



Charles McComas Robb

December 21, 1946 - August 2, 2021

Charles McComas Robb, age 74, of Philadelphia, died August 2, after a brief illness.

Mac, as he was known to his family, was born in December 1946 in Catonsville, MD. He was a graduate of West Virginia University and, later, Temple University, where he obtained a Master's Degree in social work. He was preceded in death by his parents, Charles Winfield and Minnie Belle Robb of Cooksville, MD.

Mac committed his life to serving others.

Upon graduating from Glenelg High School, Glenelg, MD, 1964, Mac travelled, over the objections of his fearful parents, to Mississippi where he volunteered to register Black residents to vote.

He also took part in social justice activism during the 1960's on the campus of West Virginia University. On one occasion, Mac entered a campus tavern that was known to deny service to Blacks and ordered a beer. At the prearranged time, a Black student accomplice entered the bar and ordered himself a beer. After the Black student was denied service, Mac offered him his beer, prompting the proprietor to eject them both from the establishment. Mac left the bar and proceeded directly to the mayor's office where he reminded the elected official of the possible consequences of not enforcing the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Mac then served the families of his adopted home city for 30 years with the Philadelphia Department of Human Services. When his first boss at DHS

mistakenly called him Charlie, Mac decided not to correct his new employer and, as a result, was known as Charlie Robb for his entire professional career. He initially worked as a social worker before being promoted to supervisor. Charlie, who was proficient in American Sign Language, then assisted families with children who had special needs, especially the deaf. He was promoted to the Resources and Development Unit where he was the first administrator to work with children diagnosed with HIV. He then moved on to become the Administrative Services Director, handling tech support, logistics, furniture, supplies and any move from building to building. Charlie was the go-to person for anything that was needed at the agency. He did this Herculean task always with his usual good nature and efficiency. He retired in March 2002.

Mac had many interests and talents. As a young boy, he wowed the audience at the Howard County (MD) Fair with his vocal rendition of "The Little Red Schoolhouse," a musical performance which earned him the blue ribbon. An award-winning stained glass artist, Mac refused to sell his works, instead donating several pieces to charity auctions or giving them as gifts. He enjoyed listening to soul, doo-wop and bluegrass music. Mac was a lifelong learner and an avid reader of history and other non-fiction books. He also studied Spanish. Mac enjoyed attending live tapings of The Price is Right and was a fan of the classic television series, The Honeymooners.

Along with his spouse, Bill, Mac befriended two elderly female neighbors and provided weekly care for them for decades. To be regaled by Miss Kelly and Mrs. Funk's colorful stories about their career as Vaudeville performers was the only repayment Mac and Bill ever requested.

Mac undertook researching his family genealogy, an endeavor which became a multi-year odyssey. By the conclusion of his investigation, his printed family tree spread across his parents' basement floor. He also spent years painstakingly transcribing all seven decades of his great, great-grandfather McComas' daily diary.

During the second part of his life, Mac found a spiritual home with the Chenrezig Tibetan Buddhist Center of Philadelphia. He came to the Center at

its original location well over 10 years ago. At the Center his presence and actions radiated loving kindness from the very start. He became a helper, offering everything he could, no matter how menial the task.

When the Center bought an abandoned building to renovate in Northern Liberties, Mac took it on as if he were the general contractor, making sure he was doing whatever was needed, when needed. He was an expert member of the team to bring the structure from its dilapidated state to the beautiful spiritual haven it has become. Mac saw the need for nature and spent months working with the city to have a tree planted in front of the building. He singlehandedly built the Center's library. Mac visited every Buddhist Temple in the Philadelphia area, from all traditions and immigrant communities, making connections everywhere.

After the Center opened at the new location, Mac became a regular volunteer next door at Mt. Tabor AME Church in their Love Kitchen where he helped provide meals for the homeless and others who are food insecure. He also assisted with the Church's winter clothes drives.

One of Mac's last earthly acts was to make sure that extra dog food went with Spiritual Director Ven. Losang Samten on his trip to India to feed more homeless dogs on the streets of Ladakh.

Mac (Charlie) was deeply loved by his family as well as his extended family and will be missed.

Mac is survived by his spouse of 45 years, William Ludwig, of Philadelphia; son, Benjamin (and Heather) Robb of Sykesville, MD; brother Bob Asmann (and Jan) of Okemos, Mich; nephew Bobby (and Allison) Asmann, of Milwaukee; and niece Beth (and Todd) Asmann Golem of South Clermont, FLA.

Viewing at Dinan Funeral Home, 1923 Spring Garden St., Philadelphia on Saturday, August 7, from noon to 2 p.m. Interment will be private.

