

Robert “Bob” Bonwell
“You can’t outperform your knowledge!”
In Memoriam
1944-2020



Robert (Bob) Earl Bonwell, 76, of Indianapolis passed away on Thursday, April 2, 2020. Bob longed to be an entrepreneur. He always said he wanted to own his own business and have a shop to work in and fix things. He made those dreams a reality when he started Advantage Marketing in 1984. Bob built Advantage the old-fashioned way – handshake deals, hard work, grit, and determination.

Bob led the company through the transition from a small carpet cleaning company to a full-service cleaning & restoration supply house known today as Advantage – Experts in Clean with locations in Indiana, Ohio, & Michigan.

Bob has always focused on ensuring the highest level of customer service and care, treating every customer as if they are a part of his own family. Bob’s motto was “You Can’t Outperform Your Knowledge!”.

The spirit that helped build Advantage as a “family business” and Bob’s legacy will be carried on by Bob’s daughter, Kristen, the President of Advantage and his son, Mike, Senior Product Specialist.

Industry Eulogy for Bob Bonwell”

By Pete Consigli and Cliff Zlotnik

Read at half-time of: IAQradio+ podcast on, Friday April 10th 2020

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L to R: Mike, Bob & Kristen Bonwell

Bob believed in self-improvement and education, driving him to work with industry colleagues and Purdue University to help develop a degree program in disaster restoration. This drive and pursuit of quality and service led to his recognition in 2002 as a recipient of the Dri-Eaz President’s Club. In 2010 Bob was honored with the Ralph Bloss Humanitarian Award.

Some of Bob’s closest industry friends and colleagues who were saddened to hear of his passing shared their remembrances.

Claude Blackburn the founder of Dri-Eaz Products reflects by saying, “One of my few life regrets is that I didn’t take more time to know Bob Bonwell better. However, I knew then and now that he was my kind of person. Bob Bonwell earned and held my respect. From my perspective, Bob acted with integrity, fair play, sharing and kindness. Bob was an industry leader and industry pioneer always looking for a better way. Bob hardly knew my first wife Mary but when she died in 2002, Bob showed up in Mount Vernon, WA for my wife’s burial. To this day I don’t even know how he knew, but somehow, he was there to offer condolences and show his respect.

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I know he spent his restoration career trying to make a positive difference in the cleaning and restoration industry. It always seemed to me that Bob found the right balance of integrity, humanity and good business practices. I deeply feel his loss and appreciate the life he led.

Darlene Mindrum who managed the Dri-Eaz education department for many years recalls collaborating with Bob in 2005 at the ASCR Restoration Conference in St Louis MO when they co-presented on applying the principles of Good to Great and how it impacted the business growth of Dri-Eaz and Advantage. Darlene remembers Bob as guy who was very fun to hang out with; and he was big hearted, gregarious and was everyone’s friend. She is sorry he is gone.

Dr. Randy Rapp of Purdue’s school of construction management who worked with Bob over the years as Professor of the Disaster Restoration program Bob helped establish says, “What to say when we suddenly lose a wonderful personal and professional friend, as Bob Bonwell passes from us? It seems the height of hubris to try to capture all Bob was, all he did, in mere words. Bob's infectious enthusiasm, love of people and the restoration industry, and unflagging generosity for worthy causes--an honorable life force we knew and respected--will be missed. But his memory can encourage us all to live up to his love of family, others, and the restoration industry. RIP.

Cliff Zlotnik the founder of Unsmoke Systems worked with Bob for many years and simply remembers Bob as a Mensch! The dictionary describes “mensch” as, “a person of integrity and honor”. But perhaps the best explanation for those not familiar with Jewish expressions comes from Wikipedia...According to Leo Rosten, the Yiddish maven and author of The Joys of Yiddish, a "mensch" is "someone to admire and emulate, someone of noble character. The key to being 'a real mensch' is nothing less than character, rectitude, dignity, a sense of what is right, responsible, decorous." The term is used as a high compliment, implying the rarity and value of that individual's qualities.

Pete Consigli known in the industry as the “Restoration Global Watchdog” remembers Bob as a “one of a kind guy” who’s like the industry many never see again! Consigli goes on to say, “Bob Bonwell had a big heart and was a man of his word. He loved the industry, his customers and many industry friends. Bob’s work with Purdue is an unparalleled commitment to help raise the restoration bar for posterity and is a legacy that will benefit generations of restorers for years to come!”.

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Industry gifts in memory of Bob can be made to the Robert Bonwell Scholarship Endowment for Restoration and Reconstruction in Construction Management Technology online at:
www.Giving.Purdue.edu/InMemoryofRobertBonwell

Bob is also survived by his wife of 50 years, Susanne, a sister, second daughter and five grandchildren. If you wish to share your condolences with Bob’s family and friends, go to his obituary page online at:
<https://flannerbuchanan.com/obit/robert-bob-earl-bonwell/#comment-134289>

For Information later this year on Bob Bonwell’s “Celebration of Life” Ceremony to be held in Indianapolis call Advantage’s main location at: 317-291-0461 or 800-242-4952



<https://advantageexperts.com/>

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