



## Bob Hong

September 4, 1923 - December 26, 2019

Our beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather has been promoted to his forever home in heaven! Because of his trust in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, Bob Hong is enjoying eternity with the saints who have gone before him. Born at home in Custer, Washington to Vera and Malvin Hong on September 4, 1923, he grew up on their family farm on Northwest Rd., attended North Bellingham Grade School, and graduated from Ferndale High School in 1940. He worked his way through Success Business College in Bellingham with part-time jobs as janitor, dishwasher, menu-typist, bill collector, and sheet-metal apprentice. He served in the army from January 1943 to March 1946 first at Fort Lewis for basic training, and then in Washington D.C. at the Office of Strategic Services. Beginning in June of that year, he continued his education in the areas of agriculture and education, graduating from Washington State College in Pullman in July 1949. In December of that year he married the love of his life, Jean Paton and they established their home on West Axton Road in the 50's and moved to Fort Bellingham in 1960. From 1949 to 1961, Bob was the instructor for the Institutional-on-Farm-Trainings through the Ag departments of high schools in Ferndale, Lynden, and Oak Harbor. In 1961, he started the first Special Education program at Ferndale High School. From then to 1978, he taught many Junior and Senior High classes including typing, and the on-road portion of Driver's Training. Always eager to volunteer, he and Jean spent their summers from 1973 through 1979 teaching Bible and other subjects in Accra,

Ghana, West Africa. Bob retired from public school teaching in 1978 to study Bible at Regent Grad School in Vancouver B.C., and he launched on his next adventure with his wife who retired from public school teaching in 1980. They served as career missionaries at Maranatha Bible College in Accra, not only teaching day and evening classes, but assisting their students to learn ways to make a living with farming, and distributing gifts sent from U.S. projects such as wedding dresses, typewriters, and organizing an 8,000 book library. Returning to Whatcom county in 1991, Bob continued to do much volunteer teaching at his local church, delivering Meals on Wheels, volunteering with international students teaching literacy, and teaching 55 Alive Traffic Safety courses. He has continued to bless others with his kind, appreciative attitude, praying for the needs of others even as he has recently had to endure declining mobility and 4 years of dialysis due to kidney failure. He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife Jean, granddaughter Erika Jean Hong, and grandson Benjamin Robert Van Vleck. He is survived by his daughter Ruth (Steven) Van Vleck of Ferndale, son David (Lauren) Hong of Carmel, CA, and son Daniel (Lori) Hahn of Ventura, CA, 10 grandchildren, and 19 great-grandchildren. There will be a Celebration of Life at Evergreen Community Church (6899 Enterprise Rd.) at 11:30 on January 6, 2020 followed by lunch. The family is grateful for the loving care that he received by the staff at Mt. Baker Care Center, Eden Home Health, as well as innumerable doctors and nurses who truly cared for him at each visit. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Evergreen Community Church or to The Gideons, P.O. Box 882, Lynden, WA 98264.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Moles Farewell Tributes created a Tribute Video in memory of Bob Hong*



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**Moles Farewell Tributes** - September 25, 2025 at 11:52 AM

“ My dad was a man of faith. My earliest recollection of my father was when as a preschooler, I was his little buddy. His job was visiting farms and I got to ride along many times. I looked forward to those times with him in the car. It was also during this time in my life that my father introduced me to his faith in Jesus Christ. He told me that even though I was usually a good little girl, no one can be good enough to get to heaven with their own goodness. I needed to accept the gift of God of eternal life through trusting in Jesus Christ as my Savior, who is the only righteous one. I knew at that early age if my kind and good daddy needed a savior, then surely I did, too. If you have known Daddy in these recent days, you will know that he still held fast to his faith in Jesus as his Savior. Although a soft-spoken man most of the time, my dad was not shy about sharing this faith with a few words, or by offering a Daily Bread devotional book to anyone who would take it.

My dad was a self-disciplined individual, and he desired to teach that trait to his children. He believed in rewarding us for behaviors that he wanted to see in us. For example, he wanted to have us get in the habit of brushing our teeth, so he would leave a quarter in the drawer as a reward for the first person to brush their teeth after a meal. He wanted us to know the value of a dollar, so rather than just lavishly buying whatever clothes, shoes, and skateboard we wanted, we picked strawberries, raspberries, and beans to earn our spending money. Later when he taught me to drive and I wanted to borrow the car to run around with my friends, he allowed me to do that, but I needed to keep track of mileage and pay a certain number of cents per mile to use the family car.

