



Robert Paul Sarnoff

JUN 11, 1948 - JAN 30, 2025



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Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Tribute Wall	Page 5
Media	Page 6



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Robert Paul Sarnoff was born on June 11, 1948 in New York City to Edward and Annette Sarnoff. He joined his older brother Jerry to complete the nuclear family. As a child he was known for insisting on a bologna sandwich for lunch every day. He was also known, throughout his life, for his loud and infectious laugh and sometimes mischievous smile.

As Robert matured, he developed what became a lifelong interest in helping people. He also developed an interest in all aspects of photography, including the technical aspects of film and lenses and developing his own photos.

Robert graduated from Queens College in 1972 with a degree in Psychology and began a career in drug counseling. But Robert sought a less traditional, more rural and meaningful life, moving first to Vermont and later to an Oregon commune. In Oregon he built a house and all his furniture using only hand tools. He adopted a vegan lifestyle. Although the commune was primarily a farm, Robert's skills led to his becoming their primary woodworker.

In his late thirties, Robert's soul searching took him back to his religious roots and he took Aliyah. He went to Israel and joined a kibbutz to farm but was soon exercising his woodworking skills there as well. Members of the kibbutz encouraged him to focus his skills less on craft and more on art, resulting in Robert's focus changing to exclusively carving and sculpting Judaica.

By the time he left Israel his parents had retired to Delray Beach, and he moved there to pursue his art. His parents encouraged him in his art (his mother was a talented painter). However, they suggested that he also turn his gifted hands to a more practical pursuit that could support his artistic interests. He returned to school and earned a degree in massage therapy. Additionally, Robert returned to his childhood hobby of photography, inspired by the beautiful flora and fauna of south Florida.



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Only one part of his life was then left unfulfilled. Robert began to attend Jewish dating programs, where he met a young woman who had spent much of her adult life caring first for her injured father and then for her chronically ill mother. Robert and Nancy Gabrilove fell in love, married, and continued to care for Nancy's mother until her death.

Nancy supported, and partially adopted, Robert's veganism. She also encouraged him to show and sell his photography and sculpture, and to create and market a series of massage training videos.

Later Robert was called upon to perform his greatest caregiving role, when Nancy developed the same debilitating bone disease that her mother had suffered from. He was the most attentive, caring, and capable caregiver to every one of his clients, but never more than when he cared for Nancy. Robert was a devoted husband who brought relief and comfort not only to his wife, but to countless people through his work as a massage therapist.

In June 2023, after 32 years of blissful marriage, Nancy succumbed to her illness. Robert was filled with profound sadness and grief and felt utterly lost without her. Friends and family tried to console him, distract him, and offer suggestions on ways to cope and move forward, but he never recovered from Nancy's passing.

Robert died on January 30, 2025. Despite his healthy lifestyle, nothing could prevent his heart from breaking.

He is survived by his brother, Jerry (Susan) Sarnoff, nephew Asher Sarnoff, niece Rebecca (Jason) Breska, great-nephew Nathaniel Mass, cousins Malorie (Pete) Currier and Sherry Alberti.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Robert's favorite charity, the Southern Poverty Law Center.

"Fare you well, fare you well
I love you more than words can tell
Listen to the river sing sweet songs
To rock my soul."
-Robert Hunter



Tribute Wall

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Ash S lit a candle in honor of Robert.

Dear Uncle, I hope where you are you find peace. A great falcon appeared before your passing. You are a great spirit, please go free find Nancy and continue your journey, because we never end. We simply change into new forms and fly free. Thank you for giving me a chance. I love you.



November 28 at 10:43 PM



Ash S posted:

I often remember talking to my Uncle about things and he was the most patient kind man I had known. He was a good listener and never got mad at me. Thank you Uncle Robert for caring about me. I will miss you and am sorry I didn't call you more often.

November 28 at 10:41 PM



Jason Breska lit a candle in honor of Robert.

May Roberts memory be the conduit that repairs bridges. May he rest in peace with his beloved Nancy. May Roberts passing be a lesson that life is fleeting. And we need to take time to not only tell each other we love each other, but get together and show it. Rest in peace Robert, you will be missed, but never forgotten



February 23 at 1:21 PM



Beth Israel Memorial Chapel shared an album called **Memories Album**.



February 20 at 4:20 AM



Media

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Beth Israel Memorial Chapel shared 5 photos to the **Memories Album** album.

February 20 at 4:20 AM





Media

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Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Robert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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