goodies, as was their due. But, there were a few times when we were the winners, also, which kept the hunt more interesting. During one visit with them in Reno we checked into a motel a bit early the day before we had agreed to meet and decided to check out some stores they had told us about. One store had a Victorian flower bowl with a strange hole and center post in the middle (R-570) that we suspected was the mate to a threaded cranberry dome we had found almost two years previously in Sacramento (and possibly separated at auction). The next day Pat gritted her teeth and smiled a bit and Bob growled and then they both congratulated us on beating them to the

treasure in their own backyard — "but don't do it again." It wasn't long after that Pat found her "Jell-O mold" (FL-XVI-3) which shows good things happen to good people.

There has been hardly a day in the past few weeks that one of us hasn't headed toward the computer to send a note to Bob and Pat



asking advice or telling about a new discovery, and then reality hits. Nonetheless, we are very grateful for the time we enjoyed knowing them.

Lloyd and Nan Graham



WE REMEMBER PAT AND BOB

The first time that I saw Pat and Bob we were all at Schiffer Publications. They were there getting some fairy lamps photographed for the upcoming fairy lamp book. After a while, we struck up a conversation. Pat told me about the book that they were working on, and I told her that I thought it was a wonderful idea. We needed something to show us some of what was available in a fairy lamp and the correct combinations for them. Of course, since the book has been out, we have all found lamps that aren't in there, but that's part of what makes collecting fairy lamps so much fun. You just never know what's out there.

Pat asked me if it would be possible to stop by the house so that they could see if we had anything that they might be interested in for the book. I had never laid eyes on either of them before, and hadn't heard of them either. Since Paul was still at work, I wasn't too sure that inviting total strangers to the

house was such a good idea, but Pat looked pretty innocent. Bob was a different story, but I still said ok! They came by after they were finished at Schiffer's, and we hit it off right away. They had pictures of their collection plus some others, so we had a fun time looking at and talking fairy lamps. We only had a small collection at that time — about 20 to 30 lamps. That new collection had branched out of our mini oil lamp collection. I was surprised when they picked out about 10 of the lamps for me to take to Schiffer's to be photographed. It seemed unlikely that with all of the examples of fairy lamps that they already had, a small collection would hold anything different. However, it did. When Paul came home, he saw this strange camper parked in the driveway and wondered what was going on. It didn't take long for him to be talking fairy lamps instead of doing what he had planned for the rest of the day!

Pat and Bob became good fairy lamp friends over the years. In the beginning, if we had a question about something that we had found, they were always very sharing of their knowledge. It was also through them that we met another good pair of friends, Nan and Doug Gole. It's amazing just how much time you can spend talking about and looking at fairy lamps!

You just never knew where the Ruf's would show up, either. We needed a peppermint swirl dome for a base that we had. I finally bought one on eBay. When it arrived, it was cracked. We didn't feel that it had happened in shipping, and one day when I was talking to Pat on the phone, I mentioned it. Wouldn't you know, she told me that they had seen the very same lamp in an antique shop as they were going across the country on their travels. It was already cracked and sitting on the shelf for sale. It was in the same location as the one that had been shipped to us. What are the odds on that? It seemed that since the dealer couldn't sell it at the shop, he decided to sell it on eBay and hope that the buyer wouldn't notice the break in the swirl pattern. We sent it back, got our money back, and everything was fine, except we still need that dome to this day.

One of the funniest stories happened when the Ruf's were back East to one of our big shows. Pat always used her scooter to get around them. The four of us were talking there when we heard a loud bang. Almost immediately, Pat was sitting crooked! It seemed that her tire had blown just sitting still. Bob had to take it out to the camper for

a quick fix, but we all had a good laugh about it.

We had been invited out to see the Ruf's collection, and we finally made it out there. We went to a nice antique show and did some sight seeing in CA before heading over to NV. Pat and Bob were at the show also - it was their idea to all meet up there first. As Pat said: "Other collectors wouldn't want you to know about this show, but we invite people to it." Once we got to their house, we had a nice visit and got to visit all their fairy lamps. Bob had big cabinets built in downstairs with sliding glass doors to keep them safe. There was a lot to see!

