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FOUNDATION FOR ALL™  
Communicate, Cooperate, Celebrate™  
Highest Civic Ideals • Good Will Values for All to Share • Since 1985

• COMMUNITY MEMORIAL SERVICE INVITATION •

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## **Jeffrey Michael Robbert**

1949-2016

Good Shepherd Church • 11AM Saturday • April 2nd

Open to All • Pot-luck lunch afterwards in the meeting hall  
(No alcohol, please.)

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd  
1823 9th Street, at Hearst  
Berkeley, California 94710

Este Cantor, Presiding

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### **Jeffrey Michael Robbert • 1949-2016 • A Remembrance**

by **Peter Bruce DuMont**

[[www.staralliance.org](http://www.staralliance.org)]

(Written 2016-3-27—31 • Easter Season)

Jeffrey Michael Robbert was an extremely honest man who was full of integrity. He carried a strong sense of fairness, generosity, loyalty, and gratitude in his relationships. He showed up for life right on time. He projected in his voice a kind of hale fellow, well met *energy* that — despite a streak of problems that would have daunted if not crushed most people — actually encouraged many others...

Jeffrey was born in 1949, on February 13th, in the historic hamlet town of Oceanside on Long Island, New York. Perhaps significantly, it was Oceanside which also produced America's first Eagle Scout. He was the eldest of three boys in his family including brothers Chris and John.

The boys' father was a travel agent who, according to Chris, boasted that: aside from old Russia and the U.S.S.R., he had *been to every country in the world*. Among other treats of childhood, the boys got to ride on some of the largest cruise ships of the era.

Jeff attended Leicester Junior College near Worcester, West of Boston, where he studied liberal arts, and then continued with more college work at Fort Collins, Colorado.

In his early adult life, he worked at both roofing and plumbing. (Let us forget these are important skills, consider going for even one rainy night without a roof, or more than a few hours without good plumbing!)

In the mid-1970's, I first met Jeff in my role as a youthful teacher of the Transcendental Meditation technique. This was at the old TM Center at the time: the former Twentieth Century Women's Club at 2716 Derby Street, just above College Avenue in Berkeley.

Noticing that Jeffrey had special emotional needs, I ended up "adopting" him over a period of time as a kind of ad-hoc protege. He frequently came by the Berkeley TM Center for support, and with patient tutelage, he developed a long-standing loyal commitment to daily practice of the T.M. technique.

In the early 1990's, we lived for a couple of years together at the historic NEHI soft drink billboard house at 2028 Ninth Street, at Addison, in West Berkeley. At the time it was still a strictly un-gentrified neighborhood. It was during that period that Jeff started attending Good Shepherd Church regularly, and I often went as well.

Out of the blue one day, Jeffrey surprised me by pointing out a nice used car which he had noticed. He shocked me when he donated \$1,000 cash for the specific purpose to buy the car for STAR ALLIANCE — a seven year-old nonprofit initiative for world peace which I had co-founded with Ernest Siravo in 1985 to help stave off the terror of the Cold War.

This was money Jeff had saved off his disability income by living homeless for a period in the Santa Cruz area!

The car was a tremendous help for STAR ALLIANCE, and in the end, it effectively paid off printing costs for thousands of beautiful promotional posters we gave out, depicting the historic *Peace World* mural created by artist Charles Lobdell and used as a backdrop for the STAR ALLIANCE SHOW weekly TV production from 1987 to 1990.

Over the years, Jeffrey frequently helped give out STAR ALLIANCE declarations promoting good will values for sustainable peace and love.

In late 2011, Jeffrey's neck was badly injured in a fall on a public bus. No seatbelt was provided, and the bus stopped too fast. His neck was cracked and drooped badly over his chest for the rest of his life.

A year ago, in a separate incident on 2015 April 10th, he was walking with his cane in a downtown cross walk near the main Berkeley Public Library when a distracted driver, focusing on her cell phone, ran a red light and hit him. Jeffrey sustained eight broken ribs and five breaks in his lower left leg: total thirteen. He described the constant overwhelming pain, once it set in after shock, as *searing*.

What made Jeffrey extraordinary to those of us who knew him was that despite his lifelong, disabling emotional challenges and extreme physical injuries — he maintained at all times a strong will to live and to get well. He had a consistent, surprisingly hearty, cheerful, generally very considerate demeanor towards others. When he occasionally caught himself in a less-than-graceful statement, he was always sure to apologize promptly.

Jeffrey projected an optimistic and hopeful outlook and maintained lots of spunk. He could be observed dancing from time to time to his favorite popular tunes. He woke up early and served others less fortunate than himself. Amazingly, for many years — and even after enduring his own big injuries: he helped a paraplegic friend with getting up in the morning, dressing, swimming, and getting down at night. He got himself around town daily, right up to his final week's battle with stage-four lung cancer at Alta Bates Hospital.

He was a fighter, not with violence but someone who, with difficulty (born of poverty), tried to use the law for what he felt was right. Much of our time together

over the last two years was spent working on what has finally become a special appeal to our United States President and California Governor: to introduce legislation guaranteeing a *Universal Civil Right to Counsel*.

And Jeffrey has assigned what rights he has in his extended case with A.C. Transit to the STAR ALLIANCE foundation. (Pro-bono representing lawyer candidates for this or other legal matters: please contact us.)

On his deathbed, Jeffrey marshaled his energy once again to tell me with big focus and emphasis, pointing and shaking his finger: *If I croak, you tell people that it's because I smoked, and tell them not to do it!*

His story would not be complete without mentioning that three or four years ago, Jeffrey surprised me once again by suggesting, completely from his side, that he pay monthly for a modest life insurance policy to benefit STAR ALLIANCE and my personal efforts for peace.

Then last year, after he had mostly healed up, and as I started to help him negotiate with the driver's insurance company, Jeffrey decided to dedicate much of his future award to support the Foundation.

Sadly, he died of other causes before he could enjoy any comfort himself other than seeing the check (which *did* bring a sparkle to widened eyes and a smile to his missing-teeth mouth, visible right through the oxygen mask!) His generosity will pull the Foundation out of longterm, worrisome bank debt, and give us a modest but much-needed boost to help benefit needy humankind.

Mr. Jeffrey Michael Robbert expressed over a lifetime a true sense of civic nobility. His spirit was memorably summarized in a famous passage from E.M. Forster, the English novelist, essayist, and social critic:

*I believe in aristocracy...Not an aristocracy of power, based on rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate, and the plucky. Its members are to be found in all nations and classes, and through the ages, there is a secret understanding between them when they meet. They represent the true human tradition, the one permanent victory of our [strange] race over cruelty and chaos. Thousands of them perish in obscurity, a few are great names. They are sensitive for others as well as themselves, they are considerate without being fussy, their pluck is not swankiness but the power to endure, and they can take a joke.*

Forster also wrote:

*The four characteristics of humanism are curiosity, a free mind, belief in good taste, and belief in the human race.*

Jeffrey leaves a lasting legacy of renewed faith in the nobility of the human race.

When I returned to my humble home office the night that Jeffrey courageously and peacefully died; standing alone in my kitchen where we had enjoyed many a snack together, I said out loud to the empty space again and again — perhaps twenty or thirty times before I was fully satisfied — *Thank you Jeff!*

Science tells us that energy is conserved. It is my commitment — and that of the STAR ALLIANCE • FOUNDATION FOR ALL — that Jeffrey's energy of good will, good cheer, honesty, integrity, fairness, and compassion for others: not only persist, but grow, at last, by leaps and bounds.

Who knows? We might just even fly!

As Forster wrote before his own death, certainly to instruct the living:

*We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us.*