



Robert Louis Jerstrom

April 10, 1947 - October 14, 2025

Robert Louis Jerstrom, beloved friend, mentor, and island treasure, passed away peacefully after an extended illness, surrounded by love on October 14, 2025. His life was one of creativity and generosity, lived fully and shared freely with all who knew him. He was born on April 10, 1947, at the Lying-In Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, to Lawrence and Dolores (Escher) Jerstrom. Rob was very proud of his Swedish heritage, and he will be laid to rest with his Swedish grandparents, the Jerstroms, in Chicago.

Known as “Rob”, “Bob”, or "Robbity-Bob" by family and friends, he lived his life with an adventurous spirit and a creative eye. He proudly and honorably served his country in the United States Navy from 1967 to 1971, and his sense of discipline and dedication carried into every chapter of his life that followed.

After his military service, Rob pursued his lifelong passion for photography, first on Marco Island, then for thirteen years as a professional photographer at the Grand Hotel, beginning in 1978. For almost fifty years, he captured the beauty, romance, and timeless charm of Mackinac Island, becoming a cherished part of its community and history. Regarding his photography career, many have summed it up in a few words — "Rob was the ‘Ansel Adams’ of Northern Michigan!"

A true and creative entrepreneur, Rob's talents and vision extended far beyond the camera lens. He owned an Italian restaurant on St. Simons Island, established Haan Cottage as one of Mackinac Island's first bed and breakfast venues, the boutique shop known as Lilacs and Lace, and the Enchanted Island Gallery. He is most noted for founding Resort Photography which blossomed into wedding and family photography. His current businesses, the Photo Hut on Surrey Hill and Market Street Gallery, will continue to carry his legacy.

Rob's love for the Great Lakes, sailing, boats, especially his sailboat, "Iota", was evident to all who knew him. His life included many adventures, and he found the greatest peace and inspiration any time he was on the water.

Known for his giving heart, Rob gave freely of his time and talents. He volunteered to teach photography at the Mackinac Island School and over the years, he mentored many young adults who came to the island for seasonal work. Frequently, he extended kindness and help to those who had fallen on hard times and his compassion and generosity touched many lives. Rob also found joy in biking, taking long walks, and was an avid reader. He loved "Grub" hunting and SpongeBob, his four-legged friends, and was always finding fun in the ordinary, seeking new horizons, both near and far.

Rob is predeceased by his parents, and his sister, June Haas. He will always be missed by his loving wife, Kathy, and her children, Robert and Sheila, his brother, Tom Jackman, and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

One of his greatest joys was a hot cup of coffee and long conversations with friends. Those who knew Rob will remember his love of life, his warm humor, and his unwavering belief in the beauty of life's simple moments. A Celebration of Life is being planned for April 2026, in conjunction with his birthday. It is hoped that family and friends will come together for an afternoon

to share their special memories. Please email Kathy at kathyhj@gmail.com and when details are confirmed, an evite will be extended.

Until then, please consider a donation in Rob's memory to St. Ignace Area Hope, P.O. Box 170, Saint Ignace, MI 49781. It is an organization that provides help and hope to St. Ignace locals in many ways, and one that Rob believed in and frequently supported.

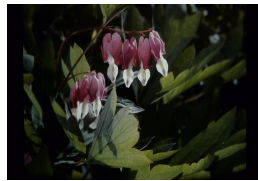
Family Life Funeral Homes – Pickford assisted the family with arrangements. Condolences may be left to the family at www.familylifefh.com.

Obituary as submitted by family.

Tribute Wall

MR

“ 1 file added to the album Videos of Robert



Mark Rensel - April 11 at 04:17 PM

PS

“ Our sincere condolences to Kathy and all the family who admired and cared about Rob.
Reading through his obituary, I remembered about his talent in photography. I learned how many worthy contributions he made to 'the Island' community; however I did not recognize his ownership of the PhotoHut despite my having had 'wagonloads' of photos taken at Surrey Hill when I accompanied groups of Road Scholars through there.
What a wonderful life he lived and legacy left.
Best wishes from 'this troll' in Charlevoix
Pam Bailey Sroufe

Pam Sroufe - April 10 at 03:51 PM

TH

“ Rob would make dreams come true even for people he’s never met... He paved the way for a future generation of photographers. It was a major compliment and an absolute honor to see my work up on display next to his. While I never had the chance to meet Rob him and his wife Kathy played a major role in my photography career. They helped me build confidence in my skills and got my work out there. Making dreams come true for someone he’s never met!



Timothy H - January 15 at 09:59 PM

DG

“ I’ve know Rob for a long time. He’s was one of the most generous and kindest person I’ve ever met. He will be missed by all who’s known him. He made my life better. We will miss him.

