Stephanie R Lewis

Stephanie Robinson Lewis, known to her friends as Steffy, died on November 7, 2019, at her home in Princeton. She had been ill for some time. On November 11, 2019, friends gathered for a quiet farewell in Princeton Cemetery where Steffy was buried beside her husband David Lewis.

Born on August 3, 1944, Steffy grew up in Greenwich Village. She attended the Little Red School House and graduated from Bronx High School of Science (where she was the best student in math). At Radcliffe College she majored in mathematics. While auditing a Harvard graduate philosophy seminar taught by J. J. C. Smart, a visiting Australian philosopher, she met David Kellogg Lewis. They were both still students when they were married in 1965.

From 1967 to 1970, Steffy pursued graduate studies in philosophy at UCLA until David’s appointment as Associate Professor in the Philosophy Department at Princeton University brought them to back to the East Coast. Steffy took several temporary teaching jobs in the area before deciding to make a career change. After taking an MBA degree at the University of Pennsylvania, she embarked on a very successful career in municipal finance. She maintained her own connection with the American Philosophical Association by serving as its treasurer for many years. She was also active in the Princeton Research Forum, a community of independent scholars, and served as its long-time treasurer. In a wry essay, “Etc.,” included in Singing in the Fire: Stories of Women in Philosophy (2003), Steffy chronicled her experiences as a philosopher, as an itinerant academic, as David’s partner, and as a financial advisor to towns and school districts.

Steffy and David had a wide circle of friends in philosophy, especially in Australia where they spent almost every summer, talking philosophy, birding, cycling, following Australian rules football, and exploring the country. In 2000, Steffy donated a kidney to David, who suffered from severe diabetes. That gave them another year together before David died suddenly in 2001.

In the years after David’s death, music brought Steffy new friends and interests. She became a fervent supporter of the classical music radio station, WWFM, enjoyed opera at the Glimmerglass Festival and the Metropolitan Opera, and served as a Board member for Orchestra 2001. At the same time, she began editing David’s correspondence and vast number of papers. With Peter Anstey of the University of Sydney and Anthony Fisher of the University of Manchester, she put together a volume of David’s correspondence with fellow philosopher and close friend David Armstrong.

Steffy and David had no children. She is survived by Don Lewis, his wife Elaine DiRico, and his daughter, Rose Anderson-Lewis; by Ellen Lewis; and by a cousin, Rebecca Epstein-Levi. For four years she was cared for with love by Kayla Reid and family, by Trisha McDermot, and by her dear friend, Andrew Rudin.

Donations may be made in Steffy’s memory to any of the organizations and institutions close to her heart.