



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF

*Bob Miserez*

1954 - 2021

# An Invitation.

Please join us for lunch at the church following the service. Bob recently talked about getting people together for a dinner to visit, reconnect with old friends, and share a laugh or two. *He will be with us in spirit.*



# In Appreciation

Bob's family would like to express their sincere appreciation for the many comforting thoughts and prayers, reflections and tributes to Bob's life, floral tributes, food, and many other acts of kindness extended to them during this time.

*Funeral arrangements are under the care of Freeman Mortuary.*

## CELEBRATION OF LIFE

11:00 a.m. Wednesday, May 19, 2021  
Central United Church of Christ  
Jefferson City, Missouri  
The Reverend Dr. Judith Scott

- Prelude ..... Shirley Klein, organ
- Procession and Sentences
- “Amazing Grace” ..... bell solo
- Greeting
- Prayer
- “The Old Rugged Cross” .....bell solo; Shirley Klein, piano
- Old Testament Scripture.....Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24
- New Testament Scriptures .....John 12: 24-26;  
John 14:1-3, 18-19, 25-27
- Words of Remembrance ..... David Queen
- Sermon
- “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” .....bell solo; Ryan Pollock, guitar
- Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession
- Song of Simeon
- “Just As I Am” .....Central UCC Bell Choir;  
Stephen Luehrman, violin
- Commendation
- Benediction
- Postlude ..... Shirley Klein, organ

## GRAVESIDE SERVICES

Riverview Cemetery  
Jefferson City, Missouri

## PALLBEARERS

Nick Higginbotham, Chad Taylor, Mike Casedy, Mark Miserez,  
Roger Miserez, Tim Bagnull, and Ryan Vermette



# REMEMBERING *Bob*



Robert V. Miserez, 66, passed away Wednesday, May 12, at his home following a brief illness.

He was born October 13, 1954, in West Point, Nebraska, the son of Virgil H. and Marjorie F. (Johnson) Miserez, and he grew up in Dodge, Nebraska.

He was married April 27, 1996, to Irma Rene Bagnull, and they recently celebrated their 25th anniversary.



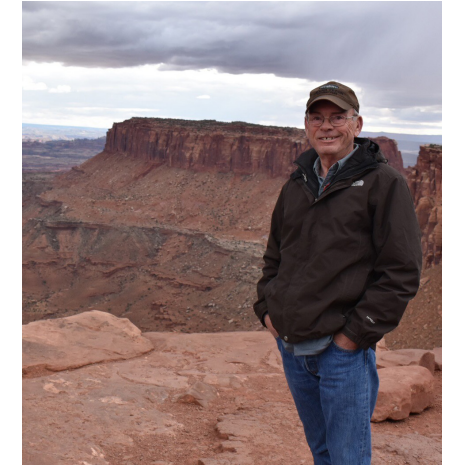
He was a graduate of Dodge High School and a 1977 graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln majoring in Political Science and History.

Upon moving to Missouri in 1982, Bob began his career as a Business Development Specialist with the Missouri Department of Economic Development, and he was the DED liaison to what is now known as the Missouri Development Finance Board. He became the Board's Executive Director and first employee in 1989, and he dedicated his nearly 40-year career to the betterment of Missouri.



Bob helped structure financings for infrastructure and economic development projects throughout Missouri, and his fingerprints are on projects ranging from small

town water towers and sidewalks to private company expansions and to large scale Union Station in Kansas City and Ballpark Village in St. Louis. Some of the projects with more personal meaning to Bob were St. Patrick Center in St. Louis, which provided culinary arts training



to low income residents; the Salvation Army of Greater Kansas City, which provided jobs for rehabilitation of men with substance abuse problems; and Forest Park Forever improvements to infrastructure of the St. Louis landmark. Bob's guiding principle was to "do the right thing for the right reasons."

Bob truly enjoyed our country's national parks and looked forward to visiting more of them in retirement. He visited several with family and motorcycle buddies, and he appreciated the beautiful and diverse scenery. As his brief illness progressed, he enjoyed watching travel videos of the parks.

He loved his daughter unconditionally, and she made him immensely proud. He often reminisced on their daddy/daughter days when she was younger, when the day's activities included Mel's Diner, Barnes & Noble, the barber, and a visit to Central Dairy.

