



Robert M. "Bob" Stein

July 10, 1950 - July 18, 2025

Robert M., 'Bob' Stein, 75, passed away at his home in Houston on Friday, July 18, 2025. Bob was born on July 10, 1950 in New York City to the late Edward and Nettie Stein.

Bob grew up in Great Neck, NY and attended Great Neck South High School where he was a member of the debate club and the legislative assembly. After graduating in 1968, Bob attended Ohio Wesleyan University where he was a leader of the student movement against the war in Vietnam and the editor of The Transcript, Ohio Wesleyan's independent student newspaper. It was as editor of the newspaper that Bob first met Marty. After graduation, Bob and Marty moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin where Bob attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. They were married there in 1974. Bob received his M.A. in 1974 and his Ph. D in Political Science in 1977.

After graduate school, Bob's first teaching position was at the University of Georgia. Following a fellowship in Washington D.C., with the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Bob began at Rice University in 1979. Bob quickly became a fixture in the community, not just at the University but on the streets of Houston's where he could be seen on his bicycle every day. Bob was a dedicated scholar, constantly publishing and editing books, articles, and journals from the 1980s through his recent retirement. Bob served as Dean of the School of Social Sciences at Rice from 1996-2006.

Beyond academia, Bob was a fixture on KHOU beginning in 1983 providing insight and commentary on local and state elections. He served as a pollster for newspapers, radio, and TV. His enthusiasm, curiosity, and mastery of the tools of public opinion were contagious. He never tired of teaching and there was never enough time to answer all his questions. He was a national expert on elections and election administration and a tireless advocate to make it easier for people to vote.

Bob was a leader in driving Rice to have an impact beyond the hedges, leading Rice's Center for Civic Engagement from 2007-2021 and working closely with the City of Houston on issues from disaster response to clearing accidents off the highway. Bob made sure to give undergraduate students the unique opportunity to contribute to this work, believing in the importance of applying academic and practical experiences to policy questions. In his last years he advised on the creation of an undergraduate major in social policy analysis (SOPA) at Rice to further this goal.

Bob is survived by his wife Marty, his daughters, Nora Stein and her husband Matt McMahon, Annie Stein and her husband Jesse Dickerman, and his grandchildren, Gwen and Nina McMahon, and Sam, Josh, and Ada Dickerman. Bob was fond of telling people he over-achieved in marriage and that his greatest accomplishment was his daughters. He left a lasting impact on his family, his community, and dozens of graduate and undergraduate students he mentored over the years.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUL **22**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Congregation Emanu El
1500 Sunset Blvd
Houston, TX 77005

Tribute Wall

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“ I didn't know Bob very well. But, I was saddened when I saw that he passed away. He seemed like a wonderful man, husband, and father. I knew Bob, briefly, when we both rode our bikes to work, in the mid 1990's. He ride from the Braeswood/Gessner area to Rice University. I ride from First Colony to the Shell data center that used to be at 1500 O.S.T. Bob and I would “run into each other” on our bikes on Braes Bayou about once every 2 weeks or so. We would have brief discussions about mostly nothing until we got close to Gessner and then we'd say our “see you later” until next time. I then would see him commenting on the elections on the news and would tell people “I used to ride with that guy on the way home from work sometimes.” Anyway, riding to/from work back then was really enjoyable, and running into Bob along the way was always pleasant. RIP Bob.

Kenny Nalepa - July 25, 2025 at 11:04 AM

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“ One of the nice things about being a teacher is not only the students you teach ..but also getting to know their families .. Nora and Annie Were talented theatre students and I loved working with them... and some of my fondest memories are also getting to spend time with Marty and Bob
I felt so lucky to call Marty and Bob my friends
My sincere sympathy to Bob's family and friends 🙏

gail silver - July 21, 2025 at 11:19 PM