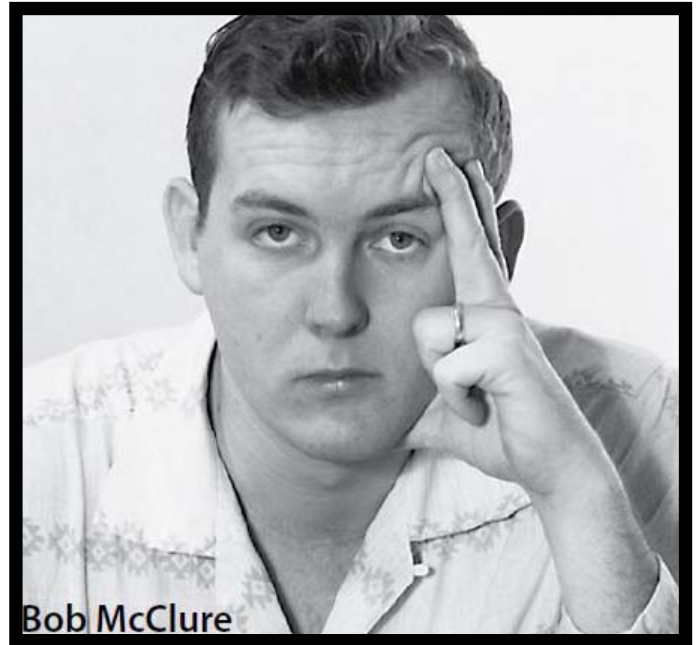


Remembering Bob McClure

Robert Marshall McClure March 29, 1935 — January 23, 2026 Age 95

It's hard to know where to begin when talking about Bob McClure. He is possibly the most under appreciated Texas caver I ever came to know. Bob and I were from slightly different caver eras. He was active and then gone before I came along. Bob was part of the early UT Grotto caver core that was active until the mid-1950s. By 1960, those folks were long gone and their caving days were over. That said, there was a nostalgic core that treasured those experiences and were energetic enough to promote a 1994 reunion at Prude Ranch in Fort Davis and also at Big Bend that drew a substantial participation. That was followed by a smaller second reunion at Mo Ranch near Kerrville, TX in 2004 that was not as well promoted and a final gathering in 2015 at Round Rock, TX that was well organized and supported by some of the cavers from later eras. At the last moment, Lynn Alman stepped in to finance the gathering at Round Rock. Attendance was good and it was supported by several cavers from later eras that wanted to assure the success of the reunion. Unfortunately, by 2015 time was taking its toll and several cavers from the 50s had passed away.



