Bob Stevens was one of the most respected twentieth century contributors to the geology of Newfoundland and of the Appalachian mountain system. He was known for his care, patience, persistence, observational powers, and original interpretations in the extensive fieldwork he undertook in Newfoundland. He openly discussed his findings but was too modest or reluctant to promptly publish them and eventually his ideas became public domain and were often taken up and attributed to others.

Bob was born in South London, England, on May 13, 1939. He received his undergraduate degree (with honors) in geology from Exeter University (1961). He immigrated with his wife, Eileen, to Newfoundland in 1963, where he initiated his lifelong research of the geology of western Newfoundland under the guidance of Dr. Hugh Lilly at Memorial University. His MS thesis (1965) focused on the stratigraphy and structure of Humber Arm, where he astutely recognized the deeper water Humber 'series' sedimentary rocks as allochthonous on carbonate platform rocks; he also correctly attributed structurally chaotic zones in the area to the emplacement of the allochthons. Bob continued research in western Newfoundland as a PhD. student advised by William Church at the University of Western Ontario, and subsequently moved on to a post-doctoral position (1969-1971) at Erindale College, University of Toronto, under the tutelage of J. Tuzo Wilson (another Appalachian pioneer). His post doc studies led to a faculty position at Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1971, where he conducted research in Appalachian geology until his retirement in 1994. In retirement, he continued geological pursuits, but also expanded his interests to botany and photography.

Bob's seminal research in western Newfoundland documented the allochthonous nature of the Humber Arm Group, the Bay of Islands Ophiolite Complex, and the Cow Head Group. From these observations, he was the first to recognize and establish the mechanism and detailed timing of the Taconic orogeny – i.e., Early to Middle Ordovician subduction of the eastern continental margin of North America beneath a fringing magmatic arc system. Bob summarized these fundamental contributions in a paper entitled Cambro-Ordovician flysch sedimentation and tectonics in west Newfoundland and their possible bearing on a proto-Atlantic Ocean, which was included in the Geological Association of Canada Special Paper No. 7 (1970). This paper was published more than 15 years before geologists in New England re-invented his ideas. Bob's research in western Newfoundland ultimately led to the scientific justification for establishing Gros Morne National Park as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Stevens had a mischievous sense of humor. Dr. Peter Cawood (St. Andrews University) recalled that on one occasion near Corner Brook (NL) as they passed one of those domes used to store salt for winter road maintenance, Bob, with a twinkle in his eye, told a story of when he was taking a group of Russian geologists on a tour past this same spot, he told them that the dome was an experimental fast breeder reactor. (cont...)

Richard Fortey has noted that "the wide compass of his interests coupled with a reluctance to push himself forward led to him not being recognized as widely as he should have been as one of the seminal Appalachian geologists." In recognition of his contributions to Appalachian geology, two trilobite species have been named in his honor – Calculites stevensi by Richard Fortey, and Bolbocephalus stevensi by Doug Boyce.

(Liberally condensed from Memories of Bob Stevens, compiled by Tony Berger, Geolog, Winter 2015 issue, and from information provided by Eileen Stevens).