

at the crags now included entire worlds for the woodland fairies and Avery's imagination. Having Avery did not slow down or alter the Absolons' joyful, active lives. They continued to pursue their dreams and interests and simply expanded their incredible world to include this bright, energetic, and beautiful daughter. They became an ever-closer unit. The name Absolon conjured up not one face, but three, like a wonderful team.

In addition to Avery and Molly, Pete leaves behind his parents, Mary and Karel Absolon of Rockville, Maryland; sister Mary Absolon of Edina, Minn.; sister Martha Delahanty of Long Valley, New Jersey; and brother John Absolon of Rockville, Maryland; as well as an extended family who loved him very much. Pete was preceded in death by his brother, Fritz Absolon, of Rockville, Maryland.

LIZ TUOHY, AILEEN BREW, and PHIL POWERS

ROBERT G. ALLISON 1928–2007

Bob Allison died April 22, at the age of 78, after a long struggle with cancer. He was serving at the time of his death as chair of the AAC's Grand Teton Climbers' Ranch Committee. He had previously served for many years as president of the Kansas City Climbing Club.

When I first met Bob he was already past 70, and my entire experience with him thereafter was at the Climbers' Ranch in Wyoming. Bob's principal qualities, as they struck me, were his excellent health, his wry sense of humor, and his good heart. That first June, just five or six years ago, while we were in the Tetons together, Bob was also planning another of his many trips to the Wind River Mountains for later that summer. His objective was again to climb Gannett Peak, 13,804 feet, the highest mountain in Wyoming. If I recall, that was to be the seventh or eighth time he climbed that mountain. Of course, the "difficult" part of the climb only begins after a 22-mile approach carrying a 60-pound pack. I was impressed with his physical stamina and strength, and the happiness he found among the mountains.

During one of Bob's trips to the Wind River Range he and his group came upon a large, obviously man-made pile of rocks. Skeletal remains of a horse stuck out from the bottom of the pile. Bob paused to study the scene, as if in meditation, then wondered aloud, "Didn't they know that if you pile a bunch of rocks on top of a horse you'll kill it?"

At the Climbers' Ranch, Bob was always a quiet presence. Though always sociable, ready to laugh and exchange stories, he was just more inclined to listen than to talk. It is a tribute to his easy-going manner and openness to friendship that people who met him at the Climbers' Ranch enjoyed his company whether they were in their 20s and had just met him for the first time or were older and had known him for years. He was universally regarded with affection and respect. His knowledge of the Teton Range and other mountains was well-known, and we were often entertained by descriptions of his journeys to the Russian Caucasus, to Mexico, China, and the old British base camp at Mt. Everest.

When Bob was diagnosed with cancer two years ago he reacted with a perfect balance of acceptance and determination. He even found humor in the situation. When the American



Robert Allison at the Ranch.
Courtesy Robert E. Hyman

Alpine Club waived the costs of his stay at the ranch that August, he told me afterward that it was a good deal, because if he outlived the prognosis of the doctors he might have free room and board in Wyoming for years to come.

Last June Bob was back at the Climbers' Ranch, and was, as usual, an active participant in Work Week. One day from across the ranch common I saw him carrying a heavy load of building lumber. I walked over to give him a hand and said, "Bob, why don't you leave that for the young guys?" Bob paused and gave me that wry grin. "It's late in the afternoon," he said, "the young guys are all tired."

My favorite recollection of Bob concerns an event at which I was not even present, but serves very well to illustrate his love of family and friends, his love of the mountains, and his celebration of physical vitality even as, after a debilitating year of cancer and chemotherapy, his physical vitality was steadily waning. Bob told me last June that he thought he might try to climb up to the Lower Saddle, between the Middle Teton and the Grand Teton. The ascent from the Climbers' Ranch to the Lower Saddle is more than five miles and 5,000 vertical feet, and ends with the challenge of surmounting an 80-foot headwall. When Bob told me he wanted to go up there he didn't present it as a major goal or as the last ambition of a man in failing health. He just said it casually, as if the excursion might make a nice day, maybe in June, maybe later in the season. Bob seemed happy simply to have the prospect before him, the thought itself a pilgrimage into the future, a connection to the past, and a triumph over the constrictions of fate. In my heart, I did not think he could make it, that week or later. Yet he did make it, accomplishing the climb in August. It was an extraordinary achievement for anyone his age, and much more so with his advanced illness. When I spoke to him afterwards he expressed his joy with quiet humility and gratitude.

My journal notes the event: "In August Bob Allison returned to Wyoming with his daughter, Shawna, and friends from Missouri and Colorado. He went along with everyone to the Garnet Canyon Meadows, at 9,200 feet, and camped. The next day he went where he wanted to go, reaching the Lower Saddle in the lee of the Grand Teton at 11,600 feet. He camped there with his daughter and friends, watching the Shadow Range on the floor of Jackson Hole at sunset, enjoying again the marvelous view out across Wyoming to the east, across Idaho to the west, range after range of snow-crested mountains, radiant in the late golden sunshine, slowly fading in the long blue light of dusk."

The last time I talked to Bob, early in April, he was cheerful and warmly asked about my daughter, who he recalled was leaving for Latin America with the Peace Corps this spring. He was looking forward to visiting the Climbers' Ranch again in June, he said, though I sensed that he knew very well he was not going to make it.

Bob lived with sensitivity to the resplendence of the earth, with fidelity to his family and friends, with kindness and generosity of spirit. He was modest and gentle and tough as Teton granite. In these last two years he showed us how to live with serenity and resolve "in the long blue light of dusk." I will miss him, as will many others from throughout the country who shared with him his happy visits to the Climbers' Ranch.

WILLIAM A. FETTERHOFF