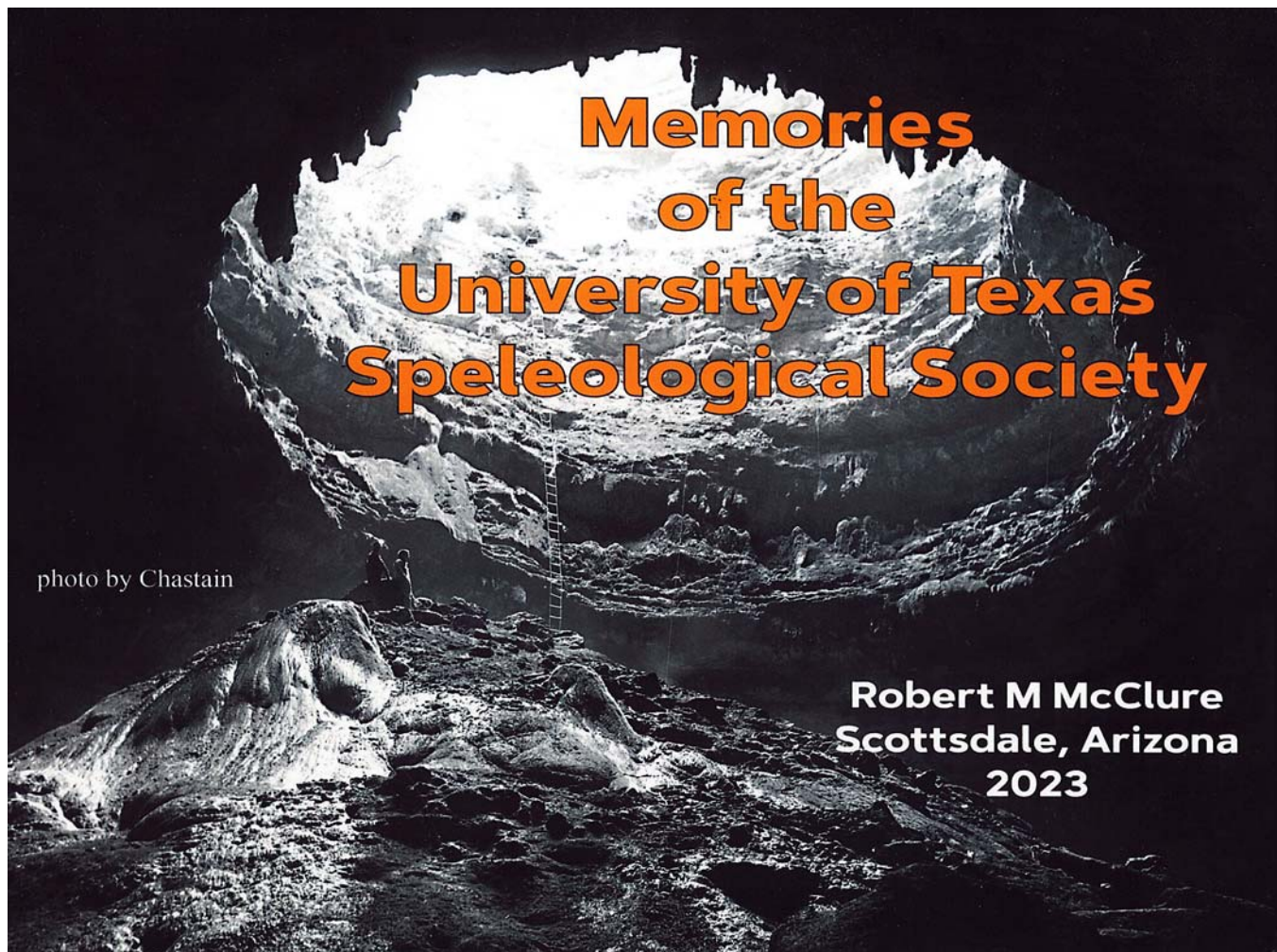
Throughout all those years, Bob McClure was behind the scenes maintaining contact with many of the cavers from earlier eras. It was my pleasure to become acquainted with Bob at the 2015 reunion and I discovered a man as interested in caver history as I. Bob also heard the clock ticking loudly and in 2022-2023 he made a nearly 6,000 mile trip through the U.S. to find and visit with many of his old caver acquaintances not contacted for many years.

He was an exceptional person with a great memory and an urge to share with others. By profession he was a PhD electrical engineer. By avocation he was a world traveler with his college caver sweetheart/wife, Dottie. His list of places visited is lengthy.

I last saw Bob in 2024 when I had the pleasure of a visit with him and his daughter, Lisa, as they were returning home after another lengthy tour to visit friends across the country. We talked of many things but time was too short. In his 90s, Bob appeared to be in good health so I was unconcerned about the near future. Then, after an extended period of no contact, I received a note from Lisa, informing me of his rather sudden passing from complications of diverticulosis.

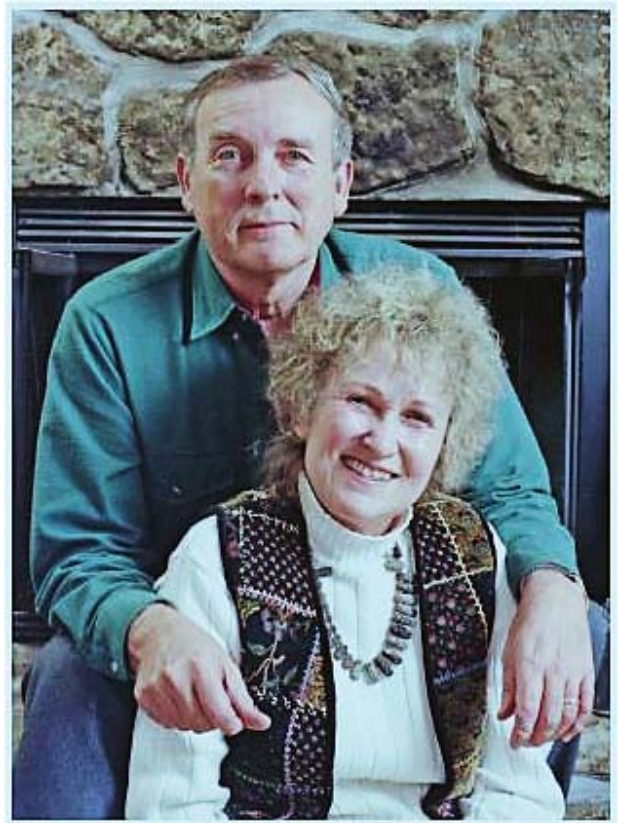
Bob was never a hard core caver but his contributions to Texas caving are important in another way. If you have been reading the obituaries posted to the Hall Of Texas Cavers, you will have noticed quite a few authored by Bob. Bob was planning ahead and had compiled some of those in advance against the days he knew were coming.

