

Robert Martin



Robert "Bob" Martin

Helicopters, planes, hot air balloons, sky-diving or scuba gear – if it could take him into the clouds, or below the waves, into glorious places full of wonders to photograph and stories to tell, Bob found a way to master it. Bob died Saturday, September 16, 2017, when Albuquerque's KRQE Sky News 13 helicopter he was piloting home from Roswell, NM crashed.

Born in San Antonio on June 28, 1953, but landing in Socorro as a 10th grader when his parents both took teaching jobs there, Bob became a devoted New Mexican. As a teenager, he was a member of FFA, raising sheep and growing alfalfa, putting every cent he earned into learning how to fly. He graduated from Socorro High and then went on to get his journalism degree at Eastern NMU in Portales. His first broadcast job was doing the farm report for a local radio station. That led to larger assignments. In the late 1970's, Bob went to Washington D.C. to cover the farm protests. He realized that storytelling through journalism, was his calling in life and that he could combine his love of flight with his passion for showing and telling the stories of the people of New Mexico.

After his start at KBIM-TV in Roswell, Bob worked for more than 40 years as a [journalist](#) in New Mexico, spending nearly all his career at KRQE (formerly KGGM) as a news reporter, photographer, and pilot. Bob's aerial shots of wildfires, flooding, and other natural disasters showed the impact on the people and lands involved with immediacy and impact. He knew that every story of a disaster was a personal story for someone.

Bob showed his viewers the real life going on all around them every day in the state he loved. He covered Friday night football in the small towns across the state where entire communities came together on fall evenings to cheer and support their teams. An avid student of New Mexico history, Bob flew over the Camino Real with his wife, Marilyn, showing her the ruts carved in the desert by the explorers and settlers that traveled north from Mexico hundreds of years ago. They explored every corner of the state by air and on the ground, as his love of history led him to weave stories of the past into life in the present. And sometimes his stories were life-changing. When the New Mexico National Guardsmen were deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq after 9/11, Bob secured funding from CBS to let him bring the stories of those stationed overseas back to their families in every town in New Mexico. He showed luminarias leading to the entrance to a tent in the desert in Afghanistan where the New Mexico Guardsmen were stationed – a touch of Christmas that meant something only to New Mexicans, showing the bond between those overseas and at home. He reported from the ground in tour after tour where sons, daughters, husbands, wives, parents in uniform risked their lives in war zones, bringing those stories of individuals back to New Mexico, bringing comfort and news to their families. When the Guard returned to Springer, NM, and the entire town turned out to welcome them home, Bob was by the roadside, shooting video for his news report. When some of the servicemen in the parade spotted him, they started shouting, "It's Bob! Bob Martin!" and began cheering him. He had been their lifeline home so many times through his reporting – their faces, their stories.

He loved traveling with his wife, never without a camera, and sharing the wonders of New Zealand, Iceland, Nova Scotia and other destinations both foreign and domestic. They also traveled to the Pacific Northwest every year, for many years in Bob's private plane, and reveled in the adventure of the spectacular views that can only really be appreciated from the windows of a small plane. He gave of his time creatively and generously in so many ways: he worked on safety manuals and training for helicopter pilots, organizing an annual statewide safety conference that is among the best attended in the country. He developed the drone-use program for KRQE from its infancy; he covered the emerging Spaceport in central New Mexico, championing science, research, and mentoring in every part of his life. He weighed every single word, and every image to create the very best story that he could.

Bob is survived by his wife, Marilyn Painter, his father, Dan Martin, brothers Keith Martin (Val), Bill Martin, and Scott Martin (Sheree); nephews and nieces Daniel, Kathleen (daughter Maddie), Shelby, Nicholle, Chelsea, and lifelong family friends, Jan and Curtis Jenkins; Marilyn's family: mother Jo Painter, sister Suzanne Painter (Keith Wetzel), brother Jan Painter (Tara), nieces Martha Wetzel, Deanne and Dana Painter. His mother, Bettye Martin, predeceased him.

A memorial service will be held at 10:00 AM Saturday, September 23, 2017 at Desert Springs Church, 705 Osuna Rd. NE, Albuquerque . The family requests attendees refrain from wearing black (unless it's your favorite color).

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Bob's name to the New Mexico National Guard-Reserve Assistance Fund, P.O. Box 5335, Albuquerque, NM 87185 (or veterans' non-profit of your choice), or to

(www.doctorswithoutborders.org).

Donations to any of these organizations in his name would honor the fact that Bob cared about ordinary, humble people in any country whose lives were being torn apart by war. In addition, Eastern New Mexico University is setting up a scholarship in Bob's name; contributions may be made by contacting the ENMU Foundation.

Bob's death leaves a huge hole in the hearts of his families, friends, and New Mexicans. He will be deeply missed.

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