

In Memoriam – Robert William Sauer (“Bob”)



Kelly and Robert Sauer at the RAQA 50th Anniversary Celebration, Oct. 2019, where Bob received the RAQA Outstanding Service Award.

The RAQA staff mourns the loss of a beloved friend and supporter, Robert William Sauer (“Bob”), who recently passed away. He was a driving force behind the creation of the John S. Benson FDA Alumni Association Centennial Scholarship for the RAQA graduate program.

Bob enjoyed a successful career with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for over 40 years, where he served in numerous leadership roles, shaping “the history of multiple FDA product areas, including medical devices, radiological health, veterinary medicine, and foods. He was the recipient of numerous awards, including the Presidential Meritorious Rank Award.”* When he retired, he was a member of the FDA Senior Executive Service.

He subsequently worked as a consultant for FDA and NIH, while also becoming an enthusiastic member of the FDA Alumni Association (FDAAA), a volunteer service organization established in 2000 to educate the public about FDA’s ever-expanding public health mission. To mark the 100th anniversary of the FDA in 2006, the FDAAA raised a scholarship fund to donate as an endowment to an institution that encouraged education in regulatory affairs. Bob served as the Chairman of that FDAAA Scholarship Committee.

We first met Bob in Academic Year 2005 -2006, when he visited the School of Pharmacy as part of his assessment of regulatory affairs graduate programs across the country. He spent a considerable amount of time interviewing us that day about our program’s evolution, mission, values, and purpose. He immediately struck us as the consummate gentleman: a highly

knowledgeable professional and scholar, who knew so many levels of FDA regulations for numerous products, let alone many key individuals within the Agency.

Upon Bob's recommendation, we were subsequently invited to meet with the executive staff of the FDAAA in Rockville, MD, to answer their questions about the RAQA program. We were deeply honored that our program selected was the recipient of the FDAAA scholarship fund following that review process. From that time forward, we enjoyed regular meetings with Bob to discuss recipients of the FDAAA Centennial Scholarship and fund-raising efforts to increase its endowment so more scholarships could be made available to RAQA students. To date, the endowment has awarded FDAAA Scholarships to numerous bright and promising students, who pay out-of-pocket for their graduate education.

Over time, we met Bob's beautiful wife, Kelly, who fully supported his tireless efforts to raise money for the FDAAA Centennial Scholarship. They were such a loving and generous couple, who radiated such enthusiasm for our program and their devotion to one another. We are deeply indebted to Bob and Kelly for their unwavering support of the Scholarship, which helped so many students from the FDA and industry start, continue or finish their degree programs.

There is no greater gift than providing scholarships to deserving students, since education provides boundless windows of opportunity for years to come. As we continue to receive beautiful and heartfelt thank-you notes from students receiving these scholarships, we will always remember and thank the vision, energy, and indefatigable spirit of Bob and Kelly Sauer.

We will always miss you, Bob, and we will never forget your kindness, generosity of spirit, amazing work ethic, and steadfast support of the RAQA graduate program and its students.



Wendy Lebing, MALD, MS
Assistant Dean
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*From the Washington Post: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/washingtonpost/name/robert-sauer-obituary?id=32769759>