

(8/07/2021)

ROBERT GOLDENBERG (1942-Aug. 4, 2021)

Robert Goldenberg died in early August after a long fight with cancer. Bob came to Stony Brook in 1979 and taught in Judaic studies, then in Com Lit, as units got shoved around, and finally in the History Dept. from 1998 until he retired in 2012. He served as director of the Judaic Studies program through those years, as well as serving a stint as chair of Comp. Lit. Bob graduated from Cornell, was ordained a rabbi at Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and got his Ph.D. from Brown (which cluttered his History Dept. mailbox with begging letters long after he retired). Before he came to Stony Brook he had taught as George Williams in Montreal, NYU, and Wichita State (in Kansas!!).

At Stony Brook he both taught on Judaism, particularly in the ancient world, along with some general ancient history, and he published books on early Judaism that were both impressively scholarly and quite readable, particularly his *The Nations that Know Thee Not* (1998) and *The Origins of Judaism* (2007). He also published in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, plus many articles and various items now available on podcast, and he had been on the editorial boards of a number of scholarly journals. At the very end he was still able to complete his share of work as a co-editor of the Oxford Mishna Project, a major enterprise of translation and commentary.

In the History Department Bob (no one ever called him Robert) was a pillar of common sense and judgement AND he was one of the great kibitzers of our generation. He was sorely missed when he retired and, for family reasons, moved to Princeton, though he kept in touch and offered perceptive and witty comments about academic matters whenever we contacted him. He is survived by his wife, Nina Wacholder, three children, two daughters-in-law, and a beloved granddaughter (for whom, when needed, he would come from N.J. to Brooklyn to baby sit).