

Two Lives Well Lived: A Celebration of Life for Bob & Gwen Tatum

Robert “Bob” G. Tatum

July 19, 1936 ~ December 22, 2024

Gwen L. Tatum

December 17, 1938 ~ January 6, 2025

Celebration of Life

11:00 A.M. Saturday, April 26, 2025

Church of the Nazarene

Ellendale, North Dakota

Welcome & Opening Prayer - Pastor Kelly Riggan

Congregational Singing – Becky & Loren Drege, Pianist & Leader

“The Solid Rock” #436

Family Reflections

Special Music – recorded song by Treasure Rynerson-Tatum

Granddaughter of Bob and Gwen

“God On The Mountain”

Message of Hope – Pastor Kelly Riggan

Special Music – Allan & Brett Miller

Accompanied by Kim Miller

“It Is Well With My Soul”

“I’ll Fly Away”

Open Mic Sharing – Tim Tatum: Memories from Friends & Family

Congregational Singing – Heather Morehead & Keri Winter, Pianist & Leader

“This Amazing Grace”

Closing Prayer - Pastor Tim Brown

Reception following service

Burial

Ellendale City Cemetery

Ellendale, North Dakota

Arrangements by

Hoven Funeral Chapel

Ellendale, North Dakota

Robert “Bob” G. Tatum, 88, of Ellendale, North Dakota, died peacefully at home in Ellendale on December 22, 2024. There was a private burial on December 24. Bob was born July 19, 1936, to Cullen and Ida (Pierrot) Tatum in Riverton, Wyoming. He was raised on a farm in the Lander, Wyoming, area and graduated from Fremont County Vocational High School in Lander in 1954. Bob attended Casper Junior College in Casper, Wyoming, and then moved on to Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Montana, where he graduated with a BS in Physical Education and minors in English and Industrial Arts. He earned his Masters degree in Health, Physical Education and Recreation in 1962 from the University of Wyoming at Laramie where he was also a graduate assistant for defense and the Freshman football team. Bob met Gwen Bowler at a “Bachelor and Bachelorette” square dancing event in Billings while he was in college, and on August 13, 1959, they married. Bob and Gwen had five children - Tim, Becky, Toby, Jill, Todd.

Bob was involved in many different organizations throughout his life, but the most significant were Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the Republican Party, and Gideons. He was also involved in many Bible studies, which he loved.

Bob taught and coached in Burlington, Shoshoni, and Kemmerer, Wyoming, before moving to California where he taught at Brawley Union High School, Keystone Christian School, and Santa Fe Christian School. In 1983, Bob and his family moved to Ellendale, North Dakota, where he taught, coached football and basketball, and served as Athletic Director at Trinity Bible College.

Bob was a teacher, but coaching was his love. He coached many sports, but football held a special place in his heart. Bob taught the “total release” philosophy to his athletes not only for competition but as a way of life to “release” everything they had, holding nothing back, in becoming more like Christ. He loved visiting with former students and athletes about this topic whenever he got the chance.

Bob and Gwen bought the Oxenrider Motel in Ellendale in 1988 and ran the business with their daughter, Becky, until December 2019. Bob loved meeting people from all across the states (and even Germany and Africa) who stayed at the Motel, and some became like family. He felt like the Motel was a way to minister to people spiritually and emotionally as well as physically.

Bob loved Ellendale and its people. He enjoyed finding businesses that would benefit the community, which is why he began selling fresh-cut Christmas trees at the Motel - he drove to Oregon to pick them up. He also sold fireworks and Conklin products, as well as operated a moving business and roofing business. He loved watching Ellendale and Trinity sports and reading the Dickey County Leader. He loved praying for and praying with the people in Ellendale.

Bob could be a man of few words unless it was about his family or spiritual things. He enjoyed visiting with his kids, grandkids, and extended family. He made time to talk with people about their lives. He loved to read and study the Bible, sing hymns, and pray. Bob loved to talk about Jesus. His perspective on life and eternity radically changed when he surrendered his life to Jesus, in his 30's. He loved to encourage others and hear encouraging testimony from others. He rarely missed Sunday School or church and loved to sing hymns in the Sunday night service. Even though his life was rarely easy, Bob was a very positive man and took pleasure in very simple everyday things like spicy food, peanut butter chocolate milkshakes, sunshine, gardening, sports, gospel songs, and the outdoors.

