



## Robert M. Parker Sr.

November 10, 1947 - June 19, 2020

One winter day, in January in the late 1980's, my dad opened the front door of our house, peered out into the cul-de-sac where we lived, which was covered with mounds and mounds of white snow, and sneered out into the blowing, icy wind "Where the \*\*\*\* is this global warming they've been promising us?" I think it's my first memory. I laughed so hard, it hurt. That's the kind of humor my dad had... sarcastic, sharp, eclectic.

Robert M. Parker, Sr., was the kind of man that people were intimidated by. He was tall and large, with a perpetual scowl on his face. After a few words with him, though, you found out that he was hilarious and kind and gentle. He cared more about what was right than what was popular. He was also brilliant. People throw that word around all the time, but Robert really was. You could ask him a question about some obscure political candidate from 1820, or about a sports statistic from the early 1900's, or whether or not a red bird you saw in your backyard was a Northern Cardinal. He would pause to consider how best to answer you, and then craft a response that might last for an hour, tracing through history or science or political climate.

Robert was born in Lorain, Ohio, on November 10, 1947, to Robert and Helen Parker. He was an only child and grew up fairly spoiled. He played football at Admiral King High School, and then went to a military academy for a year, and then to the University of Toledo. It was there that he met Ellen, a little sorority girl in his Western Civilizations class, and they went out on a date. They soon married and had their first child. Robert eventually applied to high schools in

both Lorain and Toledo, and his acceptance letter from Lorain came one day before his acceptance letter from Toledo. Therefore, the family of three packed up and moved to Lorain, back where his parents lived. He started teaching at Southview High School in South Lorain, coaching football and teaching business.

Over the next 30 years or so, the following things happened: they had two more children, he coached football and baseball, they bought a house, they had numerous dogs, Robert switched teaching from Southview to Admiral King High School, he earned his Master's degree, the kids all went to college, and a beautiful, comfortable life formed. While Ellen was the social butterfly, Robert chose his friends more carefully: Harvey from coaching, Paul from work, Carl from having nothing better to do as their wives babbled for hours. As the kids grew up, Robert gave them (and their friends) nicknames, supported them with homework and sports, and sometimes made them go down into the basement and get him a can of sardines, so he could eat them, heads and all, for no apparent reason. He also, randomly, became an avid birdwatcher and had an impressive life list. At one point, his daughter had emergency brain surgery, and he and Ellen moved up to the Cleveland Clinic so they could support her. When she finally came home, he took off months from work to stay at home with her.

After he retired, he did taxes for people for a while. Then, Ellen retired, too, and they decided that they would move down to where 2/3 of their children and 100% of their grandchildren were – Columbus. They started an antique business, and they would drive to shows and sell their antiques or go to auctions and buy more. They were respected in the antique business, and had their items in many stores. It was something that made them both happy. They liked being able to talk to so many different people, and they loved the thrill of the sell. But more than anything, they both liked spending time with their grandchildren. They went to every single concert and show possible, cheering their grandchildren on.

In 2019, Ellen developed cancer. She had numerous surgeries, and at the end

of the year, she started getting chemo. He stayed with her constantly – even sleeping, upright, in a chair, for a week while she was in a rehab center that scared her. In fact, where she was transferred, he went too. He slept on the 21st floor of the James Cancer Center. He slept on every floor at Riverside. He could tell you the differences between food in the cafeteria at both of those hospitals, depending on days of the week. In early 2020, she was in and out of the hospital, until late April, when she broke her arm. She went into the hospital and he couldn't see her, because of COVID. They talked on the phone every night. She died two days after Mother's Day.

After Ellen died, Robert was sad. He had so many plans for the future. He did teleconferences with his doctors, having neglected himself for so long because he was more worried about her. His daughter and grandson spent every day with him, and they helped him go through Ellen's things. They helped him plan for the next stage of his life. And then, one morning, Robert's daughter called him, and he didn't answer. She went over his house and he had died in his sleep. All the plans couldn't compete with the fact that he missed Ellen, after 50 years of marriage, and he just didn't feel right going on without her, and so he passed away, two days before Father's Day.

Robert was 71 when he died. He left behind his children: Robert Jr, Michael, and Victoria. He left behind two daughter-in laws: Laura and Karen. He left behind Rex, who felt like a son-in-law. He left behind grandchildren: Lauren (and her husband Allen and daughter Callie), Ashley, Katie, and Alexander. He left a huge hole in our hearts, but he also left a legacy that will carry on for as long as we do. If you'd like to make a donation in his honor, please send it to the Lorain County Metroparks, where he spent hours upon hours birdwatching.

# Tribute Wall



“ I was searching for a memory of Southview High School and immediately thought of Mr. Parker. While doing a Google search I found his obituary. I didn't know of his death and am deeply saddened. Mr. Parker made high school bearable for me. He made our class laugh and enjoy learning. The biggest thing I learned was the difference between 'Can I have the hall pass?' vs 'May I have the hall pass?' It made a big impact on me. When raising my own children, I insisted they learn the difference. I even gave credit to Mr. Parker. As you can see, he touched many lives and many generations. Thank you Mr. Parker. God Bless you and your family. May you RIP.

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**Donna Mastorovich** - February 07, 2024 at 05:53 PM



“ Robert M. Parker Sr.

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January 28, 2023 at 10:24 AM



“ Prayerful Condolences to Robert Jr. & the Parker Family

Sincerely,  
Megan A. Grissett, Brunswick Co Schools Operations Division

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**Megan A Grissett** - June 21, 2021 at 08:33 AM

LS

“ I just today heard of Mr. Parker's passing. I am so sorry for you loss. I had Mr. Parker for "general business" while at Southview in the early 70's. As a matter of fact, I also babysat for his oldest son during that time. (I took it as an honor that he trusted me with his most prized possession!) Other than the white hair in the picture shared, he looked EXACTLY like he did while at Southview. He was a good man then, and sounds like he stayed that way until the end. Rest in peace Mr. Parker, and my condolences to his family and friends.

Linda Schenker-Harrison - August 04, 2020 at 07:51 PM

JN

“ I took "Basic" and worked with Robert at H&R Block in Vermilion. He was a great guy and the best office leader ever. He was smart and caring. Ellen was such a good wife. She stopped by the office and we got to know her too. RIP both of you.

Jan Nosack - July 21, 2020 at 11:25 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Rutherford Funeral Homes - July 21, 2020 at 09:04 AM

JR

“ *Tori , Mike , Bob and all your families I have memories of your Dad , my best memory though is his laugh when he thought something was funny , it was a laugh that made me laugh along with him ,through the years and life changes I lost contact with your Mom and Dad but it never erased the memories , I would be honored to make a donation in his memory . Sincere sympathy to all of you , much love Aunt Jeanne ❤️*



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jeanne relford - July 20, 2020 at 07:48 PM