

Monuments by Robinson & Sons Creates New Memorial to Honor Trooper Bob Lather

By Teresa Lather Bodnyk

Sometimes there's a story you just feel you have to share. I just went through a very emotional but joyous experience of sorts that might help other trooper's families. I don't think anyone wants to have to go through the process of preparing a new cemetery marker or monument for a loved one, but it's unrealistic to think we could make it through life without escaping the need of having to purchase one at some point in our lives.

I felt like I had a pretty remarkable experience in preparing a new monument for my late husband, Trooper Bob Lather. As many of you know, Bob was tragically killed in a drunk and drugged driving pursuit on July 6, 1982. He was thirty years old and he and I had been married for 8 years. We had a 6 month old daughter Breanne, and 2 year old son, Rob.

When Bob passed away he was laid to rest in Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis, Indiana where other members of his family are also buried. At the burial site, we were permitted to have flush markers, but no raised monuments. Bob remained at this burial site for 25 years. Then in the spring of this year, Johnson County Sheriff, Marty Talbert, formerly a trooper of the ISP Peru Post, met with a good friend of mine, former Police Chief Tom Dinardo of the Kokomo Police Department. Marty asked Tom to approach me about having Bob's gravesite moved to the "Heroes of Public Safety" monument within Crown Hill Cemetery. Marty felt the location was more honorable and befitting for a close friend and fellow officer. Crown Hill developed the special memorial section after the attacks of September 11, 2001 for fallen heroes.

I was unaware of the new "Heroes" section and was happy to learn about it. One thing led to another and I started the process of Bob's reinterment. In March Sheriff Ken Rowland and Sergeant Jeff Stinson of the Miami Sheriff's Department, former classmates of Bob and ISP officers from the Peru Post, and Peru Post Commander, Lt. Mike Nichols, acted as honor guards as the flagged draped vault was moved to a beautiful resting place with other fallen officers and firefighters of the State of Indiana.

After Bob reached his final resting place, I started the tedious process of finding a personal monument for Bob that was nice but also affordable. I received several quotes from various monument



companies and was surprised to find out that in 25 years, prices went through the roof. The quotes were anywhere from \$5,700 to \$13,000 for the type of monument I was considering. I was really disheartened by the whole process and felt it was a huge unexpected expense and I wasn't sure what I was going to do. Then generous donations from good friends, family members, and the Indiana Troopers' Association helped to alleviate some of my expenses. Sheriff Ken Rowland also collected funds from current and former Peru Post families to help support the new memorial. It became a project of all Bob's closest friends and family members. How great is that? Then, by the grace of God, Ernie Alder of The Indiana Troopers Association contacted me and gave me the name of Chuck Layton. Ernie said Chuck could help me with an affordable monument. Chuck was a great guy and we hit it off like "frick and frack." He is the former Commissioner of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and had these wonderful networking capabilities. He was able to bring all these people and elements together to make a new monument happen. The quote from Chuck came in at \$3,093! All I could think was, "What a deal!"

Chuck then introduced me to the folks at "Monuments by Robinson and Sons" in Noblesville, IN. Dale Robinson, the owner of the company and his son Aaron were unbelievably helpful from that point on and created a new monument for Bob that surpassed my expectations. I wanted gold lettering for Bob's name and the ISP emblem that would stand up to the elements. I also knew I had a lot to say on that monument. Robinson and Sons took on the task of

sandblasting 100 words on the tablet and base! Those words were a combination of phrases that people used to express Bob's character and personality in sympathy cards and newspaper article when he passed away. I, as well as my son, daughter and Bob's family gathered privately at Crown Hill in October to see the new monument for the first time. We all couldn't be happier with the way things turned out. The monument is just beautiful and remarkable.

Chuck and the Robinson's have now generously offered their help to other Indiana State Troopers (active or retired) and their immediate family members (spouse and children). Dale Robinson has explained to me that he will offer the following:

* A free single gray granite flush or bevel marker, free of charge to any ISP officer killed in-the-line of duty. (I hope we never have to use this service again.)

* All markers, monuments, benches, etc. at a substantially reduced price in black, china red and, morning rose granite (I choose a black granite tablet and base).

They can also add personalized etching to honor the life, loves, hobbies and occupation of family members. Custom work with boulders and plaques are also available. Their service is statewide and they can work with most local cemeteries.



I wanted something special, because I felt Bob was a very special person. With the help of so many people, I was able to place a monument on Bob's grave site that was an expression of the close individuals in Bob's short life.

I hope my story can help other families and it would be my pleasure to answer any questions my ISP family may have. Please feel free to contact me at Teresab920@aol.com or (317) 407-2660. Also, the Robinson's can be reached directly at (317) 373-0111 and the address is: 20777 Riverwood Avenue, Noblesville, IN 46062.