Dave Gruca - October 30, 2025 at 11:39 PM

GG

“ Judith and I offer our deepest sympathy to Rob's family. We met him when he owned a gallery on Mackinac Island. We continue to have one of his pieces in our Mackinac Island home. He was always a pleasure to be around, and his photography was exemplary. May the memories of his wonderful life help to ease the pain of your loss.

George D. Goodman - October 27, 2025 at 08:51 AM

JC

“ Rob and I are first cousins, but we didn't get to know each other until I was in my 20's, when he started his businesses on Mackinac. We instantly clicked and always had a fun banter between us.

Some of my favorite memories are the Christmas in July party on the island at the Haan house in 1979. Rob's 50th birthday party at the barn up north. It was probably the best party I've ever been to! Our family reunions at the Villa, and 25 years of spending time with my family at the Villa. The times we spent at Rob and Kathy's in St. Ignace. These are truly the best times of my life. I was so blessed to have these times. I will always treasure them in my heart.

Rob, I already miss you so much. My life is never going to be the same with out you.

Love you, JoAnne

JoAnne Bramham Chidsey - October 27, 2025 at 08:32 AM

DB

“ Rob’s love of hearts 💕

Every time we would visit I would always take him a heart of some type. The heart with the tree of life that we brought up for him, he had to “find the perfect spot for“. He placed it in the living room picture window hanging to see all of the colors.

The first time that I met Rob and family was at the Villa Cecile. Jim and I were dating. Rob brought seafood which if I remember we ate most of it! Rob said that he was happy Jim found me. Aunt Dodie commented immediately and said that I was a keeper!

Rob photographed our wedding and he took a picture of Aunt Dodie and I drinking from a champagne bottle before we got into the limousine. Priceless memories.

Kathy and I met in the kitchen at the villa during a family reunion. We have been friends since and the four of us have had some wonderful times. I made Rob a Shutterfly book this year for his birthday. He loved the book and told me that he especially loved all the pictures of Kathy and him together.

Rob, Jim and I have all been wedding photographers and have shared the love of photography.

*Rob and Kathy have welcomed us and my family to their home. Rob always made people welcomed. He was kind and generous with everyone. He had a heart of gold 💛 and is missed already.
Love always, Diane*

Diane Bramham - October 22, 2025 at 10:34 AM

JB

“ In 1978 I worked with my cousin Rob at Marco Island, FL (Marco Beach Hotel - Photography of Robert Jerstrom).

In 1979, I worked with Rob at Mackinac Island, MI (Grand Hotel - Resort Photography).

In addition to working with Rob, I was fortunate to work with a couple other great guys: Carl Brown and John Watkins.

In 1979 (Mackinac Island), the four of us also worked with/for Universal Studios during the filming of Somewhere in Time.

The four of us were always/sometimes outstanding citizens. We worked hard, but also had fun.

Kathy always said that Rob and I “cracked each other up”. We used to laughed at each other’s dumb jokes and comments.

Diane and I had many years of fun visiting Rob’s Lake House (Villa Cecile) in Pierport, MI.

We also enjoyed visiting Rob and Kathy for 20 years in their St Ignace home.

For decades, Rob and his brother Tom used to make fun of me, because every year I would say the Lions were going to the Super Bowl. Rob would say “I agree that the Lions can go to the Super Bowl tz so his season, if they buy their tickets now”.

Rob always said to me “I know we don’t deserve it, but you and I have the best wives. How did we get so lucky?”. I told him that I didn’t know, but I agreed with him.

Rob was my cousin, but also a great friend.

Rob, Thanks for all the great memories and for always being so

generous.

I'll miss you!

I Love You, buddy!

Jim

Jim Bramham - October 22, 2025 at 10:24 AM

JB

Correction: Rob would say "I agree that the Lions can go to the Super Bowl this season, if they buy their tickets now".

Jim Bramham - October 22, 2025 at 04:51 PM

TH

“*Rob was an incredible artist painting with light. Winter Taxi being a masterpiece! With Murdick's Fudge on the left, a Christmas tree on the right, and a taxi fading away in the snow front and center. I can only imagine how beautiful that day was for him . He also captured a photo of a lightning strike on Lake Huron... I've tried capturing a photo of lightning for years and haven't been fast enough. Just shows his level of skill and patience. My deepest condolences.*

Tim H - October 21, 2025 at 01:17 PM

PM

“ I was blessed to be part of a long chapter, "We're the Millers", in the "Book of Jerstrom". My first trip to the Island was in 1978 to meet Bob, and we have been "family" ever since.

