



Robert John Sumner, Jr.

August 30, 1941 - May 11, 2026

Robert (Bob) John Sumner, Jr. was born on the east side of Detroit on August 30, 1941, to Robert and Pauline Sumner, the eldest of two sons. He graduated from Osborn High School and attended Wayne State University.

Like many young adults at the time, Bob was enamored of two things: music and cars. It was the early days of rock and roll and Motown, and Bob loved to go to the Notre Dame High School dances. He would often reminisce about all the dance crazes he partook in: the Stomp, the Mashed Potato, whatever was the newest cool set of moves. He would brag that he was asked for his autograph, which never failed to elicit eye rolls and laughter from the family.

Bob had a lifelong love of cars. He and his friends would go “cruising” on the east side of Detroit; he was thrilled when the Woodward Dream Cruise started up so that he could relive those days. He had a photographic memory of cars, and could tell you the make, model and year. He would often quiz his sons, who never quite caught that same bug. Fittingly, Bob entered heaven wearing one of his many Woodward Dream Cruise T-shirts.

He married Margaret Lueck on February 5th, 1966, after a short courtship. To hear Bob tell the story, he charmed her with his dancing. Bob often spoke of how beautiful Marge was and how he was crazy about her. He was so anxious to marry her he risked asking her father, even though he didn't have a job at

the time. The couple soon welcomed both their first dog (Frisky, a poodle) and their first child, Mark. Marge stayed home to raise their family, and soon added two more sons, Michael and Jeff.

Bob was a proud employee of Chrysler, where he spent his entire professional career of 30 years. He started working in the mailroom and eventually became a computer network specialist, working midnights and sometimes seven days a week. He mentored his teammates and became an expert at running the various mainframe computer jobs. Later in life, Bob would often ask anyone who would listen, “Can you tell by looking at me where I worked?” This is a favorite recollection of Bob’s grandchildren.

Bob enjoyed spending time with family, including his “favorite daughter-in-law named [fill in the blank]”. He looked forward to trips to Traverse City and Mackinac Island with his grandchildren.

He was close to his younger brother, Mike. The two would talk on the phone frequently about the Detroit Lions, the news, their families. Mike could always get Bob to laugh, and they always had a good time together. “We have a ball,” he would say.

Above all else, Bob described himself as a “collector.” He initially collected model trains, then model cars, then action figures – it was all about the pursuit, and each purchase brought him joy. He’d attend special toy collectors’ shows in Michigan and Ohio, and make “the rounds” of stores weekly, from Toys R Us to Target, to see what was new. A favorite phrase of his was “It’s one of a kind. An exclusive to Walmart/Target/etc.”

Bob was an avid Top 40 Countdown listener for decades and would spend Sunday mornings recording the latest songs to hit the charts. He’d document the songs on computer paper he brought home from work, and when his sons

got older and moved out on their own, he would call and share what new songs he had recorded, and what he thought about them. He would also track the singers and bands that played the late-night television circuit.

Bob was what you might call a “clothes horse.” He collected logo t-shirts, baseball hats, embroidered jeans and had a taste for what he described as “wild” and “different” clothing. It felt like you’d never seen him in the same outfit twice.

Walt Disney World was another passion of Bob’s. While reluctant to go initially, he fell in love with the place on his first visit in 1981 and returned many times over the years. He was what you might call a Disney evangelist; to him, there was no better place to visit in the world.

As a St. Clement parishioner for the last 23 years, Bob’s faith brought him comfort. Church was non-negotiable; even on vacation, Bob would make sure he attended Mass.

In recent years, Bob suffered from dementia and spent his last days in an assisted living memory care unit in Sterling Heights. Bob is survived by his sons, Mark (Dawn), Michael (Paula Strussione) and Jeff (Cassie Sweetnich) as well as his grandchildren Christian, Annabel, Bennett, Julian and Leo.

We will miss his eccentric personality but take comfort in knowing we will see signs of him everywhere in the Motor City.

A memorial mass will be held on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church in Romeo at 10:00 am. There will be a instate time starting at 9:30 am until the time of mass for all to gather and pay their respects to a man that will live in the hearts of all who knew him.

Previous Events

Instate in church

MAY **26.** 9:30 AM - 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church
343 South Main Street
Romeo, MI 48065

Memorial Mass

MAY **26.** 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church
343 South Main Street
Romeo, MI 48065

Tribute Wall

JS

“ Jay and Tammie Sweetnich purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Robert John Sumner, Jr..



Jay and Tammie Sweetnich - May 21 at 10:37 PM

JS

“ Jay and Tammie Sweetnich planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert John Sumner, Jr..

Jay and Tammie Sweetnich - May 21 at 10:37 PM

TL

“ Tim and Lisa LaFrance purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Robert John Sumner, Jr..



Tim and Lisa LaFrance - May 21 at 01:26 PM

TL

“ Tim and Lisa LaFrance planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert John Sumner, Jr..

Tim and Lisa LaFrance - May 21 at 01:26 PM

BV

“ So sorry for the loss of your dad Mark, Mike and Jeff. Bob was a wonderful man with lots of interesting hobbies, stories and lots of love in his heart. ❤️

barbara viaene - May 19 at 07:01 PM