



Robert D. Tift

December 13, 1940 - October 12, 2023

Robert D. Tift, 82, of Zeeland, Michigan, passed away, on Thursday, October 12, 2023.

Bob was born December 13, 1940, in Hillsdale, Michigan, to Riley and Dessie (Smith) Tift. He graduated from Reed City High School and Central Michigan University. He married Cathy Bull on August 22, 1964. Bob taught in Zeeland High School from 1964-1984, a well-loved teacher of chemistry and physical science. He took a keen interest in his individual students. Bob loved helping students to achieve their individual educational goals and was always generous with his time, effort, and wallet. He spent countless hours tutoring. From 1975-76 he volunteered for the RCA and moved his family to Nagasaki, Japan, teaching at a Japanese junior college. Bob was always a hard-working entrepreneur working nights and weekends at Quality Furniture early in his work life, and at De Bruyn Seed Store, and Englesman Greenhouse after retiring. He was also busy operating motels, Mother Hubbard Stores, the Sand Trap Restaurant, and Tift's Merry Berry Farm.

In 1985, Bob and Cathy volunteered and evangelized in Fort Pierce, Florida, and later Franklin Tennessee, moving back to Zeeland in 1993. Bob was strong in his faith and eager to share the gospel with others. He volunteered at the Bridge Youth Ministry Center, and Good News Express, a prison ministry Bob and Cathy founded. He also volunteered for Mission Possible in

Haiti, YWAM (Youth With A Mission), and many other places.

Bob loved to have fun too, in his hot air balloon. As part of the 100th year celebration of FMB in downtown Zeeland, he raised his balloon on Main Street and dropped ping-pong balls as prizes from the sky.

Bob was preceded in death by his sister Peggy Hart, brothers-in-law: Robert Troeger and Dennis Bull, niece Deb Sprow.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Catherine, daughters: Amber & John Fanthorpe of Zeeland, Ellen & Kurt Goebel of Tennessee; 13 grandchildren: Lennox Goebel, Chad & Papillion Snyder, Kimberly Snyder, Christina Snyder, Noah Snyder, Angel Snyder, Aviva Snyder, Liliana Snyder, Charis Snyder, Jackson Snyder, Samuel Fanthorpe, Jacob Fanthorpe, Simon Fanthorpe; several great-grandchildren & great-great-grandchildren, siblings: Jean Tift, Richard (identical-twin brother) & Marcia Tift, Rebecca Troeger; in-laws: Dean and Sandie Bull, Anita & Al Denning, Kathy Bull; and many extended family and friends.

The Tift Family is grateful for the loving care Bob and family received from Faith Hospice and the staff of SKLD Zeeland.

Visitation is 5-8 pm, Thursday, October 19, at Yntema Funeral Home, 251 S. State Street, Zeeland MI 49464. Visitation at Second Reformed Church, 225 E. Central Avenue on Friday, October 20, 10:00-10:45am, followed by a memorial service in honor of Bob's faith and life at 11:00 am. Memorial contributions may be made to Gideons International, Barnabas Ministries, 4670 Pine Street, Hamilton MI 49419, The Bridge Youth Center, 220 East Main Ave., Zeeland MI 49464.

You can watch/view the service at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaaiE7BBZNkeN2dBT-Wx59A>

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **19**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Yntema Funeral Home
251 S State St
Zeeland , MI 49464
(616) 772-2173
info@yntemafh.com
<http://langelandsterenberg.com/>

Visitation

OCT **20**. 10:00 AM - 10:45 AM (ET)

Second Reformed Church
225 East Central Avenue
Zeeland, MI 49464

Memorial Service

OCT **20**. 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM (ET)

Second Reformed Church
225 East Central Avenue
Zeeland, MI 49464

Tribute Wall



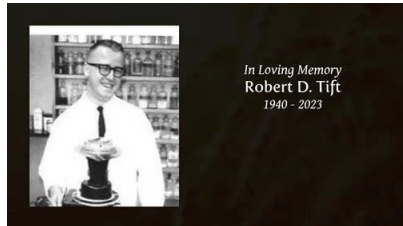
“ *Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes created a Webcast in memory of Robert D. Tift*



Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes - October 19, 2023 at 11:08 AM



“ *Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Robert D. Tift*



Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes - October 19, 2023 at 09:10 AM

LS

“ *Always seemed happy. I remember the hot air balloon he had :) His race I'd done and I'm sure Jesus smiled when he entered into heaven. A big comforting hug to Cathy, Amber and Ellen along with all the family.*

Linda Sluiter - October 19, 2023 at 09:08 AM

MH

“ *What a kind wonderful Man! I feel so blessed to have been a friend of Bobs! God Bless you dear friend may you rest in peace. My deepest condolences to Kathy and family.* 🙏❤️

Martha Holder - October 16, 2023 at 01:03 PM

SV

“ *I remember picking blueberries on his farm and also having Him as a teacher at ZHS. My sympathy to the Tift family.*

sharon Vandebeldt - October 15, 2023 at 08:47 PM

LR

“ *Heaven truly gained another angel. My sympathies to his family for their loss. Mr. Tift was one of my favorite teachers that taught me to "memorize, memorize, memorize". I will forever be known as one of his "little fellers"*

Lanette Redder - October 15, 2023 at 08:21 PM

JW

“ *So sorry to see that Bob passed away. He was one of my favorite teachers at ZHS. I always enjoyed talking to Bob @ Frank's and other places he helped out at. He was a good guy.*

jason wolters - October 14, 2023 at 09:49 AM