

Bob Thomas, wind energy “father”, VAWT pioneer and inventor, dies at 85

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The core of Bob Thomas’s knowledge of aerodynamic and mechanical engineering came from his work on tractor mechanics and farm values learned growing up on the family farm in Michigan. His spiritual growth created in part from sharing his [recurring dream of reaching for a star](#) that saved him while he hung dangerously over the edge of a cliff was also important to his success in inventing and developing the heart and soul of Wind Harvest’s Vertical Axis Wind Turbine technology.

More details about Bob Thomas can be found below.

- How [the dream](#) led to Bob Thomas, George Wagner and Sam Francis becoming the cofounders of the original Wind Harvest Company in 1975.
- The different [Windstar prototypes](#) that Bob, most often with the help of his son Dean, engineered, built, installed, operated and learned from.
- The simplicity and brilliance of his designs in the company’s patents.
 - [Self-braking windmill](#)
 - [Vertical windmill with omnidirectional diffusion](#)
 - [Coupled vortex vertical axis wind turbine](#)
- The invention he will be most known for is the [Coupled Vortex Effect](#) which he discovered and proved with three counter-rotating Windstar 530G VAWTs that operated in North Palm Springs. Putting VAWTS so close together is the breakthrough VAWTs needed to achieve the efficiencies of HAWTs.
- The book “Reaping the Wind” by Peter Asmus calls Thomas the *“father of wind energy in the US.”*

Bob Thomas believed in VAWTs and the importance that they will play in bringing the world into a 100% renewable energy future. He spent much of his life working towards this goal. A key part of his legacy will be in the hundreds of thousands of VAWTs that will be installed around the world in the decades to come because of his pioneering brilliance, heart and spirit.

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