



Robert Donald Merris

September 30, 1928 - April 14, 2025

Robert (Bob) Donald Merris, 96, died April 14, 2025, in Minneapolis, MN.

Bob was born on September 30, 1928, in Bluffs, IL, son of Donald and Helen Frohwitter Merris. He was married to the late Mary Elizabeth Bentley on February 20, 1950, in Jacksonville.

Five children survive: Michael R. Merris of Yountville, CA, Kathleen D. McNeely (Joel) of Jacksonville, IL, Gregory A. Merris (Cindy) of San Diego, CA, Mary H. Hogan (Patrick) of Apple Valley, MN, and Eric E. Merris (Susan) of Pea Ridge, AR.

Also surviving are five grandchildren: Jonah Merris of Emeryville, CA, Aiden Merris of Seattle, WA, Jennifer Carr (Jeff) of Boise, ID, Aaron Merris of San Diego, CA, and Abigail Hogan of Apple Valley, MN, and two great-grandchildren: Sophia Carr and Brayden Carr of Boise, ID.

Bob had two brothers and two sisters: William Merris (Marilyn) of Jacksonville, IL (deceased), Harold Merris (Judy) of Mount Carmel, IL, Dorothy Smith (Steven) of Holderness, NH (deceased), and Donna Merris (Robyn Huffman) of Sandwich, NH.

Bob began a career in newspapers as a "printer's devil" for his hometown

Bluffs Times. He worked as sports editor of the Jacksonville Journal-Courier during his college years. He became editor of the Decatur newspapers in the 1950s and 1960s before moving his family to New York. There, he was editor of three different newspapers for the Gannett Company before returning to Illinois.

In the 1980s and 1990s Bob settled into what he called the "most enjoyable and productive years of my life," as Vice President for Development, Alumni Relations, Public Relations and Admissions under Illinois College's then-president, Dr. Donald Munding. He taught communications courses as well.

After his retirement, Bob wrote six books he called "light histories." The books covered the pioneer days of Illinois College, Bluffs, the Wabash Railroad, and the first Scott County villages of Exeter and Naples, among others.

Bob was a U.S. Navy veteran, serving as a radio and radar operator with Experimental Squadron 2 on Chincoteague Island, NC.

He was a past commander of the Bluffs American Legion post.

Private interment services will be held at Green Cemetery in Bluffs, Illinois. The family suggests donations in lieu of flowers be made to honor Bob and his love of Illinois history, to the Illinois State Historical Society <https://historyillinois.org/support-us/> or to a charity of choice.

Tribute Wall



“ *A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Robert Donald Merris.*



May 02, 2025 at 01:33 PM



“ *My sincere condolences to you, Mary and Eric and the rest of your loved ones. I really enjoyed getting to serve and visit with your dad at the restaurant before he moved. May he rest in peace and may you find comfort in many wonderful memories. Mindy (Mueller) Carter*

Mindy Carter - April 17, 2025 at 09:37 AM



Thank you so much for writing your comment. It's so wonderful to hear from you. You would have seen quite a bit of Dad at the Boatel. Goodness, he loved that place. Would you let Eric Van Gundy know of Dad's death? They became close when Dad was writing his book that included the Van Gundy family. I would so appreciate it. Again, thank you for reaching out to offer your condolences.

Mary Hogan - April 18, 2025 at 02:38 PM