



Elliott Bob Kessler

September 1, 1936 - May 17, 2022

Elliott “Bob” Kessler, a resident of Tucson for more than 60 years, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loving family, on May 17, 2022, at age 85. Bob, as he was affectionately known by all, was the son of David and Faye Kessler (nee Abramovich), brother of the late Nelson Kessler (Libby), and husband of thirteen years to Madeleine Shulman (nee Freidman). Esta Kessler (nee Podolsky), Bob’s first wife of 49 years, predeceased him in 2006. Bob was born on September 1, 1936, and raised in the Boston, Massachusetts, area. Bob was well-known for his unwavering optimism and unconditional love for his family. His wise counsel, support, and encouragement were appreciated by loved ones and strangers alike. Bob’s strong family values endure in every member of the Kessler family.

After graduating from Everett High School in 1956, Bob enlisted in the United States Army Corp of Engineers for three years, serving with distinction as a Corp. Specialist. During his time in service, Bob met his first wife, Esta, at a Jewish singles dance, while Bob was stationed at Fort Huachuca near Tucson, Arizona. It was love at first sight, and the two married shortly thereafter, in 1957. Bob and Esta had their eldest son, Michael Eric in 1958 in Tucson. They then moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where Bob earned his bachelor’s degree in Industrial Education at Arizona State University. While in Phoenix, they had their second son, Ron Bruce, in 1960. They returned to Tucson in 1961 so Bob could attend The University of Arizona, obtaining his master’s degree in Secondary Education Administration, Phi Kappa Phi, in 1963. Bob and Esta’s youngest son, Kenneth Samuel, was born in Tucson that same year.

Bob and Esta contributed significantly to the growth and development of the Tucson educational community, forming ABC Technical & Trade Schools in the early 1980s. Bob’s prior experience as a junior high school industrial arts and math teacher, the Director of the Tucson Skill Center, and a nationwide educational consultant, served as a foundation for the creation of an innovative, alternative post-secondary pathway for students seeking to enrich their lives through technical and trade careers. ABC Tech was a family business, with Bob, Esta, Michael, Ron, and Kenny working numerous jobs at the schools to ensure

their success. Customer service and business savvy were instilled in the three sons “at the dining room table,” they recounted. Eventually, Bob and Esta expanded the schools to Phoenix and Boston, adding animal grooming. Later, Bob and Esta were proud owners of Jerome’s, a popular fine dining Cajun seafood restaurant in Tucson. Bob and Esta were active in the Tucson Jewish community, as members of Temple Emanuel and Or Chadash.

Bob and Esta found time to pursue Bob’s lifelong love of the ocean and boating, spending summers on the Santini and enjoying the San Francisco Bay area, frequently inviting family and friends. Bob and Esta often returned to the Boston area to visit family, particularly enjoying the annual Kessler family picnic at Bob’s brother and sister-in-law’s house in Swampscott, Massachusetts, where hundreds of Kessler cousins reunited to stay in touch and enjoy family time. Being the consummate entrepreneur, Bob embarked on a second career in the late 1990s as owner and president of the Pull-Out Shelf Company. Most importantly, Bob thoroughly enjoyed his role as “Zayde” (aka Z-Dog) to his eight grandchildren, and then “Great Zayde” to his two great-grandchildren, as the Kessler family continued to grow.

Bob found love again and a new “bounce in his step” when he met Madeleine in Tucson in 2008, and they married in 2010. Madeleine’s healthy lifestyle enabled them to realize their shared enthusiasm for international travel, which led to exciting adventures in Vietnam, Israel, Alaska, India, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Barcelona, Portugal, and even a safari trip in Africa! When not abroad, the two spent many joyous days and summers cruising the Pacific on the new Santini, from San Francisco to Mexico. They also frequented California’s Catalina Islands and the Marina Del Rey Yacht Club, where they were members for many years. Maddie’s steadfast devotion to Bob during their time together allowed Bob to live a truly meaningful, vibrant, and joyful life.

Bob is survived by his wife, Madeleine Shulman; his sons, Michael Kessler (Lisa), Ron Kessler (Maya), and Kenny Kessler (Lesleyanne); daughter-in-law Judi Kessler; grandchildren Morisa Merhar (Matt), Rae Kessler (Sammi), David Kessler, Mitch Kessler, Melissa Neidinger (Jim), Constance Kessler, Faith Kessler, and Joseph Kessler; great-grandchildren Danaka Merhar, and Penelope Kessler, as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, and loving friends, near and far, whom Bob loved dearly.

A memorial service will be held at 9:30 am, Monday, May 23, 2022, in the chapel at Evergreen Mortuary in Tucson, followed by a graveside ceremony. Gathering of friends and family to follow at the home of Ron Kessler. Shiva will continue through Tuesday, May 24.

Cemetery Details

Evergreen Cemetery

3015 North Oracle Road
Tucson, AZ 85705
<https://evergreenmortuary-cemetery.com>

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAY 23. 9:30 AM (MT)

Evergreen Mortuary
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Tucson, AZ 85705
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Tribute Wall



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