

Dr. Robert L. "Bob" Lytton
October 23, 1937 – November 17, 2025

Dr. Robert L. "Bob" Lytton, a longtime Texas A&M University faculty member who was advisor for the Aggie Speleological Society for many years, died on Nov. 17, 2025 in Bryan, Texas. He was 88 years old.

Dr. Lytton's interest in caving as a teenager continued to his tenure as a civil engineering professor at A&M where he was faculty sponsor of the A.S.S., which was organized in 1973.



Born on Oct. 23, 1937 in Port Arthur, Texas to Robert O. Lytton and Nora Mae Verret Lytton, Bob's family settled in San Antonio where he finished high school. He attended St. Mary's University in San Antonio for two years, where he excelled academically and participated in the ROTC program. He then transferred to the University of Texas where he completed his bachelor's and master's degrees, while still participating in ROTC.

Bob was commissioned into the Army and married his college sweetheart, Eleanor Marilyn Anderson Lytton on Sept. 13, 1961. While stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, they celebrated the birth of their first child, Lynn. Bob attained the rank of captain and was honorably discharged following his service. He then worked at a professional consulting engineering firm in Houston before his son Rob was born.

Returning to UT Austin, Bob completed his PhD in 1968 and then moved to Melbourne, Australia under a National Science Foundation grant. Bob worked with CSIRO for two years, creating standards for building foundations on expansive soils. After a third child, John, was born, Bob moved his family back to Bryan-College Station in 1971 where he joined the faculty at Texas A&M. He was on the A&M faculty for 51 years, retiring as professor emeritus in 2021. He held the A.P. & Florence Wiley Endowed Chair and the Fred J. Benson Endowed Chair in Civil Engineering, was awarded the Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Research, and was director of Center for Infrastructure Engineering for the Texas Engineering Experiment Station.

As a globally renowned scholar, researcher and mentor, Bob was known for his enormous contributions to unsaturated soil mechanics, foundations on expansive soils, nondestructive testing, asphalt technology and mechanics. He authored or co-authored more than 600 professional publications on topics related to pavement and geotechnical engineering. Among research recognitions were the John B. Hawley Award and the Carl L. Monismith Award by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Bob's work on unsaturated soil mechanics and its application in foundation engineering has aided home construction using his design approach, saving homeowners from cracked foundations and walls. Bob's work in the field of pavements and materials led an evolution from a heavily empirical field to one underpinned by physics, chemistry and mechanics. Outside work, Bob was an enthusiastic student of Texas history and genealogy – besides caving.

Bob is preceded in death by his wife Marilyn; by his parents Robert O. Lytton and Nora Mae Verret Lytton, by brothers Lee Edward Lytton and James Patrick Lytton, and by his son, John Kirby Lytton. Bob is survived by his sister Noeli Lytton of Sunset Hills, Missouri; a daughter, Dr. Lynn E. Lytton of Austin, Texas; son Rob Lytton of Plano, Texas; and grandchildren David Lytton of Bryan and Elizabeth Lytton of Plano.

Entombment was on Nov. 26, 2025, at Holy Cross Cemetery Mausoleum, in San Antonio following Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas in College Station and visitation at the Memorial Funeral Chapel College Station.

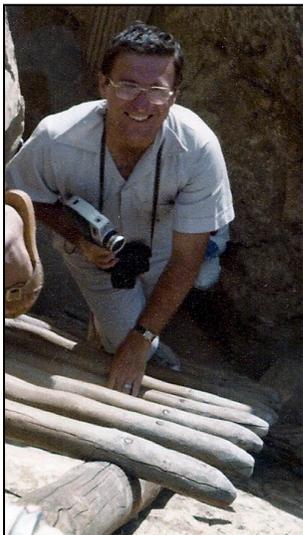
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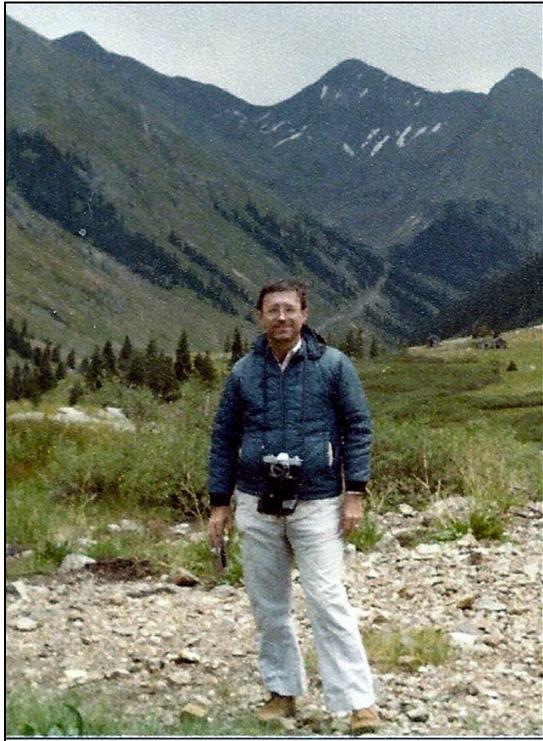
"Dr. Lytton and I met on several occasions in the 1980s and even once in 1993 to get permission for the A.S.S. to do off-campus activities. He was the faculty sponsor of the A.S.S. for 30-plus years. I think on some occasions, he helped the grotto get a campus van to go caving in Bustamante (how did they get past the vehicle checkpoint at Anahuac?) His dedication to the A.S.S. was based on being a caver in his teenage years. One of his caving buddies was James Manning, whose other claim to fame was being the father of caver Mary Kay Manning." -
David Locklear

References

[Obituary](#) for Dr. Lytton

Photos





Named a Friar at age 23 at UT Austin

