

IN MEMORY OF  
**ROBERT  
E.  
MORTENSEN**

**Obituary for Robert E. Mortensen**

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It is with great sorrow that the family and friends of Robert E. Mortensen announce his passing on July 18, 2022. A successful executive in the railroad business, Bob, as he was known to all, also distinguished himself in the military and through his humanitarian and philanthropic activities. Bob is mourned by his sister Virginia Lyttle of Morris Plains, New Jersey and his nieces and nephews.

Born in East Orange New Jersey and raised in Northern New Jersey, Bob received his undergraduate degree from Rutgers University in 1963. After graduating from Rutgers, where he was a member of Air Force ROTC, he served in Vietnam as an intelligence briefing officer to General William Westmoreland. He received the Bronze Star for his Vietnam service and the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal for Pentagon service. Mortensen retired from the Active Reserves following the Persian Gulf War. For 30 years, he worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and then Conrail, ultimately as president and chair of the board of Merchants Despatch Transportation Corp., a subsidiary of the railway. He then became a managing director for Africa Railway Development Corp, which specializes in the privatization of government-owned railways. In 2002, Mortensen was tapped by the United Nations to coordinate transportation activities in support of famine relief efforts in East Africa.

Soft spoken and self-effacing in person, Bob projected a significant voice as a philanthropist, particularly for the arts, with special interest in and devotion to choral music. An alumnus of the Rutgers University Glee Club, Bob spoke passionately of his commitment to Rutgers and the choral program at the Mason Gross School of the Arts. In addition to being the single largest contributor to Mortensen Hall, the central architectural space for music at Rutgers University,

complete with a state-of-the-art choral rehearsal space, Bob established the Mortensen fellowship for graduate conducting students in the choral program. Recently Bob endowed another fund that allows graduate conducting students to hire professional orchestras and choristers, and generously supported the Glee Club, the Kirkpatrick Choir and a broad variety of musical programs at Rutgers. He was chair of the advancement committee of the Mason Gross School of the Arts and served as a member of the Rutgers Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors.

A proud resident of Philadelphia for decades, Bob was on the board of the Philadelphia Orchestra, was co-chair of the Maestro's Circle Committee and sat on the Board's Education, Finance and Development Committee. He endowed the Robert E. Mortensen Chair in the first violin section of the orchestra. Bob served as the President of the Board and Executive Director of the Philadelphia Singers and served on the board of the Atwater Kent Museum.

Bob will be missed by his many friends and his family. A celebration of Bob's life will be held in the fall at Rutgers University. In lieu of flowers the family requests that gifts be made in support of Bob's interests. Gifts to the Rutgers University Glee Club or the Mortensen International Glee Club Tour fund and other Rutgers projects can be made via [give.rutgers.edu/bobmortensen](http://give.rutgers.edu/bobmortensen). Gifts to the Philadelphia Orchestra in Mr. Mortensen's memory may be made by visiting [www.philorch.org/donate](http://www.philorch.org/donate), or calling 215.893.3151.

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