



## Robert Edward Stanton

May 31, 2024

Robert Edward Stanton died peacefully, surrounded by books, music, and beautiful works of art on May 31, 2024 at his home in Sarasota, Florida. He was 86 years old.

Robert was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on August 19, 1937 to Stephen and Irene (Rahko) Stanton. The oldest of two boys, Robert moved with his family to the state of Maine as a youngster, where he grew up in a rural setting, first near Cape Elizabeth and later outside of the town of Saco. There he discovered and nurtured a lifelong love for music, art, literature and writing. Robert was proud of his Finnish heritage on his mother's side and he retained a love for 'all things Finnish' for the rest of his life.

After earning a B.A. in English from Bates College in Maine, Robert moved to Ohio where he received an M.A. in English from the University of Cincinnati. Following doctoral studies in Interdisciplinary Arts from Ohio University, Robert taught Art History at California State Polytechnic University and the University of Houston. He also taught English at Boston University, the University of Maine, the Art Academy of Cincinnati, and the University of Cincinnati. In the early 1980's Robert bravely ventured into the high school arena, teaching both in public and private schools. However, academic life at the university level always held his heart and Robert ultimately settled at Ringling College of Art and Design in 1990.

While at Ringling, Robert was instrumental in establishing the Comparative Arts Program which examined how the visual arts inter-relate with writing, music and the broader field of the humanities. He passionately advocated for an integrative and interdisciplinary approach to the arts. He often accompanied students to performances of opera, classical music, theater, and ballet. As an ardent proponent of study abroad, Robert worked to bring students travel opportunities that had not previously existed at Ringling.

Robert was an inspiring educator and a good colleague. Students felt and reciprocated his affection for the arts. Some reached out to him after graduating from Ringling to let him know just how much he had impacted their college experience. Faculty members expressed respect for his commitment to Ringling students and for his lifelong passion for teaching and learning.

Robert served on the board of La Musica for many years and helped to organize its annual chamber music festival. He was instrumental in leveraging student talent at Ringling to develop original artwork and designs for La Musica.

Although a consummate and recognized scholar, the two most important triumphs in Robert's life were his children, John and Emily. He was gratified by their happiness and their successes brought him great pleasure.

Robert had friends from all walks of life and was an enthusiastic host. He had a special knack for kindling lifelong friendships between people who shared his love of art, music and literature. He spent many happy summers with his friends at his cabin on a quiet lake in Maine. And like a true Finn, he introduced many to the joys of the sauna and plenty of smoked salmon.

Robert was greatly loved by his family. He is survived by his son John (Miya)

of Vashon Island, Washington; daughter Emily (Hedley) and grandsons Liam and Rhys Abernethy, all of Belfast, Northern Ireland; and brother William Stanton (Marjorie) of Bowdoinham, Maine. He will be remembered with fondness by many colleagues, friends, and former students.

A celebration of life for Sarasota based friends and colleagues is being planned.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Robert Stanton can be made to La Musica, P.O. Box 5442, Sarasota, FL 34277.