

A Minute of Memory for Robert Charles Leuze
July 1, 1936 December 14, 2018

Robert Charles Leuze was born on July 1, 1936, the third and youngest child of Agnes Graves and Lloyd Leuze. His older sister died shortly after her birth, and he grew up with his older brother, William Freeman Leuze. Education was important in the Leuze family and both of Robert's parents were college graduates. His mother taught high school prior to marriage, and his father worked as an inspector for a fire insurance company.

Robert graduated from Yale University with a B.A. in American Studies with concentrations in literature, writing and philosophy. As a student, he served as an editorial assistant for the *Yale Review of Metaphysics*. His employment after college ranged from high school math and physics teacher to Editor/Reporter for the Daily Times in Watertown, NY. A former physics student remembered Robert "as someone who was a gentle soul, and thus made science not at all cold."

A classically trained baritone, Robert studied voice for many years under Atarah Hazzana, a Metropolitan Opera principal artist. Once, on hearing him sing, Beverly Sills applauded Robert's rich baritone voice and operatic skills. In addition to opera, Robert sang in concert musical theatre, playing Daddy Warbucks in *Annie*. In 1998, he independently produced a CD of songs, entitled "Songs of our Lives."

Robert married Sarah Strong Harwood on August 16, 1969 and they remained together until her death in October 2010. Like so many relationships it had its difficulties, the most significant of which occurred when Robert, after twelve years of marriage, told Sarah that he was a gay man who needed to live his life as one. When confronted with this reality, they both chose to remain married, as their love for one another surpassed everything else. Robert later wrote that "Ours has been an unusual marriage but also (eventually) a very strong one."

Sarah and Robert found their home with the Society of Friends in 1969. In the early 1980s Sarah became a member of Morningside Meeting; while Robert remained an attender of the Meeting for the rest of his life, serving on several Monthly Meeting committees.

Both Robert and Sarah shared a spiritual home at FGC's Friends for Gay and Lesbian Concerns, and were part of its further growth in inclusion. Within the FLGBTQC community, Robert found an openness and affection that he had not experienced before. A regular attender during the FLGC midwinter gatherings Conference, he edited *Each of Us Inevitable*, a compilation of the talks given at FLGC midwinter gatherings and by some FLGCers at FGC Gatherings. The work was a ministry and historical record of FLGC, as well as an outreach to the wider community. FLGC later known as FLGBTC became a source of comfort to both Robert and Sarah. Sarah, through her concerns expressed at a gathering of FLGCBT, is responsible for the "Q" for queer friendly that led to the current iteration: FLGBTQC.

Robert found friendship and support through several musical and gender conscious organizations, including Out Music, Yale Gala, and FLGBTQC. He became a vocal critic of people who violated the rights and sovereignty of all peoples, especially members of the gay-lesbian-trans communities, and frequently took authorities to task in his thoughtful and well-crafted published letters to the editor of the New York Times.

Robert often referred to himself as “the ultimate late-bloomer,” as he came to music too late to make it a professional career. Whether or not Robert began too late to make music a career, he succeeded in making music his life. For Friends who know him, Robert never stopped singing, and at the end, when he no longer had voice, he could still hear the songs he had sung.