Now it's my sad fate to say a few words about Bob's passing. I wasn't really ready for this task, but I'm happy to do it and to honor the memory of a good friend. Bob was considered a "genius" by some that knew him well. I would rate him as among those having the keenest intellect of my acquaintances and a general overachiever in all his activities. His professional credentials were impressive. Beyond all that, Bob was a "people person" and was dedicated to maintaining contact with many lifelong friends. His involvement with the 1950s U.T. Austin



cavers made a lasting impression and caused him to research, compile, and publish a 151 page book titled *Memories of the University of Texas Speleological Society*. It is the nature of such history books that many who are figured in its pages were gone before it was published. That diminishes the importance of the book --- but only a little. This book is a massive record of the people and events that shaped the early days of Texas caving. It is an important historic document and Bob was probably the only person who could have compiled the story. To seek out so many cavers and to extract from them a little of their life story is a grand accomplishment. If he was not already so heavily laden with various awards and academic degrees, I would award him a Journalism PhD *summa cum laude*. His *Memories* book is an incredible piece of work.

Bob graduated high school in Alto, Texas in 1952 and began college at Texas A&M. In 1953 he decided that the regimented life at Texas A&M did not suit him well (despite a GPA = 3.1 of 3.0 and winning the slide rule competition) and moved to the University of Texas at Austin for the period 1953-1957. Here, he met Jerry Chastain and began a friendship that lasted until Jerry's death in 2016. Jerry was involved with the caver group and soon indoctrinated Bob into a rowdy bunch who collectively called themselves The University of Texas Speleological Society. Also, he met Dorothy Ann Payne (always called "Dottie") a girl from Dallas who had been associated with the caver group. The short version of the story is that they married within a few months and stayed that way for the next 60 years until her death in December 2018. Together, they roamed the world and raised two delightful children, Elizabeth (Lisa) and Larry. After too many moves to enumerate, they finally settled in Scottsdale, Arizona. It says something about Bob's personality that when they were preparing for their final move, they took the ultimate shortcut for dealing with a significant portion of their surplus belongings --- they bulldozed a large hole, pushed all the non-essential possessions into it and covered it. What a time capsule that will be.



It would require a long piece of paper to enumerate Bob's many personal and professional accomplishments. He became an accomplished photographer, had a nearly perfect GPA throughout his scholastic days, earned several advanced degrees and enriched the lives of all those fortunate enough to share his friendship.

Modern Texas cavers may not be aware of the many contributions Bob made to the history and lore of Texas caving. Bob was a member of the UT Grotto in the years 1953-1957 and was the principal historian of the early members. He self-published (2023) *Memories of the University of Texas Speleological Society* that is a treasure-trove of the early life and times of those pioneering Texas cavers. He traveled many miles to visit those old associates and made countless telephone calls and e-mails in search of that information. The resulting interviews and obituaries are an important record of Texas caving.

Bob attended the first UT caver reunion in 1994 but Dottie's illness prevented his attendance at the 2015 Kerrville reunion. He made up for that with a very active presence at the 2025 Round Rock reunion. The 2025 UT reunion was made possible by financial support from Lynn Allman and was augmented by assistance from Carl Kunath and Logan McNatt.

Bob was a great UT Grotto historian. Through the years, he compiled and submitted many obituaries commemorating the deaths of those early UT caving companions. His obituaries commemorating the lives of his early caver companions preserved information that might otherwise have been lost.

Bob and Dottie were frequently moving in their early days and finally settled in Scottsdale, AZ.

Bob was a good friend and a kindred soul. We shared stories of travel to India, China, Perú and portions of Europe. We were both avid photographers and shared a consuming interest in history. Bob's sudden passing was a bit of a shock to me for I somehow expected that he would outlive me.

¡Vaya con Dios, Amigo!

We are diminished.

===*Carl Kunath 8-2026*