

A BUSY ROCKHOUND AND WRITER AN ACTIVE LIFE

Bob Jones,

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1. Robert William "Bob" Jones photo from the official guide issued during the first peacetime July 1946 Atomic bomb test at Bikini atoll, Pacific ocean.

2. Bob was the Speaker in Residence for the ninth time at an official Mineralogical Federation one week retreat in the western mountains of North Carolina.

Photo: D. Stripp, 1994.

3. Bob cutting, grinding and shaping a cabochon. Photo: B. Emery, 1994.

I was born in 1926 in Bridgeport, CT. I grew up in Bridgeport until age 8 when we moved to Stratford where we lived in a garage while my father and a carpenter built a house on a small farm. My Dad worked in a factory and raised chickens and, pigeons. we had a large family garden which we enjoyed very much. My Dad was born in Wales and had worked in the coal mines briefly. He was also a superb soccer player and came to this country to play as a professional soccer player, captaining three championship teams in the 1920s. After that he refereed Ivy League college soccer games. My mother was born in England and was a good housewife who also took care of her mother and her cousin, a World War I veteran who lived with us. Both parents died in the 1970s.

In 1936 at age ten I went on a school field trip to the Yale University Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven, CT to see the dinosaurs for which it was famous. While there I wandered into the old mineral hall upstairs and saw minerals for the first time, mainly the Silliman-Yale mineral collection which included a fluorescent mineral display which really excited me. I still recall the 22 inch Japan stibnite and a small Austrian epidote with crystals sticking out of a ball of needle crystals of green bysollite. I learned years later the epidote was a fake! The day after that visit to Yale Peabody Museum I got my father's hammer and screwdriver and went rock hunting! I've never stopped since that time.

I started Junior High School in 1938. Grades 7 and 8 were combined with the four year school. I took college prep courses through high school and was on the track team. I also enjoyed acting so performed in several plays including the Senior Class play.





4. Bob enjoyed amateur motorcycle racing on a dirt track in Connecticut about 1951. Photo: J. McCauley, 1950.

In 1944 while still in high school I enlisted in the Army Air Corp hoping to go to pilot training school. I was not called up for six months during which time I worked a mechanic then mailman. When I was finally called to duty the flying schools were closed so after basic training I was transferred to aircraft mechanics school then on to an electronics school working on B-29 Bombers. That led to me being assigned to the 509th Atomic Bomb Group, Roswell, N.M. We were sent to Kwajalein for the first peacetime bomb testing in Bikini Island Lagoon part of the Gilbert and Marshall Island. I worked on a group of B-29 bombers and photo planes including Enola Gay, the Hiroshima bomber and Dave's Dream which dropped the Bikini test bomb. I was privileged to see that first bomb test from a B-29 flying 20 miles away.

I was discharged in 1946 so enrolled in engineering college but did not like it so quit and went to work as a mechanic, mailman, steel rigger, snowplow driver and finally as a fireman driving a 600 gallon pumper. In 1949 I had gone back to college briefly and I met my future wife who had just graduated from the University of Arizona. I left college and became a fireman and for a few years raced motorcycles and sports cars. In 1953 I married Alicia Ann Abbott with the understanding we would live in Arizona and I would return to college. She wanted to live in Arizona so here I am.

Our marriage lasted 40 years until she passed away in 1993. We were fortunate to have three wonderful children. Son Billi, chief assayer and water treatment manager for Kinross Gold Mining Co., daughter Suzanne, a professional cardiovascular echo tech now retired and son Evan, co-owner of Unique Minerals, a successful mineral business. Evan is also an accomplished guitar player who travels around the states to perform. I have one granddaughter Kiera Tara Jean Mariet who earned a B.A. degree in Sidney, Australia, an MA degree in London, England and an MBA at Dartmouth, New Hampshire. She is married and currently works for McKinsey Corp. in London.

In 2001 I married Carol Sues, an accomplished artist. I proposed to her when I was receiving the Carnegie Mineralogical Award at the Tucson Show banquet, Saturday evening, 1998. During my first marriage I went back to college, New Haven State Teacher's College, New Haven CT. studying to become a teacher. In college I won my B.S. degree, 1956 and my M.S. degrees, 1959. after graduation I continued in college gaining some 40 hours beyond the master's earning doctorate pay in order to support my family.

My M.S. thesis was entitled "Luminescent Minerals of Connecticut" covering over 70 Connecticut localities. The document was published privately in 1960. Localities I studied



5. In Denver a celebration of Bob's 90th birthday was held and he was joined by family members (left to right): Melissa Palermo, daughter Suzanne O'Brien, son Bill Jones, Bob, son Evan Jones, granddaughter Kiera Tara Jean Mariet, Leslie Jones. Photo: Bryan Swoboda, September, 2016.