Bob once said that he never made more than around \$22,000 a year teaching but considered himself a wealthy man. He loved well and was well-loved. His Heavenly Father has welcomed him home.

Gwen, Bob's loving wife of 65 years, passed away 15 days after him on January 6, 2025. Bob is survived by his children: Tim (Jodi) of Yorkville, IL; Becky of Ellendale; Toby (Shelli) of Yorkville, IL; Jill of Yorkville, IL; and Todd of Dekalb, IL. His grandchildren: Chelsea (Oliver) of Wheaton, IL; Treasure (Nick) of Lexington, IL; Josh of Venice Beach, CA; Alexa (Trevor) of Denver, CO; Madison of Chicago, IL; Kiley of Cortland, IL. Preceding Bob in death are his parents, his brother Jim (Marion), his sister Norma (Bob) Laird.

Gwen L. Tatum, 86, of Ellendale, ND, died January 6, 2025. She was born December 17, 1938, in Scobey, MT, to Larry and Beth (Belden) Bowler. Gwen was raised in Scobey, where she graduated from high school in 1956. She furthered her education at Montana State University (now University of MT in Missoula). She was in the Journalism program for one year. She then took a short business course at Billings Business College. Gwen met Bob at a "Bachelor and Bachelorette" square dancing event while she was in Billings, and they were married August 13, 1959. Bob and Gwen had five children: Tim, Becky, Toby, Jill, Todd.

Growing up, Gwen worked at her family newspaper, The Daniels County Leader, in Scobey. Her experience setting type by hand actually led to a job where she lived, because no one else had the skill. She worked for the U.S. Marshal's Office of MT in Billings and did medical transcription, bookkeeping, and editing. She was the morning shift manager for a McDonald's Encinitas, CA. In Ellendale, she worked in the Registrar's Office at Trinity Bible College, was the Activities Director at the Ellendale Nursing Home, and the Director of Tax Equalization for Dickey County. Most recently she worked at the Ellendale Public Library and wrote the Bookworm newspaper article highlighting and suggesting books.

Gwen was active in the Republican Party, Gideons Auxiliary, Dakota Club, Christian Women's Club, and volunteered at Kedish House. She loved to read the Bible and was always involved in Bible studies in church and the community.

Gwen was exceptionally creative. She sewed clothes for herself and her kids and window curtains for many of her homes. She sewed doll clothes for her granddaughters' American Girl dolls. She loved doing crafts. One time she made a birdhouse with real bark and berries on a Christmas tree stump using straggly pulled together to frame the house. She played piano beautifully and used her talent to accompany small groups and choirs as well as to play for residents at the Nursing Home. She also played the piano and acted in a community play. Gwen loved playing games. She loved card games, crossword puzzles, word jumbles, Boggle, Wordle, and Connections. She usually beat everyone at her favorite word game - Perquackey. She liked to spend an afternoon puzzling with her daughter, Becky. She enjoyed reading and going to the movies. She enjoyed her grandchildren very much and delighted in taking them on little dates. Gwen loved spending quiet time with the Lord, praying and reading Our Daily Bread. She believed in the importance and power of prayer.

Gwen loved to laugh, at herself just as much as anything else. Her smile was beautiful. Even in the last few years of her life when she was in physical pain, she loved to laugh. She always said laughter was the best medicine. She was directionally challenged and could not tell a joke if her life depended on it. Gwen rarely met a recipe she didn't like. She once said a man at her son's baseball game said she must really be involved in the game because she was writing down so many stats. Gwen smiled and said "Oh no, I'm copying down recipes." She had recipe books and recipes from family, friends, magazines, newspapers, and the internet-many of them for sweets involving dates and nuts. She was a wonderful cook and could make something out of nothing.

