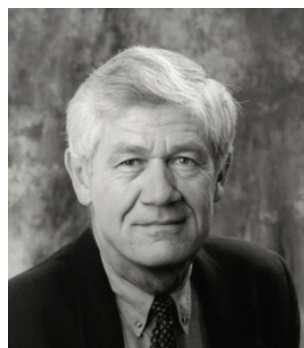


IN MEMORY OF  
**ROBERT  
OMER  
FOURNIER**

**Obituary for Robert Omer Fournier**

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Robert Omer Fournier passed away peacefully on December 10, 2023, at his home in Timberlea, with his wife and children by his side. Born in 1939 in Fall River, Massachusetts, to Omer L. and Loretta B. Fournier, Bob grew up in Providence, Rhode Island with his older sister, Claire, younger sister, Diane, and younger brother, Richard. In high school, he met Anne (Nancy) Louise Holt while he was a football player and she was the head cheerleader at a rival school. They married in 1962, a year after Bob graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a degree in Ecology. Bob went on to complete an MSc in Biological Oceanography at the College of William and Mary in 1963, and returned to the University of Rhode Island for his PhD. Following postdoctoral work in Norway and England, he came to Halifax in 1968 to work as a postdoctoral fellow under the supervision of Dr. Gordon Riley. From there, he worked for two years as an Assistant Professor of Botany at the University of Hawaii before returning to Dalhousie in 1971. He would spend the rest of his career at Dal, beginning as an assistant professor/researcher, then as Department Chair, and then as Associate Vice-President from 1986-1999. After he retired in 2005, he was awarded Professor Emeritus and stayed on at Dal as the Interim Director of the Marine Affairs program.

Throughout his career, Bob was passionate about teaching, especially the

undergraduates in his Introduction to Oceanography course. He would frequently have chance meetings with former students; even years after they had taken his course, they all recalled Bob's passion for the subject and the curiosity he was able to ignite in students by presenting the wonders of the oceans and the vast amount that remained to be learned. Bob was involved in numerous scientific committees, both locally and globally, too numerous to mention. This passion was recognized by Acadia University in 2018, when Bob was presented with an honorary degree dedicated to his sharing and communicating of the sciences.

Early on, Bob's work at Dal led to an opportunity for occasional science segments on CBC radio. This turned into the creation of a weekly column on Information Morning. He did his final segment nearly forty years later. These weekly items were a labour of love, each one conceived after scouring the many science journals and news publications he subscribed to for an idea. Bob would then dive deep into the story, educating himself on the topic so he could present it clearly to a general audience—always ably assisted by the endless curiosity of host Don Connolly, who frequently hoped the item included a mention of a vortex.

Bob was a devoted husband to Nancy, loving father of Andrew (Katrina), Michael (Sonya), Samantha (Jeff), and Daniel (Alexandra), and proud grandfather of Palmar James, Isabelle, Amelia, Imogen, Charles, Victoria, Josephine, Kiernan and Matthew. On weekends and vacations, there was no place Bob would rather be than working in the woods around his home in Timberlea, where he cut four to six cords of firewood each year for almost forty years. He was a capable amateur carpenter and auto mechanic, and for years assisted Nancy with her prodigious vegetable garden. Less capable in the kitchen, he still delighted his children with his own mother's recipe for elbow macaroni. Bob had many interests and loved to be with his family; gatherings were full of laughter and chatter. Opera was always playing on the radio or record player, and books

were found in every room of the house.

Throughout his career, Bob was seen as a groundbreaker, not just for Oceanographic research and preservation – both locally and globally – but also for how well he shared his passion for science across the country. From Information Morning, he also earned spots on Switchback and a weekly segment on CBC TV's program, Midday, from the first week it aired to the last episode 15 years later. Bob was a natural educator and chatted about science topics in a way that was captivating and easy to understand. He was humble. He downplayed his accomplishments and would compare his knowledge to the Mississippi River: a mile wide and an inch deep. Everyone who knew Dr Bob loved him and enjoyed listening to him, whether it was in a lecture hall or in their kitchens. He will be missed by many.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Aphasia Institute (<https://www.aphasia.ca/donate>). Per Bob's wishes, there will not be a visitation or funeral, but a celebration of life will be held in the new year and a notice will be posted at a later date. In the interim, condolences can be made online to [www.rawalker.ca](http://www.rawalker.ca).

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