While we were there, we went over to see Virginia City. We used our rental car to get there because at that time they only had a small pick up that wouldn't carry 4 people. So I drove over and up the really big mountain to get there. Pat had asked before we went if I'd mind driving up a winding mountain road with no guard rails. I said no, but when we got there they had installed some since the last time they had been there. Pat told me later that she told people that she never got to Virginia City so fast as when Kathy Gresko drove there. Hmmmm. We should have made plans to stay longer, but all too soon it was time to leave. We never did get back out there after they moved into their new house.

We have a lot of fond memories of Pat and Bob, and will miss them a lot in the years to come. They will always be with us as we enjoy fairy lamps.

Kathy and Paul Gresko



WE WILL REALLY MISS THEM

About 10 years ago, we purchased a large Victorian fairy lamp collection. We wanted to know more about them and finally located a small out of print book on the subject. We were thrilled in 1996 to find the new book, *Fairy Lamps*, by Pat and Bob Ruf. The book was absolutely full of many gorgeous photos and full of information. We communicated about several pieces in their book. We had met Douglas Gole, who they dedicated their book to, here in Portland, Oregon and he told us what marvelous people they were. We had hoped to meet them one day. Our chance finally came when they were here in

Portland in 2001 and we had a group dinner with our publishers. We introduced ourselves and away the conversation went. They were charming and willing to share information. We finally had the chance to really work with them when we were gathering information for our Fenton Burmese book. We had decided to include an opening chapter on Mt. Washington Burmese and they gave us some background information on fairy lamps. It is such a delight to have people willing to help and share information. They were a terrific couple and we will really miss them.

Debbie and Randy Coe



BOB AND PAT

Our first knowledge/discovery of Bob and Pat was at an Antiques Fair when a dealer mentioned "Have you seen that book published by Schiffer on Fairy Lamps?" Well after six months we managed to avail ourselves of Bob and Pat's book *Fairy Lamps - Elegance in Candle Lighting*.

Helen thought it might be a neat idea to see if we could correspond with Bob and Pat. So she decided to send a letter to Schiffer's asking them to send her letter on to Bob and Pat. After about 3 months Helen was a little disappointed because she had heard nothing then suddenly out of the blue a fax arrived from Bob and Pat explaining they had been away "on their Travels." So in early 1997, we started a regular correspondence with them via fax, snail mail and later by email.

We first arranged a visit to see them while they were on a touring holiday of California in May 1997.

The arrangement was for us to ring them when we got into Reno on the Friday, however we turned up a day early but we rang them anyway, around 6.30 pm, no problems and within half an hour Bob was at our Motel to take us up to their home. We spent around 6 hours that evening marveling at their lamps and generally talking fairy lamps, before Bob ran us back down the Hill to our Motel. We then spent the whole of the next day in their home eating, drinking and of course talking about life, the world and of course fairy lamps. That was the start of a truly wonderful friendship.

We met them at the end of our trip at the Hillsboro show in San Francisco, once inside we arranged to meet back at the Burger bar 2 hours later, in the meantime we spotted a Pairpoint puffy fairy lamp but, unfortunately, the lady would not take my credit card or a personal check but was prepared to hold the item for us. So we had a quick chat with Bob about borrowing some funds until

we got back home, he immediately agreed. Even today I still can not believe he was prepared to trust us, letting us disappear home with a relatively expensive buy on what had been no more than a few hours in each other's company.

We again went to the USA in 2000 and again visited them, this time staying with them for a week. We met Brain their son and his girls. One of the other common interest Bob and I had was that we both loved old cars (mines an MGA circa 1960 Bobs was Model T). On the Sunday we went off for the day with the Car club of Reno, Bob and Pat in their T, us bringing up the rear with Brain in his Pierce Arrow.