In addition to his wife, survivors include: his daughter, Laura Miserez, and her fiancé, Nick Higginbotham, both of St. Louis, MO; brother, Joe Aerisolphal of Kansas City, MO; sisters, Betty Miserez of Omaha, NE, and Darlene Moorman of Gardnerville, NV; and brothers- and sisters-in-law Gary and Julie Bagnull, Rick and Lori Higgins, and Alan Bagnull, all of Jefferson City.

# REMEMBERING MY *Husband*



When people talk about a life well lived, what is it that they really even mean? It's not the things you own, it's the things you do. It's the lives you touch along your journey.

As I flipped through boxes of photos this week, I realized that I'd forgotten the pieces of time that together make a life. The happy memories from what

seems like forever ago. The silly moments, captured in an instant. I was given the gift of refreshed memories.

Bob told me recently, "I didn't do anything." He was feeling he should have volunteered his time to make a difference in someone's life. I didn't hesitate in my response. We talked about how instead of one child, groups of kids roam through Union Station in Kansas City and nurture thoughts of becoming a scientist. We talked about how giving people life skills at a place like St. Patrick Center in St. Louis was a hand up, instead of a handout. We talked about how important water towers are to small communities, and not taken for granted. We talked about how Bob's efforts helped *groups* of people and so he was making a difference for "someone" over and over again.

The Wizard of Oz is a treasured favorite in our house, with favorite lines memorized, munchkin knee-kicks performed, and even allowing a young Laura to pull Bob's short hair into a ponytail at the top of his head and parade him along on our Halloween route in striped tights and fabric bows on his shoes. In one scene from the movie, the Wizard remarks, "A heart is not judged by how much you love, but by how much you are loved



by others." The cards, letters, texts, emails, visits, and phone calls that have come in over the last few short weeks are a testament to the lives Bob touched.

But those outside interactions pale next to a family dynamic. The boxes of photos reminded me of that. Thumbing through the smiles, seeing pure joy, remembering another day and time, I saw my life impacted by this man. Daily life wasn't always the stuff of dreams, but it led to an appreciation of the times that it was.

And if there is a silver lining in walking with Bob on his life's final journey, it's that life came full circle through death. We first slowed down when he was diagnosed with Covid, and then his unsparing cancer diagnosis brought life to an excruciating crawl. We sat down and talked with each other. We talked about hopes for the future, and plans when we knew it wasn't to be. We laughed while binge-watching Golden Girls and traveled the national parks through videos. We set aside what didn't matter and reconnected with each other, sometimes in the deafening silence. We held hands and faced what life was throwing at him, and at us. I cared for him, prayed for him, and walked hand-in-hand with him to the gates of eternity before whispering my goodbye. And for those moments, I am grateful.

And that's the mark that Bob leaves behind in indelible ink upon my heart. **He touched lives. His life mattered. And his most certainly was *a life well lived.***



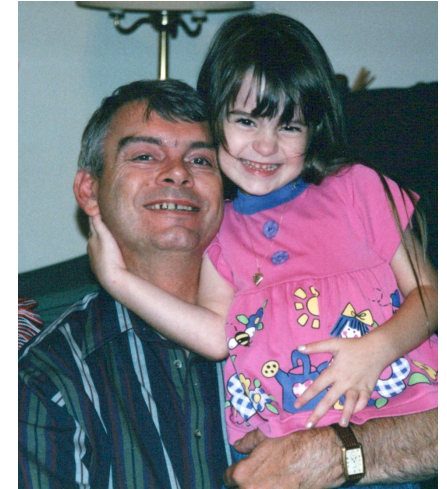
# REMEMBERING MY Dad

My dad and I have had a special relationship for as long as I can remember. When I was 18 months old traveling with my parents in Canada, they didn't have a passport or birth certificate for me, required documents for returning to the U.S., but when the border patrol officer saw my tiny fists clutched tightly to my dad, the story goes that they didn't need the documents to prove that I was Bob Miserez's daughter.

My childhood is marked with happy memories of Dad grinning and bearing the most ridiculous themed Halloween costumes I could dream up, of him sitting down after a long day of work to watch a Disney movie of my choosing for the fifth time that week, and of weekend daddy/daughter dates to Barnes & Noble, Mel's Diner, the barbershop, and Central Dairy. My colored drawings and notes wall-papered his office for a decade, and my childhood bedroom was a sea of the stuffed animals he often couldn't resist bringing home for me.