Gwen loved to bake and was known for her Swedish Rye bread that her mom and grandmother made before her. Her husband, Coach Bob Tatum, made this bread well-known as "Little Red Hen" bread at Santa Fe Christian High School and Trinity Bible College by giving it to an athlete each week who was voted the hardest worker by their teammates. This bread comes up often in memories of Bob and Gwen.

Gwen had a tender heart for young wives and mothers. She often took them under her wing and mentored them. She loved to talk with them and study the Bible with them. Gwen used her warmth and hospitality to encourage them and share the wisdom of her experience. She loved and valued these women and the relationships that resulted.

She loved well and was well-loved. Her Heavenly Father has welcomed her home.

Preceded in death by husband Bob (Dec. 22, 2024), her parents, and her brother, Printer. Gwen is survived by her children: Tim (Jodi) of Yorkville, IL; Becky of Ellendale; Toby (Shelli) of Yorkville, IL; Jill of Yorkville, IL; and Todd of Dekalb, IL. Her grandchildren: Chelsea (Oliver) of Wheaton, IL; Treasure (Nick) of Lexington, IL; Josh of Venice Beach, CA; Alexa (Trevor) of Denver, CO; Madison of Chicago, IL; Kiley of Cortland, IL. Her siblings: Jane (Jim) Dighans of Miles City, MT; Kelly (Joe) Bertrand of Casper, WY; Judy Phillips of San Diego, CA; Burley (Roz) Bowler of Scobey, MT and cousin Jere Lee (Milton) Gunderson of Scobey, MT.

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Goodbye

The breath you fought so hard for
Has left your failing lungs
As the final gasp escaped in quiet sigh.

Your heart which carried boundless love
Has stilled inside your chest
As the time has come for your final rest.

Your hands which held mine so tenderly
Will no longer rise up to wipe my tears away
Or lay upon my cheeks in gentle assurance.

Your lips will no more part in radiant smiles,
To share the good and beautiful truth,
Or speak life and encouragement to my soul.

Your arms will no longer wrap around me
In a welcoming embrace of unconditional belonging
Or shelter me from life's sorrows.

But in my grief I am hopeful
Because I know the God whom you loved,
So this is not a final goodbye.

Your life was lived with radical abundance
In all the ways which truly matter -
Touching countless hearts and changing lives.

You lived Christ's love out loudly
Boldly proclaiming the truth of His Word
And giving God the glory in and through all things.

You made space to nourish weary soul
Through simple acts of hospitality
And by offering a listening ear.

(continued on back)

I learned what kind of person I hope to become
By watching the example you set
Of being the hands and feet of Jesus.

You acted justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly,
Honoring the Lord and seeking Him each day
Never wanting credit for how amazing you were.

You sought after the Lord passionately
Digging deeper into His word day by day
With a hunger for growth and relationship with Him.

The praise of the Lord was ever on your lips
As you gave God all the glory in the good
But also trusted Him unwaveringly in the darkness.

If I can learn to love wholeheartedly
And follow the Lord as you did,
What a rich treasure that would be!

My heart joyfully aches knowing you have slipped away
From this earthly existence
Into the glorious presence of the Almighty Lord.

But I will continue to hold you dearly,
Ever in my heart and mind,
Until one day we are face to face again.

What a celebration that will be
When reunited in heavenly perfection
Worshipping the one who made us family.

***Written for Gwen by friend Stacy Bowden**

AP Press Release:

The unanimous pick for the 2024 Heisman Trophy Award is Robert G. Tatum, affectionately known as Bob or Coach. Bob started his career playing for the Devil's Brigade. Only a mediocre player, he made a life-changing decision to use the transfer portal and join the Lord's Army. Excelling on offense, defense, and special teams, he racked up statistics that Heaven's statisticians will be counting for years to come.

On defense, his many hours spent on bended knee and daily Bible reading kept the enemy off-guard and uncertain. His play on offense was amazing to watch as he interacted with people at home, on the streets, Bible studies, doctor offices, and hospitals. His special teams gift was the Oxenrider Motel where he ministered to thousands of people who crossed his path. Some with food, some with lodging, all with a kind word and the way of Salvation.

His life was an exemplary example to us all !!!

Love,

Kim & Allan

***Written for Bob by friends Kim & Allan Miller**