

Sense of adventure, love of people, defined Lexington architect Bob Verrier



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Wicked Local

When Lexington's Carlos Verrier is asked about his favorite memory of his late father, Bob, he pauses. It's not a single memory that comes to mind. It's a combination, a reel of images playing in his mind of childhood trips. These were often adventures to the beach in Mexico. Bob taught his kids to swim. He loved body surfing. Carlos recalls one particularly thrilling excursion, riding in the back of a truck over a rickety bridge made partly of tires and rope to reach a remote and highly-prized beach spot.

This sense of adventure, of believing in oneself enough to make a dream a reality, was a theme that defined Bob Verrier's life, his son said. Verrier, a longtime Lexington resident and prominent architect died on Aug. 24. As founder of The Architectural Team, Verrier was known in the industry as a dedicated professional who found joy in reinventing historic buildings such as wharfs, mills, abandoned hospitals, and even a chocolate factory.



But, when former coworkers reached out to Carlos after his father died, the stories they shared were not of how good Verrier was at his job, but of how dedicated he was to building relationships with those he came in contact with.

“He valued the individual relationship above everything else,” Carlos said. “That’s one of the repeating themes that people bring up when they say ‘Hey, I knew Bob Verrier.’”



Friends tell a story about when an employee of Verrier's once had to travel to New York City to take care of his ill mother. This was to be an extended trip. In response, Verrier opened an entire New York office to better accommodate the employee as he cared for his family.

A lifelong passion

A native of North Attleboro, Verrier wanted to be an archaeologist as a boy, Carlos said. By the time he graduated Monsenior Coyle High School in Taunton, this had morphed into a well-defined love of architecture. An architect he knew at the time suggested that, to truly learn more about architectural history, the young Verrier should take a trip to Europe.

He did, taking his backpack and hitchhiking across the continent for six months, Carlos said. This sparked his lifelong love of adventure. He wasn't afraid to take risks. On that backpacking trip, Verrier almost got trapped behind the Berlin Wall in East Germany.

"He was always honest with himself about who he was and what he could accomplish. He was a realist, for sure. But if it didn't have a sense of adventure in it, he probably wasn't that interested," Carlos said.

As he grew as an architect, historical restoration became Verrier's focus. This was rooted, Carlos said, in an uncanny ability to see the potential in something and bring it to the forefront, whether it was in a building or in a person. Historic restoration gave Verrier a worthy challenge, as he enjoyed finding and celebrating the potential of something that others overlooked.



Verrier and his wife, Carmen, moved to Lexington and bought an old farmhouse on Harbell Street. They raised their three children, Lita, Maria, and Carlos, in town.

Lessons learned for a new generation

As a father, Verrier had high expectations of his children. He didn't like inactivity, and would tell Carlos and his siblings to "get your hands out of your pockets and do something."

What they did, what they chose as their passions, didn't matter as much to Verrier as whether or not they set their mind to a task and tackled it head on. He wanted them to be the best versions of themselves, Carlos said.

"Don't believe your own B.S.," he would say. It was a common refrain, according to Carlos. To him, it meant that a person shouldn't make excuses for themselves. It meant that honesty with oneself was crucial in achieving one's goals.



Verrier was a hard worked, and passed this on to his children. At age 13, Carlos said he began working in his father's office. Before then, chores were a necessity. The children were never idle.

"He demanded a lot, but at the same time he made it pretty fun," Carlos said.

In his free time, Verrier enjoyed traveling the world with Carmen and playing sports. Hockey and basketball were the games of his youth, and he spent many days playing tennis with Carlos after his son graduated college.



Above all, Bob Verrier was a caring and welcoming man.

“There's a saying that everybody knows, but that he practiced more than most. ‘Me casa es su casa,’” Carlos said. “He was constantly doing it, literally and figuratively bringing people into his house and sharing what was his.”