Everyone who knew me as a child knew how my dad spoiled me. And everyone knew how I worshipped him. In fifth grade, our bond was solidified further when we teamed up to convince Mom to let us bring home a dog. My dad never forgot my middle school friend who once told him feeding Mimi ice cream was not good for her. Dad made sure our dog got a spoonful of vanilla ice cream at least once a week, and she's now healthily pushing 17 years old. He taught me young the golden rule of food: No matter how full you are, there's always room for dessert, especially if it's ice cream.

As I got older, our relationship became deeper as I began to see and appreciate his flaws and faults alongside his strengths. It was in this period, around my high school and early college years, when we butted heads most frequently. I think he realized that while it was fun to have his mini-me in terms of taste in music and books, having a daughter as independent, self-assured and adventurous as he had been was a recipe for trouble. When I told him I wanted to take a gap year in Brazil, I was surprised he didn't go into cardiac arrest right



there at the kitchen table. Somehow he let me go, holding my hand in the airport until the last moment before I boarded my flight. I'm sure he saw a 5-year-old girl wearing butterfly clips and carrying her pink Dolly, not an 18-year-old high school graduate, board the plane, but he said nothing except "I love you, sweetness. Be safe."

Even with these happy times from childhood, my most memorable years of the sacred Bob-Rene-Laura trio have been the past few. While at Mizzou, I was lucky to see them often for dinners at G & D Pizza, Addison's, and HuHot (my dad could make even a 30-minute drive into a food trip). We saw U2 in Kansas City and spent school breaks on the road exploring Kentucky and Arizona. And in 2019, our family took the trip of a lifetime, driving 6,662 miles across, up, and back down the western United States, seeing more than a dozen national parks in three weeks.

As I found my niche in college, I could feel my dad's pride in me swell beyond even what it'd been when he attended countless musicals, plays, concerts, ballets, showcases, and other events in high school. He became eager for our new daddy/daughter dates — chaotic weekend car rides taking Mimi and Oliver to chase tennis balls at my Aunt Lori and Uncle Rick's house or Sunday mornings drinking coffee together on our patio — when we'd talk about what I was doing in school and at my internships, or about my friends.



My dad and I had a special relationship. So many people in the past few days have told me how proud of me he was. That I was his light. That everything he did was for me. I don't need anyone to tell me that because I've felt it my whole life, wrapping around me like a protective coat of armor. I can't imagine where I'd be without it. My mom and dad have spent the last quarter of a century building a bridge that I could walk across with ease. The childhood they provided me was one of privilege and comfort and unconditional love. They have been twin flames lighting my way through life. Now one of them has burnt out. I honestly have no idea where to go from here, and the person I trust most to tell me can't answer.

What I do know is it's on me and everyone in this room now to remember my dad so strongly and tangibly that his flame still flickers. For me, that will mean valuing experiences — a good meal, good company, good weather, good music — and making time to enjoy life. It will mean appreciating earth's beauty, everything from the dramatic landscapes of the national parks to the backyard lake of a close friend. It will mean using humor to make the heavy burdens lighter. And it will mean remembering and sharing some of what my dad taught me:

- *There are more important things than work.*
- *You're never too old to try something new.*
- *People act their best with unconditional love.*
- *There's always room for ice cream.*

## REMEMBERING OUR *Friend*

*We thank Bob's many friends and colleagues who showered him with notes of encouragement and thanks for his years of friendship. The comments on these pages are but a small sampling of the gratitude and esteem shared both with, and about, Bob.*

... He can recognize untapped potential and hidden pitfalls before most people begin to look. And certainly that smile and sense of humor he lets show when appropriate, are legendary to those of us who knew him. He will leave a positive lasting impression on the state of Missouri, and all who had the pleasure of really knowing him.

— *John Mehner*

... Bob was the go-to guy in our state. He could immediately visualize if a project would work or not work. There was no beating around the bush with Bob; if it could work, he would make it work. If it was a bad project he would tell you on the spot and that would be the end of it. In the area of finance and structuring projects there was no one better. Bob was a financial dealmaking wizard.

— *Tom Rackers*

... Above all, you are a great person and dear friend, and we are blessed and grateful for the difference you have made in our lives.

