



## Bob Brown

### Bikecentennial and far beyond

“I LOVE THE FEELING OF FREEDOM WHILE I AM BIKE TOURING. THERE IS NO AGENDA, NO SCHEDULE TO FOLLOW. YOU CAN EAT WHEN YOU WANT, STOP WHEN YOU WANT.”

→ BOB BROWN ADMITS HE HAS A STUBBORN STREAK. It’s a trait that has served him well while traveling by bike. His first foray into long-distance cycling — the Davis Double Century Ride — was no exception.

“I had never ridden more than 20 miles in a day and did not train for the event,” said Bob, who was a college student at the University of California, Davis, at the time. “I rode in cutoff jeans, a cotton T-shirt, no gloves, and tennis shoes. People laughed at me as they passed. I finished at 1:00 AM with a terrible skin rash and full-body exhaustion. But I decided to become a cyclist.”

Since then, he’s made a practice of cycling from one life event to the next. After graduating from UCLA with a master’s degree in public health, he rode from his mother’s house in Cupertino, California, to Oregon for the Bikecentennial ’76 leadership training. Then he rode to Reedsport to meet his group before riding with them across the country.

“A highlight was getting to see how people changed from the beginning to the end of the ride,” Bob said. “None of the riders had bike toured before. The group showed up with way too much weight. The first thing we did was go through everything, then ride to the post office to send items home. I think it was around 200 pounds.”

After volunteering for the Peace Corps in Guatemala with his wife, Diane, Bob rode back to the U.S. Diane — who was not a cyclist — joined him

in Dallas, and together they rode to Wyoming, then over to the Pacific Coast and back to Cupertino.

“My wife became a believer in cycling on that trip, and after it she rode as much as she could. She passed away last year after having ridden almost 200,000 miles.”

When his nutritionist job at Carnation Foods was transferred from California to Missouri, he eschewed the moving van and rode his bike. He has logged miles in 45 states, sometimes solo but often with Diane, cycling friends, and even his children. In 2012, he and his son Derek rode from Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Butte, Montana, where three friends joined them to ride to Anchorage, Alaska.

“On the Icefields Parkway in British Columbia, we came across a long rock face and there were at least 100 waterfalls coming off the top. It was incredible.”

In Anchorage, his daughter Jessica joined, and for a few days — between Anchorage and Fairbanks — Bob rode with both his children before Derek flew home.

“It’s an experience most people don’t get to have with their adult children. To share such a special time when they’re adults but before they have children of their own.”

With Jessica and friends, he rode back to Butte covering over 6,300 miles.

“For me, adventure means getting to do a challenging ride in a new location. By challenging I don’t mean hard, but finding the time to organize

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it and fit it into an already busy life," he said.

"Being part of Bikecentennial '76 cemented cycling into my life. I donate monthly to Adventure Cycling because they make it safer to ride on roads and paths less traveled. I love the feeling of freedom while I am bike touring. There is no agenda, no schedule to follow. You can eat when you want, stop when you want. Just enjoy the fresh air and scenery." 

*April Cypher is Adventure Cycling's Development Manager.*

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