

## Bobbie (Roberta Susan Nathan) Chase

December 12, 1943 - October 4, 2023



Bobbie was born a military brat, in McComb, Mississippi, while her Army father was stationed at Fort Gordon. She loved her military upbringing because of the exposure to cultures of other countries, specifically Japan right at the end of World War II and Germany in the mid-1950s. By age 17 she had attended 18 schools, the most recent being Winter Park High school for the last half of her junior year and a full senior year (1961-62), when



her father retired to Florida. (Photo above, with Spunky.)



She graduated from UMass Amherst in 1966 with a B.A. with Honors in English. While in college she had her first exposure to being a “disc jockey” when she hosted a daily classical music program on student radio station WMUA (91.1 FM).

She married her first husband, Palmer Beam, in Cincinnati on July 1, 1967, and they settled in the Cleveland area, where Bobbie taught English classes to inner-city Cleveland high-schoolers, and also worked in the Avon (Ohio) Public Library as a children’s librarian.

The couple moved to Petersham in 1968 for Palmer’s new job with Barre Wool, and Bobbie was subsequently hired as librarian (1968-1970) for the newly-opened Quabbin Regional High School in Barre. They divorced in 1973, while Bobbie was in her third year as librarian at Wachusett Regional High School in Holden.

Bobbie moved to Worcester, living in an apartment on Harley Drive.

In addition to being a Wachusett teacher, she also was a volunteer at WICN (90.5 FM) radio, where she was classical music director, did a program of contemporary classical music, *Junque*, on Sunday evenings, and also a once-a-week shift for the afternoon classical music show *Montage*. It was at WICN that she met Nick, newly-arrived in December 1974 to do *Sunday Showcase*, a program which immediately followed *Junque*. This connection blossomed into a “radio station romance”, and after a year-plus courtship, Bobbie and Nick were married by Rabbi Michael Barenbaum at The Old Mill in Westminster on April 10, 1976, while many relatives of Bobbie’s, a few of



Nick’s, and Bobbie’s Library Club students from Wachusett looked on.

Most students have a favorite teacher (or a few) who made significant impacts on their lives as they developed into adults. What you may not know is that this works in both directions; Bobbie, who loved working with teenagers, had more than a few students who were very special to her and who enriched her life in ways they may never know. One student, Seth, Bobbie and Nick took into their home in 1976 when he was suddenly rendered homeless as he was about to begin college.



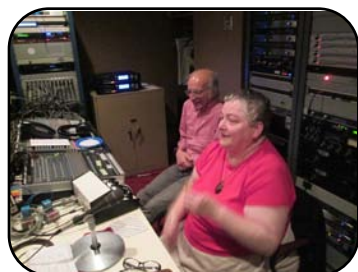
Bobbie and Nick had bought an old Greek Revival house in Hubbardston for their residence, but in 1979 Bobbie developed severe asthma from the renovation construction being done, so they (and Seth) moved to Worcester with their first two dogs, Pudgy and Erica, into another old but dust-free house in the Tatnuck area. Meanwhile, Bobbie had been pursuing her education in night classes at Worcester State College, receiving a Masters of

Education degree in 1976.

With the restoration and re-opening of Worcester's Mechanics Hall to concerts in 1977, both Bobbie and Nick became "booth announcers" for classical music concerts, announcing in real time for radio broadcasts, either live or delayed. Harry and Madelyn Levenson, founders of the (Central) Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra, heard Bobbie's announcing in the 1980 Holiday Pops concert radio broadcast, liked her voice, and invited her to be a live announcer for their summer concerts in the park.



This she did for 42 years at both Institute Park and East Park in Worcester, and in other locations where the orchestra played. The first concert she announced was on July 5, 1981 in Institute Park; the last outdoor one was the Disney concert on July 24, 2022, also in Institute Park. The final



concert where she announced for the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra (and WCUW) was in Mechanics Hall, as booth announcer for the December 10, 2022 Holiday Pops.

Bobbie was also on the Board of the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra until her death, was on the Tuckerman Hall Restoration Committee, and produced newspaper, radio/TV and website publicity for MSO concerts through November 2022. She also commandeered student and adult volunteers to help at the

MSO's summer concerts, and, from 2007 through 2022, solicited adult volunteers to assist at the MSO's Duo-Piano concerts every autumn in Tuckerman Hall.

In 1980, following some internal strife at WICN, Bobbie and Nick (at WCUW's invitation) moved their radio shows to WCUW Community Radio, 91.3 FM, still on Sundays (later moved to Mondays), with the first programs aired on June 1, 1980. Bobbie became WCUW's Classical Music Coordinator; and she decided they should do more for the local classical music community by recording concerts in the field (places other than Mechanics Hall) to supplement the recordings that Joseph Chilorio, recording engineer at Mechanics Hall, was providing them for broadcast.

Joe helped them acquire equipment, so between 1980 and 2019 Nick and Bobbie (and also with volunteer engineers Michael Blume, Ralph Dawkins, Ray Grant, John Hartwell, Chris Ingalls, Murdo Morrison, Bob Walters, and Zinta Moskalew) taped/recorded more than 1300 concerts and events for broadcast on WCUW, which were supplemented with concert recordings from Arnold Buckman, Dr. Charles Paquette, and Reed Valleau, who had their own recording equipment. In the first few years WCUW also presented its own classical music concerts under Bobbie's direction: Guitarist Peter Clemente (November 23, 1981, January 13, 1983 and December 2, 1985); Live Oak (January 28, 1981); Greenwood Consort (April 13, 1981); Voice of the Turtle (October 10, 1981); Mair Davis Duo (March 3, 1983); Waterfield Consort (June 12, 1983); and Symphonic Brass Quartet (January 18, 1984).