— *Webb Gilmore*

...Thank you for the opportunity and for the honor to share in this remembrance of our dear colleague and our dear friend, Bob Miserez. On behalf of all of us in the economic development community, we send our deepest condolences to Bob's beloved family, Rene and Laura. Thank you so much for sharing him with us.

If there's one thing that those of working in economic development in Missouri over the past 25 years can agree on, it's that Bob's impact cannot be overstated. If you look around in our major cities and even our rural communities at some of the biggest, most complex and most transformational deals—Bob Miserez is the common denominator. And while his fingerprints are everywhere, he was never one to seek out credit, favoring the feeling of the wind in his face as he rode his motorcycle over the glare of the limelight.

This might have been part of Bob's secret in how he managed to serve so ably under seven or so different Governors, dozens of different Department Directors, thousands of General Assembly members, and a high-powered Board of some of Missouri's most distinguished citizens. Bob was part of an exclusive club—one of those rare individuals who served in an impactful role in State government for a term measured by decades instead of four or eight years.

Bob developed and helped to lead an outstanding organization at the Missouri Development Finance Board, surrounding himself with smart, capable people, and always willing to share his insights and expertise. Combining an unparalleled understanding of the mechanics of development finance, along with the people and the politics, Bob was simply made to do his job, and, man, was he ever good at it.

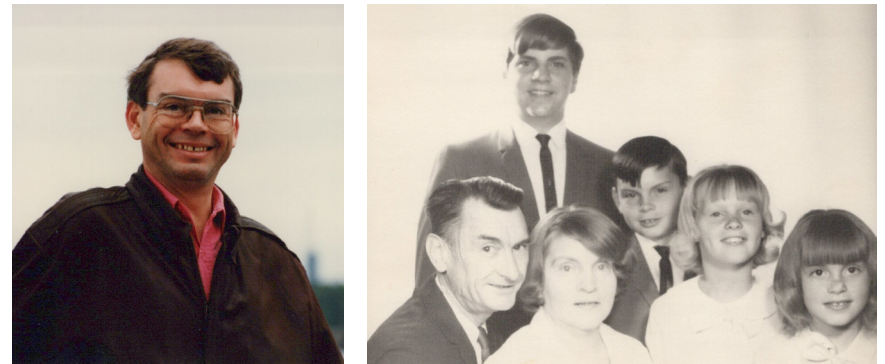
I first met Bob more than 25 years ago and what struck me immediately and what I saw over and over again during our time working together was Bob's commitment to always do the right thing for the State. I learned a lot from Bob about how to do my job and I'm sure I am not alone. Bob's art of negotiation was to always lead with "no". That, he surmised, would put you in the best position for anything that might follow. This was Bob always looking for the way to get to the best possible deal—to get the most out of the tools at his disposal to provide economic opportunities for the citizens of the state he cared for so much. His work was selfless, and he had great distaste for selfish

people. Public service satisfied him and served as his motivator. He was truly a rare breed.

As many of you know, Bob was brutally honest. I loved that about him, though every now and then I might scold him for putting his bold truth in an email. The "Bank of Bob" did not suffer fools gladly, and if you didn't bring your A-game, he'd make sure that you knew it—no public admonition was necessary, just the quiet fade of your project away into the abyss. Off-putting to some, exasperating to others, Bob's overarching goal was to push others to be their best. And while he could be a bit enigmatic in public settings, Bob seemed most in his element over a cup of coffee, or at a working lunch he would schedule at some dive restaurant he had found halfway to KC, or at the bar at a MEDFA conference, with his dry sense of humor and good-natured ribbing of friends and colleagues. He was just fun to be around.

There's no one like Bob and there never will be. The State of Missouri is a whole lot better place, we are all a whole lot better at our jobs, and I am a better person from having the privilege of knowing Bob. He will be greatly missed.

— *Sallie Hemenway and Chris Pieper*



... We cherish the memories we have made with you.

— *Dana Miserez*

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I am so sorry to hear about your diagnosis and want to wish you, Rene, and Laura all the best. Obviously, you are in my thoughts and prayers.