However, my dad was a generous man. I often wonder how my life would have been different if he hadn't generously paid my way through college. Even after I met my husband at college, my parents continued to pay my tuition so I could complete my B.A. in education. Because of that, when it came time for me to have a job, I could have a career in an area that I really loved: teaching kids. Not only was he generous to his own family, but he gave of his time and resources to make an impact on the lives of others here and around the world. Even when he and my mom went to Ghana, he

*was faithful to continue to support many other missions and charitable organizations. When he retired, he generously volunteered to teach international students the English language, delivered Meals on Wheels, taught 55 Alive Drivers Ed classes, was an elder here at Evergreen Community Church, taught Adult Bible Studies, and mentored other individuals.*

*During these last 5 years since my mom went home to be with the Lord, it has been my privilege to spend quite a bit of time with my dad. I don't regret a single minute of it. I have been privileged to be needed by this dear man who was so special to many. I'm not sure that it has really sunk in that my time with him on this earth is really over. It will take some getting used to. I just pray that a little bit of what he tried to teach me over the years will continue to sink in, and that I will be faithful to serve his wonderful Lord who is also my Lord and Savior.*

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**Ruthie Van Vleck** - January 20, 2020 at 12:00 AM

“ Well, I am David, Bob and Jean’s middle child...and with me this morning are my wife Lauren and our four kids, Lindsey from Chicago, Illinois, Cathy from San Diego, CA, Jonny from Pasadena, CA, and Melanie from Dana Point, CA. And I know that I speak for all of them when I say that they have dearly loved my dad, as I might add, have their 6 children as well. Great grandpa was always good at sending a joke by email and a couple of them loved to return the favor.

One of the real blessings my sister Ruthie, my brother Daniel and I all enjoyed was the opportunity to spend some time with my dad in the waning days of his life. I got up from California and I treasured those last days with him. Dad passed the morning after Christmas and shortly after I got home I penned a newsletter article for the church family that I pastor in California, and that’s what I’d like to share with you this morning.

I simply titled it, *A Father’s Legacy*

As I write this, we are just hours away now from the turn of the calendar, and 2019 will be history. The year will be memorable for many, for me it marks the final passing of the torch from my dad to my sister, my brother and me. The Lord welcomed Dad to his heavenly Home last week in the early morning hours. It was the day after Christmas.

My dad was a teacher, a teacher par excellence. Sometimes he taught with words, but always he taught by example. In my early years he taught me how to gather eggs from our chickens, how to do it without getting pecked. He taught me how to plant a row of corn...keep that line straight son, and he taught me how to keep water in the horse’s feeding trough when the Western Washington winter temperatures dropped down below freezing. Dad also taught me how to handle my ten-cent weekly allowance. “Always give that first penny to the Lord,” he’d say, “more when you want to say a big “Thank you” to God, or maybe more when the missionary comes from a far-away place to visit. Then save a penny or two in your bank.” It was sound economic advice, and though my allowance has changed down through the years, the principles have served me well.

*A couple more things from those early years...Dad told us kids to always eat everything mom serves up for dinner, even if those broccoli sprouts are hard to get down, and be thankful. But then save some room for dessert (and that he taught by example—Butter Brickle ice cream was his dessert of choice.) And, Dad taught me how to wiggle my ears. I'll never forget seeing his bald forehead scrunching up and down and his ears wiggling up a storm across the table. His after-dinner tales about what happened in his day were probably half fable, but they could put my mom and us all laughing in stitches.*

*And Dad taught us kids other more enduring life lessons, too. I watched him care attentively for his mother after his first dad died and his stepdad abandoned her. Dad was a good son. He often stopped by her place after school to help out with errands or fix-it kinds of problems (by my middle school years, Dad had moved from teaching farming to Korean War vets to launching a special education program for middle and high school students in our local Ferndale schools). Then, too, there were plenty of lessons about unselfish service as I watched my dad stay up late or get up very early to prepare Bible lesson for the rural American Sunday School Union church where Dad served as a lay pastor. And this in addition to his active public school teaching involvement.*

*Perhaps most enduring were the spiritual life lessons Dad taught us at home. They were lessons woven into the fabric of our family by his own spiritual convictions and example. Weekdays, we had 6:15 am morning family Bible reading. And that was often followed by reading a missionary letter and prayer. Sunday afternoons, we had Bible verses to memorize before we were freed to get out and ride bikes with the neighbors. Dinner meals always began with a time of thanksgiving. And s*

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**Dave Hong** - January 20, 2020 at 12:00 AM

“ Then, (and as many of you would know) when my Dad reached his early 50’s, he and my mom began using their summers to teach at Maranatha Bible College in Ghana, West Africa. After 7 years of summer service, they retired from their teaching jobs here in the States and went full time for the next 12 years to teach and serve at the Bible College there. For people who really didn’t get along well with hot weather, Dad and Mom still loved serving in that ministry. They deeply loved their students, and they gave of themselves unselfishly to see their students grow and succeed. And they in turn were loved greatly by those students as well. I had the rich privilege of getting to serve with them on a couple of those trips to Ghana, and I see life through different lenses, and I am a better because of it.

Upon Dad’s return from Ghana, he and my mom continued in active Christian service, here where their roots were, back at Evergreen Community Church. Dad loved teaching the Bible and serving here on the leadership team. And he stayed active in prayer groups that supported foreign missions. Even well into my dad’s 90’s, he corresponded with, and supported missionaries all over the world. His greatest disappointment in his last hospitalization and move to assisted care at 96 was that he wasn’t able to keep up his email ministry with friends in missionary service and with the online evangelistic counseling he actively engaged in with Campus Crusade for Christ.