Yet again we met at Hillsboro and yet again they helped us out by loaning us funds to buy a mirrored Burmese epergne style plateau with 7 lamps. They even took it home in their RV and shipped it to us when we had got home.

We usually emailed each other on a fairly regular basis and about every 6 weeks we would call them on the phone and have a chat and a joke about taxes, politics or the weather, we always managed to make each other laugh.

If it was not for Bob and Pat this collecting obsession we now have would have just been Helen's but thru them I learned a great deal about the glass and especially the hunt. Bob once told me to be patient because a lamp you missed today will come back on the market someday!!

For those collectors of you who think we buy too many lamps we can all blame Bob and Pat because in one of their faxes back in 1997 they advised us to buy, buy, buy no matter what.

Our lasting impression of Bob will be that of "Grandpa Walton" his moustache, checkered shirt and bright red braces holding up his jeans, just as we first met him in 1997. Bob and Pat's friendship and good humor will be sadly missed.

Graham and Helen Pullen

O2BKING AND MARSHMALLOW CHICKS

It is truly amazing how making a new acquaintance can change your life forever. Such was the case when we first met Bob and Pat.

We, of course, first learned of Bob and Pat through their book, *Fairy Lamps*. We had been "casual collectors" of fairy lamps for sometime but their book quickly re-energized our enthusiasm and the prospects of learning more about our collection.



Bob Culver, of the Night Light Miniature Lamp Club, informed us that the Ruf's were interested in meeting other fairy lamp collectors and had even suggested to him the possibility of forming a Fairy Lamp Club. That bit of information became the seed that sparked our friendship and eventual formation of the Fairy Lamp Club.

We contacted Bob and Pat by email and, after passing along well deserved accolades about their book, I raised the prospect of forming a Club. At first, Pat seemed hesitant to trust a complete stranger enough to work with, in what could be a challenging endeavor. But, after convincing them that I would do all the work and they simply had to help with the contacts and articles, they agreed to give it a try. So, with simple beginnings, our Club was born. Needless to say, their knowledge and expertise was invaluable in getting our Club started.

After countless emails, phone calls, and letters the opportunity came to finally meet our mentors and "e-friends" in person. As many know, Bob and Pat were "happy vagabonds" traveling about the country making friends and building their collections. One of their trips east brought them by our home in northern Virginia. They, of course, wanted to stop by and finally meet the sometimes "weird guy" on the other end of their keyboard.

Since the Washington DC area can be difficult to navigate, I offered to meet them when they got close and guide them to our home. I met them at a nearby Antique Mall (of course) and immediately formed a "first impression" that was right on the money. For those that knew them well, I am certain there is no need to explain what a good first impression it was.

Bob and Pat parked their mobile home in our driveway and for the next few days we talked and talked and talked some more. The hours seemed to just fly by.

During our visit, Bob and Pat shared some of their finds they made along the way. One was a Burmese epergne that was simply outstanding. Bob said "That completes a page." A page? I asked. "Yes, we now have all the

fairy lamps Clarke illustrated on one of his Burmese fairy lamp advertisements." It was, however, difficult for novice collectors such as ourselves, to fully comprehend such a collection. Sadly, we never took the opportunity to see their collection first hand. We are, however, fortunate to have met Bob and Pat. Given the choice, we have no regrets.

Bob's license plate read "O2BKING." Clearly, Bob had strong opinions on "how things should be." His license plate reflected his feelings and solutions to just about every problem. If only he were King for a day, things would certainly be different — and I am sure changed for the better.

Pat had more than one passion. Bob was one, their family was another, their collections were another, and many more are evident by her many accomplishments. Marshmallow Chicks — a common Easter candy — was also a passion and perhaps a vice. For me — having sent her "care packages of chicks" — she will be in my thoughts whenever I see them.

Rest in peace Bob and Pat. Thanks for your friendship, generosity in sharing your knowledge and, of course, the many fond memories.

Jim and Pat Sapp