Since we first met in Room 680 of the Truman Building when I joined DED on October 1, 2001, you have been a good friend. Thank you for your friendship over the years. I have always enjoyed our visits, whether we were at our offices in the Truman Building, attending conferences around the state, talking in your executive suite and balcony at the Governor's State Office Building, on the streets of Hermann, or having a conversation on the phone. You were always entertaining to talk with, full of good information, always said what was on your mind, and introduced me to a lot of people. And no matter what time of day it was, you always had a pot of coffee nearby. (I still remember the art displays from Laura at DED offices.)

I regret that because of Covid the past year I was not able to make visits to your office.

Through your leadership with the Missouri Development Finance Board, you are a legendary figure in community and economic development all across the State of Missouri. I do not think many people fully understand the magnitude of your work around the state and all the types of projects MDFB helped fund. You should be very proud of the work you have done. Your pride was evident when we visited projects you had been involved in or when you described some of the work you and your staff had completed.

I know some of the projects you got involved with were controversial, infused with political influence and minefields at every turn. Not every project fit the guidelines of MDFB and you were never shy about telling people like me why a project could not be funded. But, you were also patient enough to tell me what it would take to have a project worthy of consideration and hear my ideas. I also appreciate the fact that even with the major projects MDFB funded that gained a lot of attention under your leadership, the board also developed programs to fund projects in smaller communities, such as Hermann where we received significant support from your programs. I also know some people in Hermann were not easy to work with, but you and your staff fortunately did not hold grudges and kept working through issues that came up. As I recall, you were one of my references when I was being

checked out for the job in Hermann by Bob Kirchoffer.

You handled a very difficult job for many years as a consummate professional, a steady leader, and an honest and dedicated public servant. Thank you for that. And thank you for being a good friend.

In difficult times like this it is easy to dwell on the things you did not get to do or may not get to see or experience. That's a natural feeling to have; but the Good Lord has a plan for each of us. You have been very blessed during your life, you have been a blessing to others, and you have accomplished many great things. You have a loving wife and daughter. Focus on the blessings you have received and be thankful.

Hang in there, my friend.

— *Jim Grebing*

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... Thank you for being a role model and mentor. Over the past 10+ years you have taught me much more than I can ever express in this short letter. Your dedication to your craft, unwavering work ethic, and tenacity are traits that are rare today and that I very much respect and appreciate getting to learn from you.

— *Ryan Vermette*

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... You've been a rock in Missouri economic development for as long as I can remember – quietly steering complicated deals through a complex process. There are thousands of people working throughout Missouri, buying homes and putting their kids through college, because of your leadership. That's an impact that lives on through multiple generations and quite a legacy as well. I'm blessed to call you a friend.

— *Steve Johnson*

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I am fortunate enough to have lots of great stories and memories and you would think that I would select the trip to testify at the court case in New Orleans with Bob, David, Ann Perry and Steve Stogel, or the approval of the MDFB Board of the DREAM program, or the six attempts we made toward Ballpark Village before we succeeded, or the grueling Monday morning staff meetings, or coffee on High Street, or 25 years of Governor's Conferences, but literally one of the great privileges and best memories of time spent with Bob centered around the invitations I received to the standing "Bob Miserez/David Queen Working Lunch".

This coveted and rare invitation was extended even after I was 3 hours late to one such lunch at the Hilltop BBQ in Warsaw. That is a testament to loyal friends who will wait that long for your arrival.

These occasions typically and purposely were held at some of Missouri's best "dive" restaurants. The menu was sometimes barbecue, greasy cheeseburgers, or the day's special and I dined with the only two guys in the restaurant in button-down shirts and ties.

I also witnessed Bob research his detailed selection of different destinations. There was analysis and evaluation of the items on the menu, the level of dinginess, the decor (or lack of it), and any number of other indicators a dive connoisseur could apply in his trade.

Once at the restaurant the first order of business, I observed, was learning the waitress' name, engaging in a conversation, and determining the best items to eat. There was always at least one item ordered to share at the table.

I listened intently to Bob discuss the positive components of the service as the meal progressed along with simple delights found with the food and the "ambiance". Bob could find these out-of-the way joints like my bloodhound can find a bone.

The work conducted at the lunch sailed by, sometimes paused briefly by a simple, yet worthy observation.

While I found myself never really wanting the meal to end, I waited in anticipation for the moment I could look back at the face of the waitress as we walked out the door as she discovered her incredibly generous tip left by my two friends. There is absolutely nothing like making someone else's day.

