

ROBERT SANFORD LUKE



Rob Luke died on June 20, 2022 at the age of 68, while jogging at Dockton Forest, on Vashon Island, WA.

He is survived by his wife, Ayumi, son, Timothy, brother, Richard Luke, sister, Anne Jarvis, and his niece, Sören Shimizu. He is also survived by his rescued Husky, Misha.

He was born in Chatham, NJ, to Connell and Helen Luke, and grew up in New Jersey. He entered Williams College, and graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics. Upon graduation from Williams, Rob attended the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, at Princeton University, and earned a Masters of Public Affairs with distinction. He also attained a Masters of Arts in National Security Policy and Strategic Studies with honors from the U.S. Naval War College.

Rob had a distinguished 32-year career as a Senior Foreign Service officer at the U.S. Department of State. He was an expert on China and Japan, and spent over 20 years as an economic and political/military specialist in those countries.

He was the Consul General at the U.S. Consulate Naha, Okinawa and served as the Minister Counselor for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy Beijing and the Minister Counselor for Political Affairs at the U.S. Embassy Tokyo. He also held two assignments in Europe, at the U.S. Embassy in Bonn, and as Counselor for Economics, Environment, Science and Technology to the U.S. Delegation, to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Energy Agency (IEA), and the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) in Paris.

Rob was a superb linguist, having mastered fluent Chinese and Japanese, as well as French and German.

Rob's friends across Asia and in the Foreign Service admired him for his active intelligence and incisive insights into the culture and politics of the countries where he served. They also respected him for his cultured appreciation of fine French wines, and punk and grunge rock. He will be remembered as one of the first westerners to lead a rock band in Taiwan, and introduce the music to Taiwanese youth in the early 1980's.

He retired in 2014 and bought his first house on Vashon Island. Though he had lived all around the world during his diplomatic career, Vashon held a special place in his heart, as he loved its natural beauty and was an avid jogger, hiker and skier. He especially enjoyed kayaking off the island and diving for red crabs.

Rob was a devoted father and never missed any of his son's football and lacrosse games. He was especially proud to see his son's team win the state lacrosse championship in 2019. He loved working at the community pool with his son, as a lifeguard, and was surrounded by many friends on Vashon.

The day he died was the first warm day of summer, and he fell at a clearing looking out over the sea and Mt. Rainier. He must have enjoyed his last run.

In memory of Robert Luke, you can make a donation to the Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust: <https://vashonlandtrust.org/> or Mukai Farm and Garden: <https://mukaifarmandgarden.com/>