



Robert "Bob" J. Welch

MAR 1, 1954 - DEC 22, 2023



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AJ 
HOLLY & SONS

Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Events	Page 5
Tribute Wall	Page 6
Media	Page 7



Robert "Bob" J. Welch

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Following a brief, valiant fight, Robert “Bob” Welch of Waupaca passed away peacefully on Friday, December 22nd. Founder of the Waupaca Biological Field Station, a privately-owned research facility, Bob was a middle school science teacher, ecologist, researcher, artist, explorer, humanitarian, saver-of-lives, local and state legend, and beloved by many. His tragic, unexpected death is buffered only by the incredible conservation legacy and devotion to others he leaves behind.

In addition to his robust teaching career, Bob was dedicated to researching and banding birds, contributing instrumental research on migratory species. He also played a crucial role in the discovery, research, and conservation of Wisconsin’s timber wolf population. He was dedicated to restoring native Wisconsin prairies and oak savannas, so passionate that he designed an acorn themed lodge for visiting students and friends—fondly known as “The Nut House.” Bob’s impact is reflective of one of his favorite trees, the oak—providing shelter, food, and safety for countless others and seed for future generations.

Bob is survived by his siblings Jim Welch and Mary Ferreter, extended family, his beloved critters, and countless friends and colleagues. Bob’s lifeforce persists in the land that was his life’s work, the beauty and serenity of nature, and the wonder of each of his students. Etched on the rock where he will be rejoined with his wife, Debra Martin, is a quote by esteemed conservationist and activist, Rachel Carson. It reads “If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life...”

In lieu of flowers, Bob would encourage us to take time each day to appreciate nature. Whether a stroll through Hartman’s Creek or bird watching through your window, you will find him there.

A prayer service for Bob will be held at the Holly Funeral Home, Waupaca at 10:30 AM on Saturday, January 6, 2024. A memorial visitation will be held from 8:00 AM until the time of service at 10:30 AM at the funeral home. The celebration of Bob’s incredible life and legacy will



Obituary

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continue at the Waupaca Danes Hall with an Open House from 1:30 PM until 4:00 PM. The Holly Funeral Home of Waupaca is assisting the family with arrangements.



Events

Robert "Bob" J. Welch

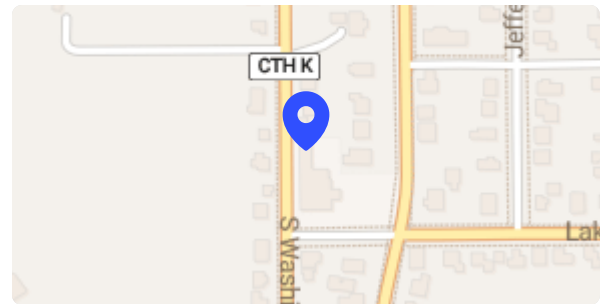
MAR 1, 1954 - DEC 22, 2023

Memorial Visitation

Saturday, January 6, 2024

8:00 AM - 10:30 AM CT

A. J. Holly & Sons (Waupaca)
526 S. Main St, Waupaca WI 54981

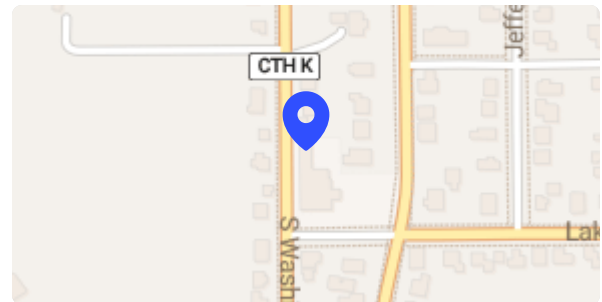


Prayer Service

Saturday, January 6, 2024

10:30 AM CT

A. J. Holly & Sons (Waupaca)
526 S. Main St, Waupaca WI 54981

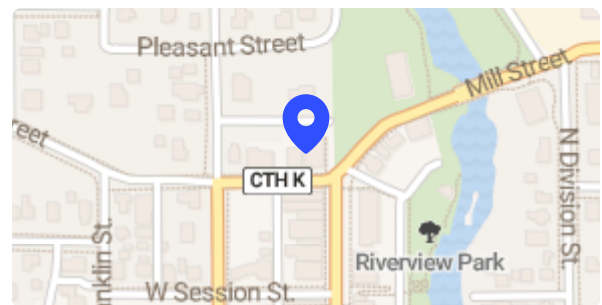


Celebration of Life Gathering

Saturday, January 6, 2024

1:30 PM - 4:00 PM CT

Waupaca Danes Hall
301 N. Main Street, Waupaca WI 54981



Cemetery Details

Holly Cremation Service
Waupaca WI



Tribute Wall

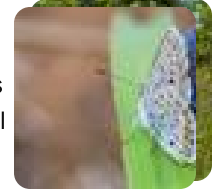
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Cathy Bleser shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Bob was one of the best people I've ever known. I first met him when I went to his door as a DNR endangered resources biologist to talk with him about his beautiful lupine savanna, and the rare blue butterflies that live there. He was immediately full of enthusiasm and there began our relationship for many years. I visited many many Karner sites in Wisconsin but his property was always my favorite, thanks to not only its beauty and rolling oak savanna habitat, but to Bob, its loving caretaker, who I considered a friend. I even brought my young son up to visit him and go inside his teepee, and stayed in touch after I retired from the DNR. We attended his wedding. Bob was an inspiration, and a beautiful soul. I'm so sorry to have missed his service, I learned too late of his passing. My sincere sympathies to Bob's family. Bob lives on across his savanna landscape and in all the blue butterflies who are able to continue thriving here because of him. I've attached photos. Cathy Bleser, retired DNR biologist



January 8 at 5:11 PM



Lawrence Woody posted:

Bob was a classmate of mine and a big reason why I went into environmental activism. A very inspiring man that cared about the community. RIP Bob 🙏

January 2 at 11:22 AM



Laurie J. Krueger lit a candle in honor of Robert "Bob".

My thoughts and prayers are with the family of Bob Welch. Bob will be greatly missed by all who knew him . With my deepest sympathy, Laurie (Hobson) Krueger



December 30 at 8:01 AM



Sally Pope Chrystal posted:

Mary, I am SO sad to hear of the passing of your dear brother!! My thoughts and prayers are with you!!! 🙏🙏💔💔 With love, Sally Pope Chrystal

December 28 at 9:02 PM



Media

Robert "Bob" J. Welch

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Cathy Bleser shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

January 8 at 5:11 PM



oak savanna with lupine in full bloom



Karner Blue butterfly



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Robert "Bob" by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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