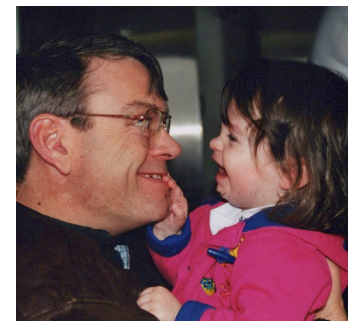
What Bob reminded me of during these adventures was the fact that life is about the journey along the way; that parts of your life should just be simple and uncomplicated and you should work just as hard to find those as you do for complex and complicated ones; that you are never too old to just have fun; and maybe most importantly, that the more pickup trucks in the parking lot, the better the food.

— *Sallie Hemenway*

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... In looking back on my work with Bob over the past 30 years or so, I realize that his focus was always on making sure that each project that we worked on created the maximum benefit to the entire community, and he was always anxious to find ways to improve each project and its impact on the community. Kansas City area icons like Union Station, the Truman Sports Complex and the MLB Urban Youth Academy would not exist in their current form without Bob's good work and guidance. Bob's work has touched a large number of lives in our community, and Bob can be very proud of all of the people who have benefited from his work. Particularly, Bob's work to help preserve and redevelop Union Station has created the central place in greater Kansas City – a symbol of what can be accomplished when capable people (like Bob) are given the opportunity to intervene and bring their talents and skills to bear.

— *David Frantze*



I hope this email finds you well and finding some peace during these tough times. A mutual connection of ours, David Queen, was kind enough to forward me the news about Bob's health. I am so sorry to hear this news as I hold Bob in the highest regard. I'm certain you don't know me but I'm an old industry colleague with Bob. This news has definitely shook me, as he is one of the first people I met when I took over the Council of Development Finance Agencies 17 years ago. Bob was a long-time member of CDFA and his influence and engagement with CDFA over the past few decades was profound. When I was hired to be the new CEO of CDFA in 2004, he reached out within days to welcome me to the organization. He was so kind. He didn't know me and he had no reason to reach out other than to provide me encouragement and his support. I later had the chance to visit with him in his office, have lunch and just get to know him on a personal level. We met many times over the years at CDFA events and he was always such a sincere and genuine person. His humor and intellect and his kindness and support will always be how I remember him.

I was 28 when I took over this job. I had no idea what I was doing and the old-timers in our industry looked at me with skepticism and a bit of disbelief when I shared my vision for the organization. I had big plans and I was ambitious and vocal about pushing our agenda as an industry. I definitely rubbed some people the wrong way with my aggressiveness and motivation to make us better. Why would anyone follow a 28 year old kid in an industry led by such established people? Now, so many years later and I look back at those who influenced me and Bob is on the top of my list. They say life is about figuring out "how they will remember you" and I just want you to know that this is how I will forever remember Bob. For his kindness and friendship.

If you have the chance, please let him know that he is on my mind, in my prayers and will always be remembered for everything he did for me. I respect him so much and just want to thank him for being so kind, so thoughtful and such a good person. I wish him well and cannot thank him enough for everything.

— *Toby Rittner*



Bob, on behalf of the St. Louis Cardinals, we want you to know how important you have been to the Cardinals' success over the past 15 years, including our two World Series Championships during that period. Without your great

leadership, vision and support, we would not have been able to finance and complete our new Busch Stadium project, which enabled us to achieve the sustained success that we have had during those years and which we hope to continue to have for the foreseeable future. Thank you for all that you have done for the St. Louis Cardinals and the State of Missouri over the years, but, most importantly, we truly appreciate our wonderful friendship with you.

You are a first-class person and a true gentleman, and you are loved by so many. We wish you peace and comfort in the coming days and weeks, and we know that, once you get to heaven, you will be there watching all of the St. Louis Cardinal greats, like Stan, Red, Lou and Gibby. Bob, we celebrate you and your life and your amazing contributions to all of ours. Our lives will forever be better because you have been in them.

