



Mr Robert "Bob" M. Lea

November 4, 1931 - June 1, 2020

Robert (Bob) M. Lea, 88, of Egremont, died Monday morning, June 1st, at Kimball Farms Assisted Living Center with his loving, devoted wife by his side. Bob was born on November 4, 1931 in Manhattan, NY to the late Isidore and Rachel Levy. He graduated from The Bronx High School of Science in 1949 and attended Union College in Schenectady, NY. After graduating from Union College in 1953, Bob attended Yale University where he obtained his PhD in Physics in 1957.

Bob did research at Brookhaven National Laboratory in Long Island before settling into a long career as a Physics Professor at the City College of the City University of New York until his retirement in 1992. Bob enjoyed tennis, gardening, and sailing.

Bob married Vickie K. Lea on August 17, 1986 at their home in Egremont. Besides his wife, Bob is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Jennie and Campbell Clegg of Brunswick, ME; step-daughter, Sabina Curti of Hillsdale, NY; grandchildren, Rachel and Zelda Clegg; two nieces, Melissa Lea of Newton, MA and Cara Lea-Ballard of Forest Hills, NY; two nephews, Jonathan and Daniel Kusko of Kansas; grandniece, Kelsey Lea Hart; grandnephew, Spencer Lea Hart; his brother, Joseph S. Lea of Briarwood, NY; brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Bruce and Gaby Kusko of Kansas; his dear friends, Rachel Brier, Phil Pechukas, Paula Miranda, Gail Zinberg, and Atan Minami; and his furry friend, George.

Bob's family would like to extend their sincere gratitude to all the wonderful

staff and caregivers at Kimball Farms LEP Unit for their care and compassion for him, his family, and friends during this difficult time. A special thank you to Dr. Richard Honig; Ave Schwartz, LICSW; Ellen Boshe; and his driver, Ed. Per Bob's wishes, services will be private. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Bob's memory may be made to the Berkshire Humane Society in care of the Roche Funeral Home, 120 Main Street, Lenox, MA. 01240.

Tribute Wall

JG

“ I am saddened to hear of the passing of Professor Emeritus Bob Lea. I first met Bob when I was an undergraduate student taking a physics major laboratory course at City College in ~1961. He was knowledgeable, clear, patient, and always willing to answer questions. When I returned to City College as a faculty member in 1970 Bob was the chairman of the department. He, together with Harry Lustig, then dean, had obtained a large NSF departmental development grant that really transformed the department from a teaching department to a research plus teaching department. Professors Boyer, Callender, Kikkawa, Sakita, and Smith also arrived in 1970. Under Bob's skillful management the department really flourished. He was a prime force behind transforming an ROTC marching field into a 13 story science building, now called the Marshak Science Building. He was an excellent teacher, chairman, colleague, and friend. He will truly be missed by all that knew him.

Joel Gersten - June 02, 2020 at 06:51 PM

VL

Thank you, Professor Gersten. We love hearing and remembering how effective Bob was in his many years at CCNY. He used to tell me that he couldn't believe he got paid to do his job, because he loved teaching so much. He really was someone special and even after he got sick he would say "I'm a lucky man". We were blessed to know him, may he rest in peace. Thanks again, Vickie

Vickie Lea - June 03, 2020 at 02:06 PM

RT

“ I joined the Physics Department in March 1988, and Prof. Lea was the chairman. He had chaired the search committee's interview when I applied for the job and welcomed me to the department. I will always be grateful to him for his wonderful training during that first year. He taught me everything about the administrative responsibilities, including the bureaucratic requirements and how to interact successfully with the students, staff and faculty. He was always kind, thorough, and gave me his genuine respect. I have been in the Physics Department for 32 years now, and credit Prof. Lea for getting me started right in the job.

Sue Turner
Department Administrator
Physics Department
The City College of New York

Roberta S Turner - June 02, 2020 at 03:39 PM

VL

Thank you, Sue, for your kind remembrances of Bob. I remember him speaking highly of you, and he would be so pleased to know that you are still performing your important duties for the department.
Vickie

Vickie Lea - June 03, 2020 at 02:02 PM

AG

Hi Vickie,

I came across Bob's ("Mr" Lea's) obituary yesterday and I'm sad about his passing. I admired him. I thought his combination of intellect and leadership was akin to Robert Oppenheimer's. I was grateful to him. He was a mentor to me, and it made a big difference in my career. More than anything, though, I had affection for him. I liked him.

Susan and I both hope that you'll find comfort in memories of the good times.

*Love,
Alberto and Susan Guzman*

Alberto Guzman - July 21, 2020 at 11:56 AM