



Robert Neal Dewitt

June 27, 1936 - May 4, 2023

Youngsville -

A Private Funeral Service were held by the family for Robert “Bob” O’Neal DeWitt, age 86, who passed away peacefully at his residence on Thursday, May 4, 2023, in Youngsville.

Bob was born on June 27, 1936, to Neal and Mary DeWitt in Lake Charles. Throughout his childhood he had an immense curiosity in science and was even called “little professor” by his grandfather, Frances DeWitt. Bob left Lake Charles to attend Southwest Louisiana Institute to major in physics, along the way marrying the love of his life, Patricia Faye Webb of Westlake. The launch of Sputnik spurred his commitment to become a part of the U.S. space program which was a driving force throughout his life. After graduating from S.L.I. Bob and Pat left Louisiana and headed to the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama, where he worked with top German scientists in rocketry. Wanting to continue his studies, he moved his growing family to North Carolina and then to Virginia to continue his work and education. He was a theoretical physicist for the Department of Defense and later the Department of Energy, publishing many scientific articles while earning his Masters and PhD in physics at American University in Washington, D.C. He loved teaching and, in the evenings, he taught at the community colleges and other universities in the Northern Virginia area. Upon retirement, he and Pat retired

to Altoona, PA where they restored a historical old home and Bob found a job teaching at Penn State-Altoona. He will be deeply missed and never forgotten.

Bob is survived by his children, Elizabeth DeWitt, David DeWitt (Ellen), Catherine Cecil (Jimmy), and Carolyn DeWitt; his grandchildren, Sara Beyer, Samuel Gillis, Olivier Fields, Jeanette DeWitt-Kyle, Steven DeWitt, Emily Fruge, Katie DeWitt, Laura Cecil Gifford, Justin Cecil, Austin Mellon, and Ryan Mellon; as well as his great-grandchildren, Abraham Kyle, Joan Kyle, Silas Fruge, Freya DeWitt, Michael Gifford, Madelynn Gifford, and Justin Cecil, Jr.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Pat DeWitt; his parents, Neal and Mary DeWitt; as well as his sister, Patsy VanSickle.

Cypress Funeral Home & Crematory, 206 W. Lafayette St., Maurice, LA 70555, (337) 740-3123, is in charge of arrangements.

Tribute Wall

MC

“ I know you will miss him terribly. My hope is that he will be United again with his wife and love ones: what a glorious day that will be for him! I am sending blessings your way, Liz. I am always a phone call away. Sincerely Ms Mona Credeur

Mona Credeur - May 10, 2023 at 10:09 PM

TM

As a former student of his at PSU I can say he was captivating and caring, knowledgeable and even welcomed some of us into his home for dinner as homesick students longing for a home cooked meal where we shared stories and dined with he and Pat on a meal fit for royalty. A small group of us tried to stay in contact over the years via email with him and he was always glad to exchange life stories and catch-up. His dedication to our nation and science, and I'm sure to family and friends as well, will be how he is remembered. Rest In Peace Dr DeWitt.

Timothy McLoughlin - August 01, 2023 at 10:45 AM

TR

Bob, I still remember the night Marlene and I invited a houseful of friends and discovered that many of them were disappearing into our basement. Upon investigating, we discovered you offering "Astronomy 101" to a crowd of captivated guests!
It was great to have known you...

Tom Russo - PSU/Altoona

Thomas J. Russo - December 02, 2025 at 09:41 PM