For her efforts in supporting the local classical music community, on April 21, 1982 Bobbie received an "Outstanding Community Volunteer" certificate of appreciation from the United Way of Central Massachusetts, in a ceremony at Mechanics Hall.

In October 1981, at the insistence of WSRS (96.1 FM) announcer Bob Hokanson, Bobbie applied for the weekend overnight shifts at WSRS. They liked her mellow radio voice, so she was hired as the first female announcer on WSRS, ever. In November 1993, for health reasons, she had to give up the Sunday overnight shift, but she continued doing Saturday overnight shifts on WSRS until April 9, 1995, when she transferred to a Sunday evening only shift on WTAG (580 AM; 94.9 FM). Her last commercial radio shift was on January 18, 1998, on WTAG.

Bobbie volunteered her services in many places, not just in radio and classical music concerts. In 1980 and 1981 she volunteered to take a shift answering the Crisis Center of Worcester's hotline. In late April 1995, while she was on medical leave from Wachusett, she traveled alone (by train) to Weatherly, Pennsylvania (where Seth had settled

and married Ruth), for a week to help organize the new, run-by-volunteers Weatherly Area Community Library. She returned (with Nick, by car) for the dedication on July 29, 1995.

At the end of her medical leave, Bobbie did not return to Wachusett, but instead went to work as librarian at Southbridge High School (1995-2000). She was especially fond of the Hispanic (Puerto Rican heritage) students, and loved the culture.

(Bobbie's ancestry was partly Hispanic: Sephardim, from Spain and Portugal.) During her time at Southbridge High School she also volunteered for Southbridge Community Television, when she operated a TV camera at town council meetings.

In 1999 Bobbie decided she wanted to be a puppy raiser for service dogs, through NEADS in Princeton - meaning, Bobbie would do the light work while Nick scooped the poop. Over the next decade the duo raised and helped to train 12 NEADS puppies (listed with graduation date, if applicable): Ali (10/2000), Phoebe (4/2002 and 6/2004), Della (10/2003), Bert (10/2004, photo is Bert with his soulmate Ashley Riva), Willie (6/2005), Gracie (6/2006), Newman (6/2007), Joey (3/2008), Ginger (3/2010), Clover, Norton, and Betsy. In 2018 they also raised Lucky through the North Star Foundation in Storrs, Connecticut.

Bobbie's last employment as a school librarian was at Oxford High School (2000-2002), from where she retired - sort of. For another three years she was an on-call substitute teacher, as long as they called her the night before, not at 5:30 AM on the day they expected her to show up. During her "retirement" she worked until 2006 at Dress Barn at White City in Shrewsbury, to accumulate enough credits to be eligible for Social Security.

Bobbie was also active in synagogue and Jewish life, at Temple Sinai,



then Temple Emanuel Sinai, singing in the choir (1978-2016), and serving on the Caring Committee (1992-2018). From 2010 to 2019 she also produced a temple membership listing (phone directory) which was then mailed to all members - very helpful with many members discontinuing their landline phone service and switching entirely to cellphones.

On May 3, 1991, after studying with Rabbi Seth Bernstein and Cantor Wendy Autenrieth, Bobbie was called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah, at the age of 47! (They didn't do this for girls when she was a teenager.) From 1997 through 2010 Bobbie also prepared publicity for the annual Jewish service at Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, New Hampshire, and similarly did publicity for Worcester's annual Torathon from 2009 to 2020.

Although Bobbie was allergic to flowers, she was membership manager and produced annual membership lists for the Patriot Daylily Society, 2007 through 2019, because she really liked the people!

Bobbie was diagnosed with vascular dementia in May 2022. For more than a year she adjusted to it but still led a meaningful life, although Nick took over tasks (such as paying bills) that she could no longer do. On August 11, 2023, at sunrise, she collapsed on the bathroom floor, and was taken by ambulance to St. Vincent's Hospital. The doctors diagnosed a urinary tract infection and an (unspecified) lung infection, from which she recovered; she was then transferred on August 21 to Life Care Center of Auburn for physical therapy, returning home on September 11. But her dementia had progressed to the point where she ate very little, because she thought she had just eaten, and did not take pills because she thought she had just taken them. In the afternoon of September 16 she had a seizure in bed, resulting in another trip to St. Vincent's, where she had three days of seizures and a stroke. From this there was no recovery; on September 28 she was transferred to Rose Monahan Hospice House, where she died peacefully and without pain on October 4, 2023.

## GEOMETRY

Roberta Nathan, Leavenworth (KS) High School

Shapes making fun of me--  
That's geometry.  
I'm a lowbrow; they're highbrows.

Never again will I attempt this subject,  
Better that I feel contempt for this subject,  
It's impossible -- that it is.  
I will never again think a subject a whiz.

How I'd love to bring forth a formal disproof  
That there ever existed a formal proof.  
And just how were those fiendish constructions invented?  
The author of them was surely demented.

*Published in Young America Sings, National High School Poetry Association, 1960*