

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF ROBERT F. JUDD

A tribute from Reba Wissner



I didn't know Bob very well for very long, but we recently were working closely together over the past year to try and make the AMS more welcoming for contingent workers. Of course, over the past 15 years of being an AMS member, I knew OF Bob. Bob never ceased to amaze me with his depth of knowledge of all things AMS and beyond and his warmth, grace, and charisma. He handled difficult situations with humor and a smile on his face and aimed to make things better for as many people as he could, always willing to lend an ear and help those members of the society who he felt that he could. Never one to drop any of the balls he had in the air (and we know he often had about 15 balls more in the air than he had hands), he is someone I aspire to emulate.

The Bob I knew, which is also the Bob we likely all knew, was the person who would do things outside of his responsibilities to help make the AMS a better place. He administered some of the surveys that had my name on them such as the adjunct needs survey, taking time out of things that were pressing to make sure the voices of those who are contingent were heard. He also tangled with software at annual meetings to make sure that those people who wanted access to sessions remotely for accessibility purposes were able to do so. For Bob, it was about putting others first.

One of my last interactions with him was earlier this year when we met to talk about a meeting the AMS was sending me to in Philadelphia on contingent labor at one of our sister societies. In typical Bob fashion, he told me that if I was too busy to go HE would make the trek to the meeting. In any case, a few weeks before I went to the meeting, I arrived at the local coffee shop early to write, and he was very disappointed that he couldn't buy me a cup of coffee because I already had one. That was Bob: generous and caring. Recently, probably like many of you, I looked back on my emails and came across my last exchange with Bob, who said we would touch base after the American Historical Association meeting that we would both be attending and grab some coffee. It is painful to know that that will not be happening. He will be deeply missed.

