



Robert H. Koch

December 19, 1929 - October 11, 2010

Robert H. Koch, emeritus professor of astronomy and astrophysics at the University of Pennsylvania died at his home in Ardmore on October 11 of a brain tumor. He was 80 years old.

He was born in York, PA, and graduated from York Catholic High School in 1947. He

attended the University of Pennsylvania on a senatorial scholarship, graduating in 1951.

After two years in the army, he enrolled in graduate school at the University of PA, doing

his doctoral research at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Dr. Koch received his PhD

in astronomy in 1959 and moved to Amherst, MA where he taught as a member of the 4-

college astronomy department until 1966.

Following a year at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, he joined the Astronomy Department at Penn, teaching and doing research there until retirement in

1996. Dr. Koch's life-long love of astronomy led him to continue pursuing various areas

of research during retirement, in addition to his main specialty of studying

variable

double stars. His many students were amazed at the breadth as well as the depth of his

knowledge. He was actively engaged with what he called the "most romantic science"

until right before his brief illness. During retirement he also researched and wrote a

history of "Observational Astronomy at the University of Pennsylvania 1751 to 2007". He

was a gardener and a musician, learning to play the mandolin when he was 77. In

addition, he and his wife actively pursued their love of traveling and bird watching,

visiting nearly 30 countries during these years.

He met his future wife, Joanne, in graduate school in 1957 and they were married in

1959. Besides his wife, survivors include sons Thomas and James (Dana), daughters

Elizabeth (Murray) and Patricia- Budlong (Steven), seven grandchildren, a brother and a sister.

A funeral mass will be held Tuesday December 21 at 10 AM in St. Colman's Roman

Catholic Church in Ardmore, with family greeting after 9:30. Burial will be private. In

lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Cape May Bird Observatory, 600

Route 47 North, Cape May Courthouse, NJ 08210, Attn: Deb Shaw.

Condolences may

be offered at www.chadwickmckinney.com.

Previous Events

Service

DEC **21**. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Colman's Roman Catholic Church
11 Simpson Rd.
Ardmore, PA