



## Robert J. Small

October 5, 1929 - October 3, 2024

Robert Joseph "Bob" Small went to be with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Thursday, October 3, 2024, just two days before his 95th birthday. Bob joins his parents, Glenn and Estelle (Denny) Small, three brothers, three sisters, his daughter "Boopies", son-in-law Mark and countless friends in his heavenly home.

Bob was born on October 5, 1929 in Napoleon, Ohio. He met the love of his life, Donna Jean Gray while in high school and the two were married 78 years ago, on August 20, 1946. Together they raised 14 children and he leaves behind an incredible, enduring legacy.

Most of Bob's career was spent at the "Napoleon Products Company", working his way up from sweeping floors to president of the company. In 1978, he left to share ownership of "The Party Shop" for a time before starting "Small's Cheese" food distribution company. Following the sale of his business to "The Napoleon Creamery", he continued working with them until his retirement demonstrating a dedicated work ethic that spanned 6 decades!

Bob's faith was extremely important to him and he passed along this faith to each of his children. In spite of the tragic loss of his daughter, Elizabeth (Boopies), in 1954, his faith was unshakeable. It was truly his foundation, and he lived his life as a reflection of that deep faith. Through every joy and every

trial, right up until the end, his trust in God never wavered. His faith guided him, and it will continue to guide those he left as they move forward without him. A life-long and dedicated member of St. Augustine Catholic Church in Napoleon, he was one of the first eucharistic ministers at the church.

After his Savior, his greatest love was being surrounded by his family. He truly cherished every opportunity to get together and would always drop "you don't have to leave so soon" when it was time to go our separate ways. His love for each of his children was evident in everything he did, and that love continues to strengthen the Small family bonds.

In addition to his faith, wife and children, Bob loved sports, especially football (ND Fighting Irish football!) and golf. His love for the game of football drove him to start the program at St. Augustine Catholic School in 1954, raising \$200 in donations from local businesses to purchase the uniforms and equipment to start the program. Bob would continue to coach the program for 30 years, sharing his love for the game, direction and discipline with hundreds of young student-athletes through that period. His influence extended far beyond the field...he wasn't just a coach, but a mentor, teaching lessons of discipline, respect, and integrity that helped shape the lives of those he guided.

In his later years, Bob could be found carefully guiding boards through his scroll saw creating "Images on Wood", or "Woodies" as they were affectionately referred to, making thousands over the past 25 years for businesses, veteran organizations, homeowners and classic car enthusiasts.

In addition to his loving wife, Donna, he leaves behind 8 sons and 5 daughters; Jean Small, Bill (Kathy), Cathy (John) Austermiller, Mary (Gary) Poore, Tim (Robin), Terry (Rita), Glenn (Jayna), Pat (Steve) Spengler, Doug (Kim), Andy (Carol), Rick (Ann), Carol (Jeff) Lanzer, and Steve (Penny). He

also leaves 34 grandchildren and 49 great-grandchildren (plus 3 on the way!). He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers John, Bill and Jim, sisters Geraldine Yeager, Betty Foster and Jane Yarnell, daughter Elizabeth (7/4/1954), son-in-law Mark (Pat) Hines (9/16/2004) and grandson-in-law Kurt (Amy Austermilller-Byrne) Schlade (8/16/2003).

Visitation will be Monday, October 7 from 3:00-7:00pm with a rosary service at 6:30pm at Rodenberger Funeral Home, Napoleon. A funeral Mass will be held Tuesday, October 8 at 11:30am at St. Augustine Catholic Church, Napoleon. The family kindly requests that memorial contributions be directed toward St. Augustine Catholic School.

Online condolences may be left for the family at [www.rodenbergergray.com](http://www.rodenbergergray.com).

# Cemetery Details

## St. Augustine's Cemetery

St. Rt. 108  
Napoleon, OH 43545

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT 7. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Rodenberger Funeral Home - Napoleon  
1010 Westmoreland Avenue  
Napoleon, OH 43545

## Rosary Service

OCT 7. 6:30 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Rodenberger Funeral Home - Napoleon  
1010 Westmoreland Avenue  
Napoleon, OH 43545

## Mass

OCT 8. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

St. Augustine Catholic Church  
726 Monroe St.  
NAPOLEON, OH 43545



# Tribute Wall



“ We’re sending our heartfelt sympathy to the family What a beautiful man and he will be missed by those that knew him. He truly led by example Rest in peace Bob. Go IRISH !!!!! Will and Pat

will pat wagner - October 07, 2024 at 04:09 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.



October 07, 2024 at 01:06 PM



“ iHeartMedia planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert J. Small.

iHeartMedia - October 07, 2024 at 01:06 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.



October 07, 2024 at 10:36 AM

TF

“ Tony, Adam and the MolsonCoors family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Robert J. Small.



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Tony, Adam and the MolsonCoors family - October 07, 2024 at 10:33 AM

TF

“ Tony, Adam and the MolsonCoors family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert J. Small.

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Tony, Adam and the MolsonCoors family - October 07, 2024 at 10:33 AM



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.



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October 07, 2024 at 09:48 AM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.



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October 07, 2024 at 09:19 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.



October 07, 2024 at 09:07 AM



“ Richard and Robin Hopkins purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Robert J. Small.



Richard and Robin Hopkins - October 07, 2024 at 08:54 AM



“ Richard and Robin Hopkins planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert J. Small.

