



## Robert "Bob" Nelson Plumb Jr.

December 19, 1936 - February 6, 2026

On Feb. 6, our wonderful Bob sailed away after successfully fighting melanoma cancer for one year. Then his 89-year-old body simply gave out.

Bob was a lifelong resident of Bellingham, born in a hospital only a few blocks from his current home. He grew up on Bellingham's South Hill, very close to Lowell Elementary. He often said he always won the race home from school because he lived so close. He graduated from Bellingham High School and stayed in close contact with many of his childhood friends; they were all very important to him.

He attended Western Washington College of Education (now WWU) for two years. He joined the Marine Reserves and trained at Camp Pendleton, CA. He later took a job in Bellingham selling Volkswagens and discovered his true passion—automotive sales. When the dealership's owner, Pat Pigott, died in a car race, Bob became Sales Manager.

On January 1, 1965, he opened his own dealership, selling British Motor Cars and Rover, and later Volvo and Datsun (Nissan), at 210 Grand Ave. downtown. In 1970, he took a new Datsun off the showroom floor and turned it into a race car. Doug Sande and his wife Judy raced the car, becoming Trans-Am champions in the Pacific Northwest for four years.

In 1973, Bob built the Import Motors building at 1601 Iowa St., where he operated a successful dealership selling both Nissan and Volvo.

He was very supportive of the local community. For many years, he sponsored the Hole-in-One Golf Tournament at the Bellingham Golf & Country Club, a fundraiser for the Boys & Girls Club. He served on the board of the Boys & Girls Club, was a founding member of the Bellingham Bay Rotary Club, and served as Rotary President in 1989. He traveled to Seoul, Korea to represent the club and was a Paul Harris Fellow. He was also a member and board member of BYC, a member of CYC, and raced his sailboat with both clubs.

He crewed aboard Diehler for Swiftsure and raced the Around the County Race many times with dear friends aboard Bacchus II. He shared many wonderful years racing and cruising with his wife Susan, children, and even grandchildren. He sailed around Vancouver Island as crew aboard the Haines' sailboat Lioness, sailed through the Panama Canal with the Diehls, and participated in Swiftsure races.

Bob was a longtime Car Coach for the University of Washington, holding season tickets and traveling with the team to one away game each year. He cherished memories of games at UW and even two Rose Bowls. He also served as a Car Coach for WWU for a time.

After retiring as an auto dealer, he worked at boat shows in Seattle for Dick Hawley. Later, David Bradley of Whidbey Island Bank recommended Bob to sell boats at Performance Yachts—he knew boats, sales, and Bellingham well. He loved working part-time for Tom Britton.

Retirement allowed plenty of time for travel to Europe, Hawaii, Alaska, New Zealand, and Australia. He and Susan cruised their sailboat in the summers and traveled south in the winters to Palm Desert and Borrego Springs, CA, in

their RV. He enjoyed family trips to Hawaii, Washington, D.C., Kansas City, San Luis Obispo, and Delta, CO.

He loved telling stories at the many wonderful deck parties held at their condo on Lummi Island. Weekday mornings found him having coffee with friends, and weekends meant breakfast with friends and family. He loved staying connected by phone with the many friends and family he cared about so deeply.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Nelda C. Judd.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Susan Plumb; sons Wade and Brantley Plumb; daughter Hilary Fullner (Mark); granddaughter Emma Finney (Blake); grandson Michael Plumb (Lexi); and three great-grandchildren.

He will be greatly missed by many.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Bellingham Vo-Tech College.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Squalicum Boathouse located at Zuanich Park on Saturday, April 11th, 2026, from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

# Tribute Wall

TE

“ In 1989 I purchased my first of many Volvos from Import Motors. A wine berry red 240 wagon. Did all the paperwork and was standing in the showroom waiting for them to bring it around and this guy comes down the stairs and shakes my hand and says I'm Bob thank you I hope you enjoy your new Volvo. Ran into him at an event at the yacht club many years later. A real gentleman.

Tom Ekdahl - March 11 at 11:26 PM

TB

“ I was lucky to know Bob! I had just bought Performance Yachts in Bellingham. It included a dealership for Catalina sailboats, which I knew nothing about. My banker, Dave Bradley said I ought to call Bob as he just retired and was bored and driving Susan nuts. It was great for both of us! He knew how to sell and he knew sailboats- he taught me a lot. We had a wonderful time through the years going to boat shows and rendezvous and selling boats. After I sold the business and moved to Hawaii, we continued to talk monthly and meet up at Anthony's whenever I came back to the Mainland. Bob was always upbeat and enthusiastic about life. I'll miss him. Tom Britton

Tom Britton - February 26 at 12:27 PM

BR

“ Breesa lit a candle in memory of Robert "Bob" Plumb



Breesa - February 18 at 01:54 PM