



Robert Papworth Best

June 20, 1929 - February 26, 2026

Robert Papworth Best died peacefully on February 26, 2026, in Florida, surrounded by his loving family. He was 96 years old.

Bob was born on June 20, 1929, in DuBois, Pennsylvania, to Helen Papworth Best and Robert M. Best. He attended MMI Preparatory School in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, where, as a teenager during World War II, he patrolled the streets after curfew with the Boy Scouts. He later attended Hobart College in Geneva, New York, where he met his beloved wife, Suzanne Bolton.

He went on to graduate from Albany Law School, finishing second in his class and serving on the law journal. Bob and Suzanne were married in 1955. Shortly thereafter, he joined the United States Navy, became a Judge Advocate General (JAG) officer, and was stationed in San Diego, California, where their first two children, Mary Kathryn and Robert B., were born.

In 1958, the family returned east and settled in Gloversville, New York. Bob began his legal career as a law clerk to his uncle, New York State Supreme Court Justice Willard L. Best. He later established his own law practice on West Fulton Street in Gloversville, where he became widely known and respected throughout Fulton County as “Judge Best.”

Public service defined much of his professional life. In the 1970s, Bob was

elected Mayor of Gloversville while continuing his law practice. He later served as Fulton County District Attorney. In the 1980s, he was elected Fulton County Judge and Surrogate. Ultimately, he was elected to the New York State Supreme Court, where he served with distinction for 16 years before retiring at age 76.

Following retirement, Bob and Suzanne—married for 70 years—made their home in Lady Lake, Florida, while remaining devoted “snowbirds,” traveling between Florida and Gloversville for nearly two decades.

Bob loved skiing, golf, and bowling, and he shared those passions with his family. He was an original do-it-yourself enthusiast whose weekends were spent painting, papering, laying floors, and recruiting his children to assist. He was a proud member of the Elks, Rotary, the Eccentric Club, American Legion, and the Sons of the American Revolution.

In retirement, Bob and Suzanne traveled widely, visiting Egypt, China, and destinations throughout Europe, and enjoyed many cruises together.

In 2022, Bob authored a book commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Fulton County Courthouse. He played a significant role in preserving the historic courthouse, ensuring that it remains one of the oldest continuously operating courthouses in the United States.

Robert was predeceased by his parents, Robert and Helen Best; his brothers, Dale Best and Willard C. Best; and his son, Robert B. Best.

He is survived by his devoted wife, Suzanne Bolton Best; his daughters, Mary Kathryn Breen (Peter) and Meredith Best (Babette Loucks), daughter in law Lisa Best; six grandchildren, Elisabeth Krauze, Tyler Best, Alyson Best, Sean W. Robert Breen, Dele Loucks-Best, and Aubrey Loucks-Best; and two great-grandchildren, Ruby and Penelope Best.

A funeral service will be held on May 16, 2026, at the Church of the Holy Spirit on South Main Street in Gloversville, New York, with burial to follow at Prospect Hill Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Historical Society of the New York Courts. <https://history.nycourts.gov/product/donation/>

Funeral arrangements are under the care of The John W. Finocan Funeral Home, Inc. Online condolences may be made at www.amicofuneralhome.com.

Cemetery Details

Prospect Hill Cemetery

Gloversville, NY 12078

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY **16**. 9:00 AM (ET)

Church of the Holy Spirit
151 South Main St.
Gloversville, NY 12078

Tribute Wall

JB

“ J.J. Smith, Trustco Bank purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Robert Papworth Best.



J.J. Smith, Trustco Bank - April 24 at 02:24 PM

JB

“ J.J. Smith, Trustco Bank planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert Papworth Best.

J.J. Smith, Trustco Bank - April 24 at 02:24 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Amico Funeral Home - April 01 at 11:14 PM

KK

“ I remember the Best family as I babysat the children when I was a teenager in the 1960's. Sincere condolences, Karen Tracy Fisher Kipp (Pacifica, CA)

Karen Ann Kipp - March 24 at 06:16 PM

LM

“ I am so very sorry for to hear of the loss of your dad, I am sending many hugs to the family as you travel this journey.
Lisa (Clo) McLellan

Lisa C McLellan - March 21 at 07:52 PM

KH

“ *Bob and Sue were wonderful neighbors at Peck Lake for years, have been missed...sad/sorry to learn of his passing. K Henry*

Kathleen Henry - March 07 at 08:51 AM

SJ

“ *Rest in Peace Judge Best!*

Steve Stofelano Jr - March 06 at 07:52 PM

RM

“ *Bob was a guiding light for Gloversville and Fulton County. I am sorry for your loss. Robert Curtis Mills, MD*

R. Curtis Mills, MD - March 05 at 09:40 AM