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Stephen Roy Holbrook



October 18, 1948 - August 12, 2017

Stephen Roy Holbrook of Moraga, Calif., beloved husband of Libby and father of Bryan, passed away Aug. 12 from pneumonia. He was 68. Despite early health issues including contracting polio at age 4 resulting in lasting mobility and lung effects, he earned his bachelor's in chemistry and his Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the University of Oklahoma.

He worked as a postdoc at Duke University and met his wife, a biochemistry graduate student. They married in 1978, moved to Oakland in 1979, welcomed a son in 1987 and moved to Moraga in 1993. Steve worked as a staff scientist at Berkeley National Laboratory, first in Prof. S-H. Kim's lab and then as head of his own group that researched nucleic acid and protein crystal structures, and prediction of novel RNAs. He and Libby shared an office and worked together.

He authored 100 scientific papers and mentored countless undergrads, grad students, technicians, and postdocs during his career. He received the DOE Outstanding Mentor award and a Division award for Scientific Excellence by an Underrepresented Member. He volunteered with youth sports and scouts, was a lifelong fan of the A's, Warriors, 49ers, and OU Sooners, and loved March Madness and fantasy baseball. He also sang exuberantly in church, was co-founder of an

investment club, and enjoyed science fiction books and movies. He became ill in 2007, spent a year and a half in the hospital, and eventually returned to work.

He retired in 2012 after being seriously injured in a 2010 fall. He was then confined to a wheelchair and dependent on a ventilator. Despite these challenges, he remained optimistic, always had a big smile, and exuded a true joy for life. He leaves behind his wife Libby, son Bryan, daughter-in-law Jamie, sister Debbie, in-laws Lee, OJ, Marianne, and Mary, nephews Ryon, Andrew, Jonathan, and Larry, nieces Megan and Ashley, great nephews Ethan and Zachary, great nieces Millie and Lauren, caregiver Brittney, grandpup Flapjack, and numerous friends and colleagues. He lived a full life and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. The family welcomes memorial donations to Zion Lutheran in Piedmont, Calif., or to your favorite charity.

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[back](#)

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