He was the Best Man at our wedding - Chuck and I even spent our honeymoon with him! As our children grew, time with him was always an adventure that included "Grub" Hunts...special carriage rides on the island...beach fires at the Villa...Swedish Pancakes... He was always a presence in each of their lives - their graduations, weddings and when grandkids began arriving, Bob and Kathy made special trips to be here when each of our children's first child was born.

His interest and love for my extended family - my Mom, siblings and their families - were also constants. Through the years he extended numerous invitations and hosted our entire family at the Villa, the Island, and his St. Ignace home. THANK YOU, Robert, for all we shared for nearly 50 years. I love you and will see you on the other side, my friend. I'll bring the pie and ice cream :).

Penny Miller - October 21, 2025 at 01:06 PM

CM

“ Bob, I lost a lifetime friend last week and our friendship of 65+ years went too quickly. From highschool to enlisting in the military together, it became a lifetime of enjoyment and funny experiences. Except for my tour in Vietnam, I don't recall a month or less that we didn't stay in touch during our friendship. The laughs were always great and stories we shared were innumerable; even though we repeated many numerous times. I was proud to watch you grow from someone that had virtually nothing to someone that excelled with your businesses.

Last Tuesday, I was honored to be by your side as you transitioned from this world into your next world. I know the world you are in now is just a little bit better because you have arrived.

Take care Bob, I'll miss you.

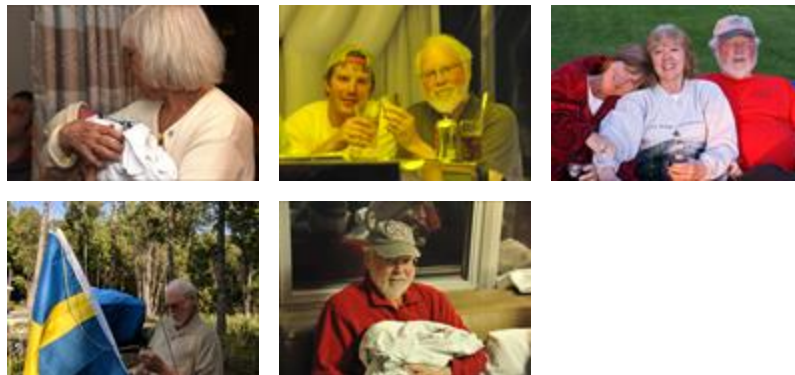
As your friend Spock would say, "I have been, and always shall be, your friend".

Chuck

Chuck Miller - October 21, 2025 at 12:47 PM

KJ

“ 127 files added to the album Friends and Family



Kathleen Jerstrom - October 21, 2025 at 09:48 AM

NR

“ Rob and I met while I was planning weddings at Mission Point Resort and he quickly became my favorite photographer! Years later he also introduced me to my husband Dave and we became dearest friends! He added so much Sunshine to my life! Gods Speed my awesome friend!

Nancy Richmond-Gruca - October 20, 2025 at 10:41 PM

MS

“ Rob was responsible for my photography career.
An amazing photographer who taught me how to be a successful professional photographer and take over his Marco Island business over 40 years ago.
Thank you Rob, all I have is because of you.



Mike Sullivan - October 20, 2025 at 06:06 PM

VR

I knew Rob when I worked on the Island, he always talked to me about riding my Harley and if I went on any rides since the last time he seen me. Funny thing he always called me Victoria and I never corrected him. RIP Rob

Veronica Rickley - October 20, 2025 at 06:22 PM

HD

Rob and I met on Mackinac Island in the late 80's. I ran a charter service and Rob was the eminent Island photographer. It didn't take long for a warm, humorous and friendly relationship to nurture. I began to look at Rob as a brother along with being a good friend. It would take a book of anecdotes to fully appreciate the experiences we shared. We were thrilled to see he and Kathy married in Chicago. We still have the Lilac that he gifted to everyone. The pleasure we have in seeing its continual growth is rewarding in knowing where it came from. I will miss the many glasses of red wine we shared and spilled over the years. You will not be forgotten, Rob, our friend!

Harold & Elizabeth DeHart - October 21, 2025 at 09:51 AM



Rob was also responsible for my photographic career. Resort Photography was my first “real job” after college and Rob was my boss in places like Mackinac, Key West and Marco Island. He mentored me and also shared his love of warm islands, sailboats and good times. When I left Mackinac, Rob was, and remained, my friend. “Winter Taxi” is prominently displayed in my home and is a constant reminder of my “time” with Rob. Rest in peace, Rob.

Laurie Chase - October 21, 2025 at 05:02 PM