

Robert H. Heinmiller, Jr.

The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution has received word of the death April 25, 2005 of former employee Robert H. Heinmiller, Jr. of an acute respiratory infection following a six-year battle with cancer at Martha Jefferson Hospital in Charlottesville, Virginia. He was 64.

Bob Heinmiller was born December 17, 1940, grew up in Florida and received a B.S degree in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1962. He joined the WHOI staff in July 1962 as a research assistant working in the Theoretical Oceanography and Meteorology Department with Eric Kraus and Columbus Iselin, who was Department Chair. He transferred to the Applied Oceanography Department in July 1964 to work with Earl Hays and others on the moored array program servicing current meters and other instruments for deployment on moorings. He was appointed a research associate in 1966 and assumed responsibility for the buoy operations group and all at-sea operations. He was named research specialist in 1973. Bob took a leave of absence in January 1977 to serve as executive manager of the US-USSR POLYMODE program at MIT, deciding to leave WHOI the following year to continue his appointment with POLYMODE.

In 1978 Bob married Susan Kubany and in 1980 they co-founded Omnet, Inc. and operated SCIENCEnet, a cutting edge communications and information network for earth scientists until late 1994, when the growth of the internet forced a change in operations. The company moved from Boston to Staunton, Virginia in 1995 and repositioned itself as a consulting company specializing in information technology and Web functionality. In 2002 the pair were named Entrepreneurs of the Year by the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council.

In recognition of his contributions to the development of the internet, Heinmiller received the American Geophysical Union's Ocean Science Award in 1995 "for developing an electronic mail system for the oceanographic community that has dramatically changed our discipline. He and Susan Kubany? bravely led the way for oceanographers to enter the electronic mail era well before e-mail as popular."

Bob Heinmiller had many interests, from physics, ocean engineering and communications technology in his professional life to literature, skydiving and sewing, historic home restoration, astronomy and bees in his personal life. In his early thirties he studied modern dance and ballet, performing semi-professionally.

Survivors include his wife, Susan Kubany, of Staunton, VA; a daughter, Patricia Minsk of Redwood City, CA; a brother, Kurt Heinmiller of Davie, FL; a sister, Lorelei Oviatt of Rosamond, CA; two granddaughters, Danielle and Michelle Minsk; a cousin, Paulyn Heinmiller of Ivy, VA; four nephews and two nieces.

A memorial service, reception and celebration of his life will be held at 2 p.m. June 4 at Grey Gables Farm in Staunton, VA. For further information contact Paulyn Heinmiller at Paulyn@MSN.com. In lieu of flowers, donations made be made to the Sara Manley/Michael Dolan Scholarship Fund at MIT.