

## Bob Alerding's legacy of giving

*"For it is in giving that we receive."*  
– St. Francis of Assisi



Bob Alerding

When Indianapolis resident Bob Alerding passed away in 2010, he left behind six children, 17 grandchildren and 23 great-

grandchildren. His obituary listed the numerous organizations he helped, the various leadership roles he took on, the community service work he did and much more.

But what it didn't mention was the *real* legacy he left behind: a desire to give to others that was inherited by his children and grandchildren.

His daughter, Mary Schaffner of Indianapolis, recently talked about her father's life and how the next generations are following in his footsteps. "Dad was faithful to prayer, to celebrating the sacraments and to being an active member of his parish community; he lived his Catholic faith well. From this, service to others flowed naturally. Growing up, we were witnesses to his generosity day in and day out, in big and in small ways."

Bob married Margie Hicks in 1944, and they became the parents of seven children. When Margie died of complications following elective surgery in 1963, Bob was left to raise the children alone. The youngest, still in diapers, was not yet 2 years old. The other six were 4, 7, 10, 12, 15 and 18.

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Mary Schaffner

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The Catholic faith that bonded their marriage kept Bob going. Prayer became a lifeline during the struggles of raising a family as a single parent.

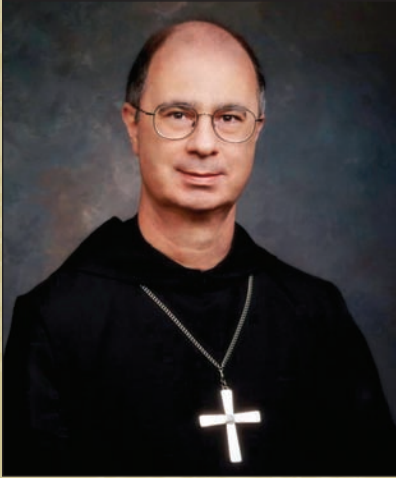
Mary, the second youngest of the seven, recalls that her father expanded their world by his service to others. While he certainly had reason to focus his energies solely on his family, instead Bob seamlessly integrated many church and civic activities into their lives.

Mary and her siblings remember his regular visits to the county jail, where he conducted prayer services for the inmates. "It's something that stayed with us and made an impression." His work with inmates influenced Mary to become involved with the Indiana Women's Prison, where she offers spiritual direction and attends Mass with the Catholic community there.

Bob's other children have experienced similar things. Their Dad's devotion to service spilled over into their own lives. Mary says that church and community service weren't expected of her and her siblings: "It seemed to flow naturally from growing up around it." The oldest, Jim, recently received the Service to Community Alumni Award at Cathedral High School, giving credit to his Dad, "who was involved in service to others from the time I can remember until his death," in his acceptance speech.

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**Rt. Rev. Justin DuVall, OSB  
Archabbot of Saint Meinrad**

Dear Friends,

Most of us, regardless of age, gender or vocation, sometimes reflect on the kind of legacy we will leave behind at our passing. We don't necessarily see ourselves leaving legacies that involve breaking sports records, authoring world-renowned books or making great scientific discoveries. Rather, we simply hope to leave a legacy that makes a difference in our communities and in our families.

There are many ways to create a legacy, whether it is sharing resources, volunteering or simply offering prayers for causes and institutions that are important to you. In demonstrating support in whatever way you can, you are helping to sustain good work that will benefit others.

Bob Alerding is a wonderful example of a donor who demonstrated his commitment to Saint Meinrad Archabbey during his life and through his estate. His legacy of giving is an inspiration to his family and to all of us who were blessed to know him.

May Bob and all the faithful departed rest in peace. And may God continue to bless you in all ways.

*+ Justin DuVall, OSB*



*Bob Alerding (seated) laughs with his seven children at a family gathering.*

"It becomes just the way you live," she reflects. "You're raised to think outside yourself."

