

Memorial Minute for Steven Deutsch
Born January 1937 - died February 2020

Those of us lucky to walk alongside Steven Deutsch in his life as social justice leader, Quaker activist, labor educator, husband, father, or friend, will sorely miss him. His enthusiastic engagement with the struggles of our times to make the world a better place was matched only by his joyful love for his family, and his warm regard for his many friends, students, and colleagues. Steve died on February 10, 2020 after a brief illness. He was fond of saying “I’ve had a wonderful life”; we will miss him tremendously.

Steven came to Chicago in 1938 as an infant refugee from Nazi Vienna with his parents Joseph Deutsch, MD, and Ella Deutsch, MD, along with his sister, Hanne. The progressive view of his family and wide circle they cultivated was formative. His childhood was rich in classical music, political discourse, family and friends, and a commitment to social change. His close lifelong bonds with family reflect that close-knit immigrant legacy.

Young Steven attended Quaker-founded Circle Pines Center (CPC), a progressive retreat in Michigan. There he learned of pacifism, Quakerism, the coöp movement, YMCA activities, political and socio-economic movements. The Korean War, then the draft for the Vietnam War prompted Steven to become a registered conscientious objector. Later at Oberlin College, he studied sociology and became an effective activist in the NAACP, the AFSC, War Resisters League, Fellowship of Reconciliation and helped to start the Student Peace Movement. Throughout his life Steven was active in many Quaker meetings: Chicago’s 57th Street, Oberlin, East Lansing Preparatory, Ann Arbor, Cleveland, Honolulu, and Eugene, Oregon.

At Oberlin College Steven met the love of his life, Elizabeth (Beth) Gale. The couple shared a passion for justice and activism. Their first two children arrived during Stevens’ Masters and Doctorate programs at Michigan State University. Here Steven and Beth were active in civil rights, the New Left, and anti-war activities. By resisting the draft in 1960 he risked jail time or alternative service with AFSC. But aware of his graduate studies, his Chicago draft board instead issued Steven a student deferment. In Cleveland, where he took a Professorship at Case Western Reserve, he served as the first Clerk of the formative Community Friends Meeting.

In 1966 following a visiting professorship in Hawaii, Steven was wooed to join the University of Oregon faculty, soon receiving tenure and a full professorship. Beth and Steven joined the Quaker Meeting in Eugene, and added a third child to their family. They became active in the Anti-Vietnam War movement, political

campaigns, and in providing sanctuary for families fleeing persecution from El Salvador. Both in Cleveland and Eugene he helped found local chapters of Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC). His books Where It's At and Academics in Retreat chronicled those times.

Steven left enduring progressive institutional legacies from his time at the University of Oregon. He wrote key papers on socio-economic development, the work environment, and labor education. His policy work led to forming the University of Oregon's Labor Education and Research Center (LERC). He became an international leader in the worker participation movement with roles that took him and Beth to Geneva, Dubrovnik, Ljubljana, Paris, Washington DC, and Stockholm. He also branched out to become a reviewer for the National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety. During a sabbatical the Deutch's lived in Washington, DC, where their youngest, Jennifer, attended Sandy Spring Friends School and son, Peter served as a teacher. All three of their children (Pamela, Peter and Jennifer) graduated from Earlham College.

Steven always exclaimed that being a husband, father and grandfather was the most wonderful and joyful part of life. "Bop," as his grands call him, retired from academia in 2000. Always involved, he and Beth became even more available and adoring of their extended family. Devoted to each grandchild, Bop was always ready for family trips to Black Butte Ranch and the Oregon Coast. His family and wide circle of friends will miss him fiercely.

Steven is predeceased by parents Joseph and Ella Deutsch, sister Hanne Sonquist, cousin Zoe Snyder, wife of nearly 60 years, Beth, and daughter Pamela Deutsch. He is survived by son Peter (wife Susie, grandchildren Max, Teo), daughter Jennifer Bender (husband Mason, grandchildren Ella, Rachel, Ava), son-in-law Ken (grandchildren Alex, Joe and Sidonia), and many nieces and nephews.