



Robert "Bob" Hess

February 2, 1944 - March 27, 2026

Robert (Bob) Hess of Luther, Michigan was born on February 2, 1944, in Pipestone, Minnesota and died on Friday, March 27, 2026, at the age of 82.

Bob is survived by his high school sweetheart and wife of 59 years, Mary; his son, Jamie and wife Laura; his son, Chad; his daughter, Molly and her husband, Tommy; his grandchildren, Ava, Cydney, Rune, Nolen, and Clayton; his sister Judy and husband, Larry Dahl; and his nephew Michael Dahl and wife Monica, and their children Mackenzie and Jacob.

Bob graduated from the University of Minnesota and received a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife. He began his career with the Minnesota Department of Conservation. Bob moved with his wife Mary to Michigan and worked for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from 1968 to 1997. His 30-year career for the DNR began in Paris where he worked as a wildlife habitat biologist. In 1971, he moved to Lansing where he worked in the Office of Environmental Review. In 1973, Bob became the District Wildlife Biologist in Grand Rapids, serving there until 1985. In Lansing, he oversaw the Wildlife Division's Nongame/Endangered Species Program for seven years, which coordinated the Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund and included the successful reintroduction of the Peregrine falcon and Trumpeter swan.

Bob finished his career in Mio as District Wildlife Biologist. His work in Mio

included the management of the Kirtland's Warbler Program and he was instrumental in creating the Kirtland's Warbler Festival for which he earned an "Eyes on Wildlife" National Achievement Award in 1994. Bob retired in 1997 and continued his career as an environmental consultant in land management and served as an instructor of "The Birds of Northern Michigan" with the University of Michigan Biological Station and John C. Campbell Folk School in North Carolina. He volunteered with numerous local organizations including the Pine River Association, Bluebird Society, and the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy.

Bob spent his childhood roaming the prairies surrounding Pipestone National Monument in Minnesota, where his lifelong love for the outdoors took root and his deep respect for Native cultures began to grow. He was an avid birder, a hunter and fisherman, and a faithful steward of the land, who understood that nature is not ours to conquer, but to protect.

Alongside his distinguished career, Bob undertook a labor of love that reflected the very heart of who he was by reclaiming a historic timber-frame barn and carefully moving and transforming it into a cabin that stood in harmony with the natural world.

Bob was, at his core, a builder of places, of ecosystems, and of connections. He had a deep love for stone, shaping the land with patient hands, restoring wetlands, and nurturing life wherever he could with quiet devotion.

Above all, Bob was an environmentalist in both word and deed, a man who lived his values. As a father and grandfather (Baba), he passed on not just knowledge, but reverence: teaching his children and grandchildren to see the land as sacred and to care for it with humility.

He was preceded in death by his parents Carlton and LaVerle Hess and

nephew, Jeffrey Dahl.

In his memory, and in celebration of his life, take a walk beneath an open sky, pause to watch the sunset, listen for the call of birds and the quiet rhythms of the land. Honor him by protecting the environment, by engaging in conservation, and by caring deeply and intentionally for the natural world. Donations can be made to the Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org or to the Michigan Bluebird Society at www.michiganbluebirds.org.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, June 27, 2026 from 1-3 pm at the Luther Lions Club.

An online guestbook is available at www.petersonfh.com.

Upcoming Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 27. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Luther Lions Club
1003 State St
Luther, MI 49656

Tribute Wall

RM

“ Renee Maurer lit a candle in memory of Robert "Bob" Hess



Renee Maurer - Yesterday at 05:47 PM

R(

“ "Mr. Hess", you are Remembered. That smile, strength and leadership is imprinted on the tree trunk of Life. Your wife, children, and grandchildren, carry on your magnificent legacy. I know your still shaping the landscape in what's next, ahead of us and for us, and thank you for that! Renee Walsh (Maurer)

Renee Walsh (Maurer) - Yesterday at 05:26 PM

KP

“ I was a student at the UofM bio station where Bob taught me about predator birds. Fun memories of him excitedly swerving to the side of road to park while both driving and pointing to a hawk sitting on a snag!

Kate Pearson - May 07 at 10:06 AM

GB

“ Bob was well liked and highly respected by all his fellow Department of Natural Resources' employees. Our DNR was made better because it had the benefit of Bob's knowledge, skills, energy, and attitude.

George Burgoyne

George Burgoyne - April 18 at 11:02 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Robert "Bob" Hess.*



April 07 at 01:22 PM



“ *We always remember Bob and how much he gave to the community. I will always remember the times we spent at his Home, the Monday school kids fishing on his pond. The nature walks through his woods and the beautiful garden he designed and built at the luther library. He will be missed , blessings and hugs to Mary and his family.*



Barb Stenger - April 06 at 02:11 PM