

IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT (BOB) M. WOOD

James Houran



Many other people could have—or perhaps should have—prepared this remembrance, but I selfishly wanted to do it. You see, the late 1990s brought the opportunity for me as a young frontier scientist to research new aspects of the Roswell UFO incident of 1947. This led to a paper that later appeared in *JSE*. One of the firm but fair reviewers of that early work later opened a dialogue with me. We disagreed on some points related to this famous case, but he encouraged me nonetheless not to be afraid to engage with controversial topics or to face any aftermaths that might accompany it. This was my heartfelt introduction to Bob Wood, and little did I know about his strong presence and influence within the UFO community. Over time I came to fully understand the extent of his passion and the sincerity with which he held his beliefs. Likewise, Bob was widely known and respected even by his critics as a supreme gentleman. His son, Ryan S. Wood, informed the SSE that Bob, aged 96 years old, died on August 26, 2024, from cardiopulmonary arrest. Although I had not corresponded with Bob for 25 years or more, the news of his passing was still deeply felt.

Ryan graciously shared details about his life and career that were new and eye-opening to me. Born on April 4, 1928, in Ithaca, New York, Bob's journey through life was characterized by a relentless pursuit of knowledge and a deep commitment to uncovering the truths that lie beyond our immediate understanding. His academic journey began with a B.S. in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Colorado in 1949. He furthered his education by earning a Ph.D. in Physics from Cornell University in 1953. His early career saw him working for General Electric Aeronautics and Ordnance, followed by a two-year stint in the U.S. Army at Aberdeen Proving Ground. In 1956, he joined Douglas Aircraft, which later became McDonnell Douglas, and eventually Boeing, where he spent 43 years. During his tenure in the aerospace industry, Bob was involved in numerous ground-breaking projects. His work included the thermodynamics of missile cooling, managing independent research and development projects, antigravity research and investigations, designing radars to discriminate between Soviet ballistic missiles and their decoys, and contributing to the Space Station's development. He also played a pivotal role in promoting the Delta launch vehicle as NASA's workhorse for orbital payloads.

Bob's interest in UFOs began in the late 1960s when he led a proprietary project aimed at understanding how UFOs "worked." This *Boys in the Back Room* (BITBR) project employed the late Stanton Friedman and had funding that equated to \$4.5 million in today's currency. Ultimately, this blossomed into a lifelong passion, and upon his retirement in 1993, he became extremely involved in the forensics of authenticating the "Majestic-12" UFO trove of documents. Moreover, Bob was a long-time Director of Research for the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) and served as a physics consultant for the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO). He was also a counselor to the Society for Scientific Exploration and a member of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics since 1947. His scholarly contributions included authoring numerous articles on UFOs and the ground-breaking 1968 AIAA talk "Giant Discoveries of Future Science." He authored, edited, and contributed to several books—*Alien Viruses* (2013), *Selected by Extraterrestrials* (2015) by fellow Douglas Aircraft employee Bill Tompkins, and the *Encyclopedia of Flying Saucers* (2023) by Vernon Bowen.

Many leading ufologists disagree with the perspectives and conclusions that Bob advocated later in his life, and I also tend to sympathize with his critics. But his many personal and professional qualities should inspire future generations of researchers and enthusiasts—namely, curiosity, boldness, dedication, integrity, and passion. His relentless pursuit of knowledge and eagerness to debate provocative ideas were consonant with the founding goals of the SSE and an exemplar for the UFO community. Simply put, Bob Wood exemplified for me and many others the attitude of a true "maverick scientist." Rest in peace, our SSE comrade in arms.

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2. To promote stricter transparency and context for readers, all analyses where appropriate should provide effect size statistics in the form of direct percentages of either *association* (correlative analysis) or *mean percentage differences* (ANOVA, *t*-tests, etc.). In the case of correlative analysis, reported results shall report R^2 to provide a covariance percentage estimate. Mean tests shall provide a ‘percentage change’ indicating the actual percentage change between groups (e.g., $M = 3.44$ Group 1 versus $M = 4.02$, in Group 2, on a five-point scale is calculated by the following: $ABS [M_1 - M_{2/5} (\text{scale range})] = 11.6\%$ shift or change in means). Standard effect statistics also are allowed, so long as the above percentage techniques are likewise reported. These statistics should be reported in results as ‘percentage effect’ and follow immediately after standard statistical analysis notation. For correlation, ($r = .43, p < .01$, percentage effect = 18%), for means tests ($M_1 = 3.44$ versus $M_2 = 4.02, t = 3.443, p < .01$, percentage effect = 11.6%).

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