

Robert P. Parker, age 84, of Washington DC, passed away peacefully in his home at Ingleside at Rock Creek on February 16. He was the child of Charles Parker and Sally Parker (née Griff), born on May 15, 1940, in Washington DC. Bob's father was a chemist and attorney for the US Patent Office and an accomplished musician. Sally was a public-school teacher and homemaker.

Bob, his brother Ted, sister Dorothy, and his parents lived in Washington DC all his growing up years except during World War II when the patent office was relocated to Richmond, Virginia. While in high school, he played piano in a rock band. He attended and graduated from Coolidge High School in Washington DC in 1957. He earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics from Duke University in 1961.

After graduation, he had a long and successful career in the federal government. He focused primarily on the preparation and use of official federal statistics and on maintaining their independence, quality, and relevance.

He spent 10 years at the Census Bureau, developing new economic statistics programs. He then worked for 30 years at the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), rising to positions of Chief Statistician and Associate Director for National Economic Accounts. At BEA, he directed the preparation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accounts and played a major role in improving their reliability, relevance, and transparency. After BEA, he spent 5 years as Chief Statistician of the Government Accountability Office, directing congressional reports on federal statistics, including a study of the American Community Survey, the replacement for the decennial Census "long form."

When he left BEA, an article in Barron's weekly report dubbed Bob "The King of Stats." He was a Fellow of the American Statistical Association, recipient of the Shiskin Award for Economic Statistics, and of the Butler Award by the New York Association for Business Economics.

He married Elaine Halpern in June 1963, and they had two sons: Alan and Steven. Bob and Elaine divorced, and Bob married Jeanne O'Neill in 1989. Jeanne passed away from complications of multiple myeloma in 2007. Bob then found love and companionship with Nancy Gordon, with whom he spent the rest of his life.

Bob was a devoted father and grandfather. He coached soccer and enjoyed hiking with his sons, especially in the White Mountains in New Hampshire. Alan and Steven have fond memories of Bob taking them to see the NASA rocket yard in Greenbelt before the Air and Space Museum opened in downtown Washington DC. He also enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren, Rose and Matthew, and taking them to local sites when they were visiting from Wisconsin.

Not only was Bob an accomplished statistician, but he was also a talented piano player and continued to play throughout his life. He performed in several Broadway shows with community theater groups and more recently at Ingleside. Bob was an avid follower of current events and read multiple newspapers every day. He was one of the formative members of Temple Beth Ami, where he remained an active member throughout his life.

Bob and Nancy loved to travel and see the world. In many cases they were accompanied on their travels by Nancy's father, Walter Gordon. Bob treated Wally as a father and helped care for him in his later years. Bob and Nancy had friends around the world, especially in China and Japan, where they developed life-long friendships through their professional connections.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, Charlie and Sally. He is survived by his wife, Nancy Gordon; his children, Alan Parker and Steven (Sheri) Parker; brother, Ted Parker and sister, Dorothy Parker; and grandchildren Rose and Matthew Parker.

Contributions in his memory may be made to the Anti-Defamation League or the American Heart Association.