

Robert F. Van Etta was born September 28th, 1924. He was the oldest son of Dr. Michael and Jean Van Etta. He was raised in Cook, Minnesota where his father practiced dentistry. He was valedictorian of the Class of 1943 and played basketball and was named to the All County team. Upon graduation, he began college at Virginia Junior College and then served during World War II as a seaman in the Navy. While attending the Navy Radio and Telegraph school in Detroit, he met his future wife, Luella "Lee" Pauline Quinn at the USO. After the war, he returned to Minnesota and attended the University of Minnesota Dental School and graduated in 1950.

Dr. Van Etta reenlisted in the Navy during the Korean War and this time served as a dentist; while in the service, his eldest son, John, was born followed two years later by Robert II. After completion of his military service, the family moved to Ely, Minnesota where he established his dental practice. Their third son, Thomas, was born in Ely. Dr. Van Etta practiced his entire career in Ely until his retirement in 1989. In addition to his practice, he was also a member of St. Anthony's Catholic Church, the Knights of Columbus, the Ely School Board, Vermilion Community College Advisory Board, the Ely Airport Commission, the American Legion, VFW, Moose, and Kiwanis Club. He enjoyed fishing, bowling, golf and was a champion trap shooter.

Following retirement, the Van Etta's moved to Bella Vista, Arkansas. They continued their enjoyment of playing golf for many years. They developed many close friends. They had been married for 56 years when Lee passed away in 2003. Dr. Van Etta continued to remain active, residing independently in his home, attending mass each week at St. Bernard, as well as driving several friends to mass weekly. He also continued to play bridge and poker. He was an active reader and more recently enjoyed reading on his Ipad where he also had his Facebook page.

Dr. Van Etta passed away on March 16 at the Circle of Life Hospice. He is survived by his three sons: Dr. John (Dr. Linda) Van Etta, Robert F. Van Etta II and Thomas (Leah Anne) Van Etta. In addition, he is survived by his grandchildren: Kathryn Van Etta-Olson (Matthew Olson), Robert F. Van Etta, III, Matthew Van Etta, Hannah Babcock and John David Babcock and three great-grandchildren: Thomas Olson, Robert Van Etta IV and Michael Van Etta. Robert will also be greatly missed by companion and friend Lynne Snodgrass.

A Memorial Mass will be held at St. Bernard Catholic Church in Bella Vista, on Friday, April 21st at 10:00 a.m. Memorials may be sent to the Circle of Life Hospice, 1201 NE Legacy Parkway, Bentonville, AR 72712.

Arrangements are by Bella Vista Funeral Home and Crematory, Inc. On-line condolences may be made at www.funeralmation.com