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Frank O. Bowman Jr. dies at age 93

Founded the geology major at FLC, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

By Ann Butler Herald staff writer

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When Frank O. Bowman Jr. died Wednesday at 93, he left a legacy worth noting: Founder of the geology major at Fort Lewis College, co-founder of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango and a leader of the citizen effort to make the Weminuche a wilderness area.



Courtesy of Bowman family

Frank O. Bowman Jr. died Wednesday at the age of 93.



Courtesy of Bowman family/FLC Independent

Frank O. Bowman Jr., who died Wednesday at the age of 93, made the front page of the Fort Lewis College

After serving in the Army Corps of Engineers during World War II, Bowman returned to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he had earned his bachelor's degree in geology before the war, to earn his doctorate in the subject. In addition to picking up a PhD in 1954, he picked up a wife, meeting and marrying Mary Ruth Davis, who is well-known in Durango for her community activism and colorful hats.

After four years with Standard Oil working as an exploration geologist, Bowman and his family moved to Durango in 1959, where he joined the faculty at FLC. He founded the geology department, designed a curriculum for a geology major that was approved in 1963 and went on to be the chairman of the department until 1973. From 1968 to 1970, he was chairman of the Division of Physical Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering. Bowman retired in 1985, having served on and often chairing virtually every faculty committee, his family said.

It was the great outdoors Bowman loved, particularly fishing, but he wanted to preserve the wild areas for all users, his family said.

"Working with the Colorado Mountain Club, the San Juan Ecological Society, the Four Corners Wilderness Workshop and other groups," his son, Frank O. Bowman III wrote, "he and like-minded colleagues helped create the wilderness reserves in Southwest Colorado many residents and visitors now enjoy. He helped lead the fight to create the Weminuche Wilderness Area, serving as chairman of Citizens for the Weminuche and writing multiple reports and congressional submissions during the years before the final approval of the Weminuche Wilderness Area in 1975."



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Independent in 1963, when his proposal to create a geology major at the college was approved.

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Memorial service

A memorial service for Frank Otto Bowman Jr. will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, June 20, 2015, at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango, 419 San Juan Drive. Bowman is survived by his wife of 62 years, Mary Ruth Bowman, of Durango; sons Frank Otto Bowman III of Columbia, Missouri; Herbert Bowman of Tbilisi, Georgia, and Robert Bowman of Arlington, Virginia; and eight grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be sent to the Dr. Frank O. Bowman Jr. Geology Scholarship, c/o the Fort Lewis College Foundation, 1000 Rim Drive, Durango, CO 81301.

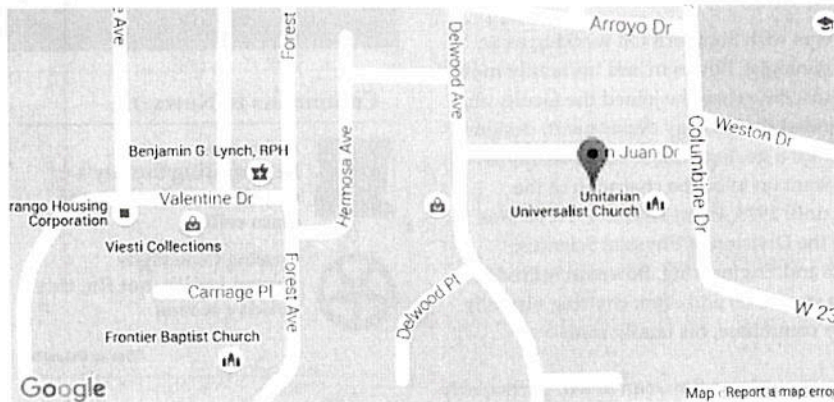
Bowman was also instrumental in founding the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango, remaining a consistent supporter for so many decades that when the fellowship moved into its new facility near Needham Elementary School, members voted to name the building that holds its social gathering place and offices in his honor as Bowman Hall.

"He and Mary Ruth always went out of their way," said Pat Blair, an early member of the fellowship, whose husband, Rob, was hired by Bowman to teach in the geology department. "They are about the most genuine, community-oriented, good-hearted people I ever knew."

Bowman was involved in the community in numerous other ways, serving as a longtime member and sometimes commander of the Durango Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol; singing with several community groups; directing the San Juan Basin Science Fair for 25 years; serving on the Council for Boy Scout Troop 501 for a decade; and playing a number of sports, not only in city leagues but on tennis courts and Hillcrest Golf Club.

"He and Mary Ruth were, for decades, fixtures at Hillcrest Golf (Club)," their son wrote, "and one of their proudest days came when they both won the club championship, he for men and she for women, in the same year."

abutler@durangoherald.com



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5:30 PM



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6:00 PM



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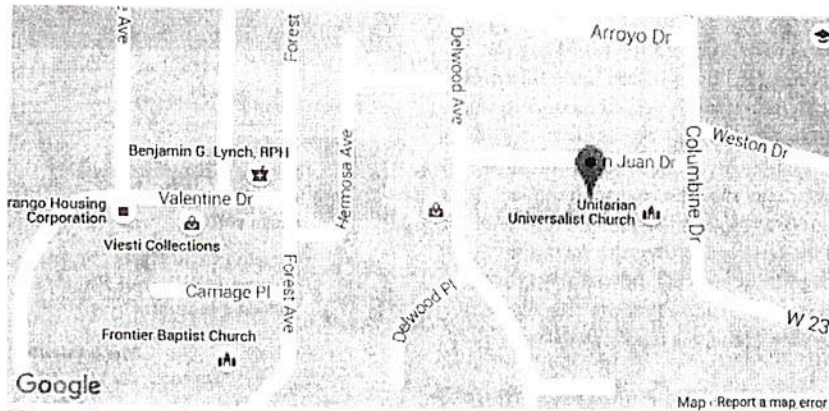
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