Cemetery Details

Interment Private

Previous Events

Viewing in Funeral Home

AUG 7. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Shelly-Dinan Funeral Home inc.
1923 Spring Garden St.
Philadelphia, PA 19130
(215) 563-3655
<https://www.dinanfuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Charles McComas Robb*

February 03, 2023 at 04:11 AM



“ *I knew Mac from high school in Glenelg. He was my favorite dance partner- he was excellent! I'm so proud of what he did with his life. He lived it with passion, I see this in his obituary. I'm sending good wishes to Bill, happy he had such a wonderful life partner.*
Sue McCoy Jensen

Sue Jensen - October 08, 2021 at 05:57 PM



“ *I'll never forget the kindness that Mac showed to me at TBC. He made me feel like I had known him for years even though we only had a few conversations. I hope that one day I can be as warm and kind as he was. I'll be keeping his family and friends at the sangha in my prayers.*

Jeff Costello - August 10, 2021 at 09:55 AM

WM

“ A poem written by Bernice Kaplan, a close friend. Bernice and Charlie's co-workers performed the poem as a song for him at his retirement February 28, 2002.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE ROBB

*Go gently into your retirement
In search of peace & mirth
An exciting world awaits you
In the heart of middle earth*

*At DHS Robb reached the top
Beloved social worker, housekeeper & top cop
The love & respect among the Fellowship never stopped
And we will always remember your fondness for Doo Wop.
Shubee Dobe Doo - Doo Wop, Doo Wop*

*The Fellowship Salutes Charlie Robb
And Wishes him the best
As he begins his new life and his new quest.
Think of us Robb even when you bar hop
Because we will never forget you and your Doo Wop.
Shube Dobe Doo - Doo Wop, Doo Wop
Shube Dobe Doo - Doo Wop, Doo Wop*

Willetta McCulloh - August 10, 2021 at 12:50 AM

WM

“ Mac had an endless sincere curiosity about everything. He cared about things that mattered and didn't sweat the small stuff. We admired the way he lived his life with authenticity while sharing his love, his skills, his energy with the world around him and beyond. We will miss Mac every day and the only solace for us is knowing that he's off to his next big adventure.

Being part of his life has been and still is a pleasure and inspiration. We were constantly in wonderment at how he and husband Bill seemed to sit around (not long!) and think about how they could do good things for others. That desire came naturally to both of them.

Of the many memories we have of Mac is the joy he derived from his genealogy research and the absolute pride in the outliers, the courage, and the persistence of those who came before him.

Along with his husband Bill Ludwig, his son Ben, both Robb and Ludwig families and friends we mourn for our own loss while taking comfort in knowing Mac is leading the way on the other side with the same positive energy he shared in this world.

With Love, Steve, Willetta and Connor McCulloh

Willetta McCulloh - August 07, 2021 at 12:31 PM

SP

“ To me and so many others, Mac was a true bodhisattva, always making new TBC visitors feel welcomed and sharing his Dharma wisdom. I looked up to him as a devoted Practitioner. I am so grateful to have known Mac. May Mac take rebirth in the Land of Great Bliss. Buddha Amitabha and Chenrezig are waiting. 🙏💖💖💖



Sue Passante - August 07, 2021 at 12:09 PM

EA

“ Mac was a lifelong student always bringing an open and curious mind to everything. As inspiring as his beginner mind was, it was the fact that he was a master teacher in disguise, using his actions and smile to teach and not words or theories, that made him so profoundly special. We all aspired to be better human beings, full of kindness and compassion, because of our contact with him - the essence of a dharma master.

Elazar Aslan - August 06, 2021 at 04:53 PM

KA

“ We are richer for having known him. He made every effort to make a difference in this world and he did! He is irreplaceable in regards to his service to the sangha. 🙏🙏🙏
So proud have been able to call him a friend.



kim alsbrooks - August 06, 2021 at 03:27 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Charles McComas Robb.



August 06, 2021 at 11:19 AM

AC

“ Mac was just a great energy! He lived life gloriously enjoying every moment and deed while expressing his deep gratitude to all people he touched. Happy travels!!!!

Atul Govil, member CTBC - August 05, 2021 at 02:39 PM

TM

“ *Ma was always ready to pitch in and share his good humor. He helped many of us at Men's Morning Out to acclimate and welcomed us warmly into the group.*

Tom McCarron - August 05, 2021 at 11:17 AM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Charles McComas Robb.*



August 05, 2021 at 10:34 AM

AG

“ *What a life! Ben, I'm certain your dad was so proud to see you living your life by many of the same tenets. Sending love your way. Anne*

Anne Gawthrop - August 05, 2021 at 09:37 AM