Mary also remembers what a good cook her Dad was. "Dad loved to cook – and not just cook, but gourmet cooking," she says. "There were so many times when he would cook extra, and he'd always find somebody to give it to." Later, when people showed up with empty dishes or sent thank you notes, Mary realized how his thoughtfulness had touched others.

At her Dad's funeral, Mary recalls the many people who came up and talked about the little things Bob had done for them. "That, to me, is the beauty of Dad," she says. "He was on all these boards and he was kind of a public person in that way.... But there was the other extreme, which was very quiet, very 'behind the scenes,' the small acts of kindness that he just did for people."

Bob blessed Saint Meinrad in many ways during his lifetime and even at his passing. He was a faithful advocate of Saint Meinrad and generously shared

his resources and prayers with the monastic community.

He served as a volunteer on several fundraising efforts, encouraging others to be part of Saint Meinrad's work and mission. And, in planning for his estate, Bob arranged for a bequest to come to Saint Meinrad. In all these ways, Bob created a legacy of giving that will forever impact Saint Meinrad and continue to inspire others for years to come.

Today some of Bob's philanthropic and community interests have been inherited by his children and grandchildren. His gifts of time, talent and treasure for such places as St. Vincent Hospital, The Talbot House (a home for alcoholic men), Cathedral High School, his parish, as well as Saint Meinrad Archabbey, are being echoed by his heirs.

"Some of us are involved in some of the very things that Dad was involved in," Mary says. Besides her work with inmates, Mary – like her Dad – became connected to Saint Meinrad. She earned a master's degree in theology from

Saint Meinrad in 2010 and now serves on the school's Board of Overseers and its Board of Trustees.

Bob's legacy of giving continues to live on through his children. In fact, Mary and her siblings laugh when they think about their Dad's gravestone. "For whatever reason, the death date hasn't been put on there yet," she says. "And we keep laughing that he just continues to live." ♦

## Why some people don't have wills

People come up with all sorts of reasons for not having a will. Do any of these sound familiar to you?

- I don't want to think about death.
- Only rich people need wills.
- I can't afford a will.
- I don't have time now.
- I don't have an attorney.
- My family will divide things when I'm gone.
- I will do it just before I die.

You can probably think of other reasons as well. The point is that

these are only excuses. None of them is really valid for putting off one of the most important things we will ever do.

Every adult needs a will, if for no other reason than to officially close out our affairs and to make sure that whatever assets we have go where we want them to go. Perhaps an even greater reason is to make life easier on the grieving loved ones we leave behind.

We encourage you to take time to have a will prepared or to review your existing will to see if it needs updating. As you do so, we encourage you to consider including a charitable bequest to Saint Meinrad or other charities you have supported during your lifetime. ♦

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*"Some of the most meaningful expressions of support seen by Saint Meinrad over the years are gifts received after a donor's passing. To be named the beneficiary of a will or trust, a life insurance policy or retirement account leaves a legacy of support by further demonstrating a donor's strong commitment to Saint Meinrad. If you're interested in learning how to create your own legacy of support, please contact me at (800) 682-0988."*

Barbara Balka, Director of Planned Giving





## Create your own legacy

There are many ways to support the work and mission of Saint Meinrad. Throughout our long history, many donors have given generously of their resources by way of a planned gift.

Planned giving is an intentional way of arranging for a gift now that will provide for the future support of Saint Meinrad. Some planned giving options to consider include:

- Endowment: Make an immediate or deferred gift for a designated purpose.
- Bequest or charitable trust: Name Saint Meinrad as a beneficiary of your last will and testament or a charitable trust.
- Life insurance or retirement plan: Name Saint Meinrad as a beneficiary.
- Charitable gift annuity: Make a gift to Saint Meinrad now and receive income for life. (Note: Due to varying state regulations, Saint Meinrad is not able to offer charitable gift annuities to residents of all states.)

When you make a planned gift, you establish a legacy of generosity. You demonstrate the values you held most dear during your lifetime – and perhaps inspire others to adopt your spirit of philanthropy in their own lives. ♦

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