Richard and Robin Hopkins - October 07, 2024 at 08:54 AM



“ Marc & Carol Small. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert J. Small.

Marc & Carol Small - October 06, 2024 at 03:23 PM



“ To the Small family, please accept our condolences on the loss of your father. Jim and Chris Rettig

Jim Rettig - October 05, 2024 at 07:45 PM

DA

“ *What a remarkable gentleman he was! My sincere condolences to the family.*

*Deb Grieser Armstrong*

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**Deb Armstrong** - October 05, 2024 at 05:01 PM

JS

“ *Please accept our sincere condolences on Bob's passing. What a wonderful life he lived with Donna and family, and what a legacy he leaves behind! God's' blessings to all of you.*

*Sincerely, Jan and John Stover*

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**Jan Stover** - October 05, 2024 at 04:48 PM

CW

“ *Your father was an amazing, generous man. He made many wood sculptures for us. He donated So many to Napoleon schools. I thought the world of him.*

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**Charleen Weber** - October 04, 2024 at 03:28 PM

KT

“ *Our Deepest Condolences. Love from Kaitlyn's Cottage staff and participants*



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**Kelly Tong** - October 04, 2024 at 03:17 PM

MA

*Thank you. Dad thought the world of your incredible services and love for his grandson! ☐*

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**Mary** - October 09, 2024 at 07:02 PM

LG

“ He was such a kind man and loving man, it was an honor to have known Bob just a short time as I worked at Alpine of Genacross where he lived, you will be missed, God bless his family



Lori Garner - October 04, 2024 at 02:11 PM

RH

“ Raymond and Diane Hughes purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Robert J. Small.



Raymond and Diane Hughes - October 04, 2024 at 12:27 PM



“ Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.



October 04, 2024 at 11:16 AM

GI

“ Grube, Inc. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert J. Small.

Grube, Inc. - October 04, 2024 at 11:16 AM

CM

“ Chris and Max purchased the Simply Elegant Sp  
athiphyllum for the family of Robert J. Small.



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**Chris and Max** - October 04, 2024 at 10:19 AM

CM

“ Chris and Max planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert J. Small.

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**Chris and Max** - October 04, 2024 at 10:19 AM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of  
Robert J. Small.



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October 04, 2024 at 10:14 AM

CS

“ Chris & Nancy Schroeder purchased the Beautifu  
l in Blue for the family of Robert J. Small.



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**Chris & Nancy Schroeder** - October 04, 2024 at 09:57 AM

JL

“ To Cathy and the rest of the Small family, Jerry and I want to extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to you all during this time of grief and sadness. May God bless you and keep you in his tender care. Our thoughts and prayers will be with you all. Jerry and Marlene Lighthill

Jerry and Marlene Lighthill - October 04, 2024 at 09:56 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.



October 04, 2024 at 09:47 AM

ED

“ EXGR Staff and Board of Directors planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert J. Small.

EXGR Staff and Board of Directors - October 04, 2024 at 09:47 AM

WC

“ West Michigan Sports Commission purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Robert J. Small.



West Michigan Sports Commission - October 04, 2024 at 09:44 AM

DC

“ Dingers crew. purchased the Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray for the family of Robert J. Small.



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Dingers crew. - October 04, 2024 at 09:40 AM

DC

“ Dingers crew. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert J. Small.

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Dingers crew. - October 04, 2024 at 09:40 AM

TF

“ The Orcelletto Family purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Robert J. Small.



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The Orcelletto Family - October 04, 2024 at 08:58 AM

Person icon

“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.



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October 04, 2024 at 08:53 AM

HS

“ Dear Carol, praying for you and your family at this time. -Hannah Smith

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Hannah Smith - October 04, 2024 at 08:47 AM



*Thank you so much Hannah!!*

**Carol Lanzer** - October 09, 2024 at 06:29 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.*



October 04, 2024 at 07:55 AM



“ *Carol,  
I am so very sorry for your loss. My continued prayers for you and your family.*

*Lisa Selogy*

**Lisa Selogy** - October 04, 2024 at 06:54 AM



*Thank you so much Lisa!*

**Carol Lanzer** - October 09, 2024 at 06:30 PM



“ *Kim Ritter and Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Robert J. Small.*



**Kim Ritter and Family** - October 03, 2024 at 09:56 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.



October 03, 2024 at 09:37 PM



“ Joe & Em Schweiss planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert J. Small.

Joe & Em Schweiss - October 03, 2024 at 09:37 PM



“ Heavenly Light was purchased for the family of Robert J. Small.



October 03, 2024 at 08:19 PM



“ Randy & Debbie Burke lit a candle in memory of Robert Small



Randy & Debbie Burke - October 03, 2024 at 07:31 PM

JB

“ I have so many wonderful memories it would be difficult to post them all.  
I am very proud to call him friend. I'm certain he was welcomed to heaven. My prayers for Bob and his entire family.

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**John Buranosky** - October 03, 2024 at 06:07 PM

KY

“ Remembering when Tim was playing football for Saint Augies. I think Terry was coaching but Uncle Brownie would be there too. God's continued peace and loving care to all of you. Love, (Bob), Kathy, Jennifer and Tim. Will be sending memorial to St. Augustine School.

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**Kathy Yarnell** - October 03, 2024 at 06:03 PM



Thanks so much Kathy!! Love you!

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**Carol Lanzer** - October 09, 2024 at 06:31 PM