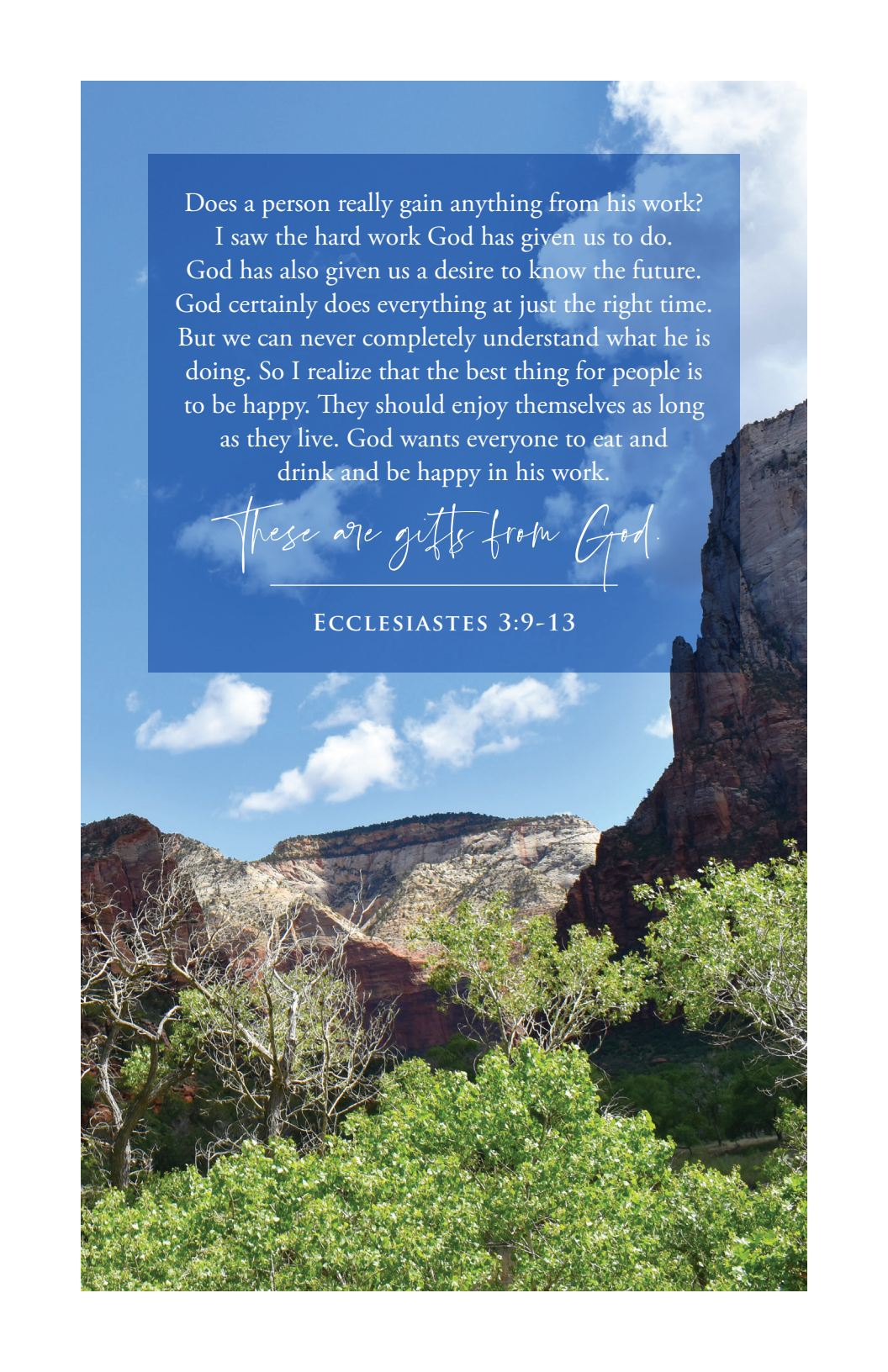
— *Mike Whittle*

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... I've always appreciated my friendship with Bob. Every conversation seemed to be centered on 'doing the right thing'. He helped me understand how to best serve people in our respective positions, and for that I'm forever grateful.

— *Greg Steinhoff*

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Does a person really gain anything from his work?  
I saw the hard work God has given us to do.  
God has also given us a desire to know the future.  
God certainly does everything at just the right time.  
But we can never completely understand what he is  
doing. So I realize that the best thing for people is  
to be happy. They should enjoy themselves as long  
as they live. God wants everyone to eat and  
drink and be happy in his work.

*These are gifts from God.*

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ECCLESIASTES 3:9-13