In character, my dad was incredibly patient. He almost never complained, even through rough days of kidney dialysis and failing health. In his last days his most often repeated words to his care givers were, simply, “Thank You.” Together with my mom, my parents made a great pair. He loved my mom well, and he missed her terribly when she was gone.

Growing up as a kid, I didn’t really get to know my dad well. I was busy being a kid, and he was busy doing the things that busy dads do. His Scandinavian hard- working manner was for the most part pretty quiet, and his life was all about serving others. It wasn’t really until after I trusted Christ and began walking as a believer in my later teen years that my dad and I began to connect at a heart level,

*of just beginning to know how to talk about life together. I'm so grateful that we had many more years for me to get to know and him and to appreciate the great gifts passing along to me. For the last years of his life, and more importantly after Mom passed on to heaven, I grew to love the weekly telephone conversations we had about family, about life, about ministry. Even now, I can see him in my mind's eye, in his later years, sitting in his chair by our old piano, a stack of missionary letters on his lap, faithfully praying over each one, and then finishing his morning devotional time by praying by name for each of his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.*

*I know without a doubt that Dad's faith was in Jesus as his Savior. And because that's true, I know he's now moved on to be face to face with Jesus. I know too that we'll meet up in heaven not long from now. When Dad breathed his last, I thought of the Apostle Paul's personal testimony and how fitting it really was as well for my dad. Paul wrote, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. In the future (and for Dad that future is now) there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but to all who have loved His appearing." Dad loved Christ's appearing.*

*Now we are about to roll into a new year, and I feel the weight of carrying on the best of my dad's legacy. And I realize more than ever what a privilege it has been to be shaped by his words and by his example. The things he cared about are the things of eternity. His habits have left their mark on my soul. I know I've still got some lea*

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**Dave Hong** - January 20, 2020 at 12:00 AM

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“ Bob Hong. If you knew my dad, you likely knew...

*He loved farming. Over the years he raised a lot of animals— cows, chickens, rabbits, ducks, sheep, a horse, a goat, a guinea pig, a turtle along with tolerated dogs and cats—which generally seemed less useful.*

*He grew a half acre of green beans, lots of berries, all sorts of vegetables, enormous pumpkins and even a patch of Christmas Trees.*

*He didn't like to throw anything out. He never wasted anything. He would even save leftover toast until the next day. He liked milk, even buttermilk, and would hold the carton upside down over his glass to get every last drop.*

*He listened to preachers on cassette tapes and had thousands of them stored up*

*He liked his button down shirts with two pockets, no flaps*

*He preferred to eat at Dennys or something equivalent, nothing fancy.*

*He and mom preferred Motel 6, nothing extravagant.*

*He liked his cars to be durable, nothing pretentious. He loved Ramblers, which were cars made by the American Motor Company—a car which no longer exists made by a company that no longer exists.*

*He loved Evergreen Community Church and he loved the Gideons, an organization that distributes Bibles.*

*He loved missions, missionaries, mission conferences, missionary slide shows, supporting missionaries, missionary prayer letters and anything else remotely associated with taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth.*

*He was an avid game player, and in the end played Rumicub as long as anyone else would keep playing. When I was a kid we never had real playing cards—just Rook cards. My faith was shaken when I came home from college and found a pack of real cards in the game closet.*

*If you knew my dad, you knew he had a strong moral compass. He never wavered. He was faithful in every way. When I was a kid, some gas station restrooms required a dime inserted in a silver box*

*on the door in order to open the door. Once, when someone was exiting I remember trying to slip in before the door closed—thus saving our family a dime. My dad very sternly explained that was, in fact, stealing. If they required a dime to use the toilet, we would be paying the dime. No question.*

*Dad shunned anything that appeared worldly for the time period—things like bellbottoms or, going to movies, dancing or kissing on dates, which might lead to dancing. He did like jokes though. He loved telling jokes. He and mom loved good humor and were routinely heard laughing their heads off. They knew real joy.*

*Dad really didn't like sports. Mom liked the Mariners—so he went along with it to a degree, but it wasn't his gig. He didn't read novels, didn't listen to music, and didn't like TV, except when mom made him watch Animal Kingdom or some such show.*

*If you knew my dad, you knew he was even keeled, level headed, rarely ruffled, endlessly patient, always stable, predictable, and practical. Which all served him very well as a Special Education instructor as well as a Driver's Ed instructor. He sat calmly while 15 years bumped and screeched and swerved all over town. What's funny is that later in life, my mom always did the driving when they were out together. He, a driver's ed instructor relegated to the passenger seat. He said that mom was happier driving—which meant he was happier riding.*

*If you knew my dad, he was totally faithful. He loved God. He loved the Bible. He loved to pray. He led family devotions in the morning. He loved sharing the Gospel with people. He was completely kind to every human being he ever met. I never saw my dad do a mean thing to anyone. Ever.*

*No matter what, my dad never swore. To his final days, I never heard him say a bad word. Ever. Amazing. I remember the day I said the word "darnit!" That earned me a really long time out.*

*Sometimes my dad would discipline us by fining us a certain amount of money. I suppose he needed the dimes for restrooms.*

*If you looked at photos of my dad at, say, age 30, and at 50, 70 or 90...he*