



# Robert R. Cushing Jr

July 20, 1952 - March 7, 2022

Forever a traveler, Robert Reynolds Cushing, Jr., of Hampton, New Hampshire, took yet one more journey on March 7, 2022, at age 69.

Renny was born on July 20, 1952, to Robert and Marie (Mulcahy) Cushing in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. His first memory was of picking up his twin brothers at the hospital, and his family - his ohana - was at the center of his life ever since. His sense of justice and righteous anger at senseless violence began with his opposition to the Vietnam War. His protests brought him to marches on D.C. and to advocate at age 15 for the voting age to be lowered on the floor of the New Hampshire State House - a place that would become his home away from beloved lifelong home on Winnacunnet Road.

He loved chunky peanut butter, cheddar cheese, and salami on an English muffin, leaving half an apple to brown in the car cup holder, and was “tuck-challenged” when it came to doing up all the buttons of his shirt. He wore t-shirts down to the threads rather than throw away a gift, and had a Yankee approach to cultivating piles of good scrap.

He began a life of wicked good trouble with a handwritten note from his mom giving him permission to hop freight trains and hitchhike across the country. He picked grapes in Salinas, mined gold in Ontario, collected trash in Atlanta, dug clams in the Hampton Harbor, saw all fifty states by his fiftieth birthday, and could not remember much from Woodstock '69.

In his junior year, he was suspended from Winnacunnet High School for growing his sideburns out too long for the dress code. He sued the school to be reinstated - marking the first time Renny teamed up with the ACLU, but certainly not the last. With a senior year of football on the line, Renny reluctantly trimmed the sideburns, led the team to the state championship, and returned fifty-one years later to give a commencement speech.

He would be the first to tell you he was not a morning person, preferring instead la madrugada - the time after midnight before the sun rises when everything is still and your

best thinking can be done - and la sobremesa - the time after a meal is finished when everyone is still gathered around the table, enjoying laughter and good company.

He learned this Spanish working in the tobacco fields of Mexico, reading Neruda and sharing stories of oppression and hope that convinced him to return home, where he thought bringing a people's revolution to New Hampshire might take a few years and then he could return to the life of a traveler.

Turns out it took a bit longer than expected.

It started with supporting progressive political candidates as they visited the Granite State - working in the trenches for Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern progressed to being the state co-chair for Jesse Jackson and Bernie Sanders. It was at the presidential primary rally for Fred Harris that he met Kristie Conrad, first his comrade, and then his wife of more than 33 years.

Renny's revolutionary spirit found its home in cofounding the Clamshell Alliance, the first grassroots organization dedicated to nonviolent direct action in opposition to nuclear power. His fight against the Seabrook Atomic Power Plant reflected his love of the natural seacoast and his New Hampshire sense of righteousness - the use of eminent domain to overturn the democratic will of the people had to be opposed. Fortified alongside his brother- and sisterhood of clams, Renny was one of the first protestors arrested - first as one of 18, then as one of 180, then as one of 1,414 in one of the largest mass arrests in American history.

His ohana expanded from Cushings and Clams to include those who had survived the murder of a loved one. He deeply believed that if we as a people let those who kill make us into killers, then evil triumphs - and we all lose. Taking another life would not heal the loss of his father or brother-in-law. It would not honor the lives lost for another family to be victimized by state-sanctioned murder.

His crusade against the death penalty took him on advocacy works across the world, but for Renny even the road less traveled led back to New Hampshire, where after thirty years of impassioned speeches and strategic politicking across both parties, the state death penalty was abolished.

As a state representative, Renny put the people first. He advocated for workers by passing the state's whistleblower protection act and fighting repressive right to work legislation. He was a proud card-carrying union member, organizer, and supporter of the state's firefighter, teacher, and municipal employee unions. He was at the forefront of

relocating New Hampshire's secure psychiatric unit so vital mental health care can be provided without criminalization. Funding construction to revitalize the Hampton Beach boardwalk, increasing resources for survivors of domestic violence, decriminalizing marijuana - if it meant a better life for New Hampshire families, Renny was there.

With his cancer diagnosis, Renny wanted to continue serving, so he adopted a new motto: "Dying While Legislating" (or DWL as his custom belt buckle proclaimed). Serving as the Democratic Leader of the House brought him great pride. Not in the title - he cared more about the work he got done - but in his ability to empower young progressives and make space at the table for the diverse voices who have always advocated for their communities but were shut out of the halls of power.

But of all the titles he held through the years, the one he was most proud of was Papa. He adored indulging his three daughters in ticklish pedicures, countless dance parties, weekend trips playgrounding that had to end with ice cream, and reality television marathons when the world felt too hard to handle.

In turn, his daughters indulged his countless piles of paper, explosions of crumbs whenever he made breakfast, weekly dinners of cold pizza, fried Spam, or Welsh rarebit, and surprise crashings on their couches when his travels brought him around unannounced but always welcome.

A self-described aging romantic, he married dozens of couples in wedding ceremonies as a Justice of the Peace, scribbled countless love letters in nearly indecipherable chicken scratch, and tattooed his mom's nickname in a heart on his arm. He baked the best Irish soda bread while reciting W.B. Yeats, and ached for the smell of burning peat and Irish rain.

He never met a stranger he couldn't turn into a friend, and never met a "No Trespassing" sign he couldn't turn into an invitation for mischief.

He argued pro se and won a case before the New Hampshire Supreme Court and drank Pabst at the Legion Hall, met with the Pope to advocate for ending the juvenile death penalty and snagged first place in the Nashville Swine Ball beauty pageant. He was brilliant, goofy, melancholy, righteous, fanciful, and profound.

Renny's memory will forever be a blessing for his wife, Kristie Conrad, and their three daughters - Marie Cushing and husband Austin Beckford; Elizabeth Cushing; and Grace Cushing.

Renny is reunited for a walk along the shores of Hampton Beach with his beloved father Robert and mother Marie; brother Michael; and brother-in-law Stephen McRedmond, cherished husband of brother Matthew.

Renny is lovingly remembered by his seven surviving siblings: Giovanna Hurley and husband Jim Fortin; Matthew Cushing; Kevin Cushing and wife Kathleen (Hanson); Marynia Page and husband Richard; Christine Rockefeller and husband Dale; and Timothy Cushing and wife Janet (Batchelder).

He was an adored Uncle Papa to his beloved niblings: Eleanor Fulmer and husband Ronald; Rose Murray and husband John; Isaac Cushing and wife Julia (Barkley); Kate Fortin and husband Eduardo Thomas Perez del Postigo; Danielle Cushing; James Fortin and fiancée Augusta Nissy; Abigail Rockefeller; Christine Page and wife Uannya; Kathryn Rockefeller; Alexander Cushing; Shannon Page; Kasey Cushing; and Hillary Cushing.

His hope to make the world a better place lives on in his eleven grandniblings: Katie Fulmer, Caleb Cushing, Ronald "Trey" Fulmer III, Pluto Cushing, Jesse Murray, Corrine Murray, Riley Fulmer, Avery Fulmer, Julian Cushing, Ellie Fulmer, and Fernando Thomas Fortin.

The family would like to thank the tireless efforts of Dr. Xin Gao and the oncology team, as well as the wonderful, compassionate nursing and support staff at Massachusettes General Hospital. There are no words to describe the gratitude held for the support from Rockingham VNA and Hospice.

Memorial services will be held for family and friends at the Rivermill at Dover Landing 2 Washington Street, Dover, NH from 3 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, March 19. Attendees will be required to wear masks.

In lieu of flowers, his family asks that you pour yourself a glass of good bourbon or cheap tequila and write a letter to someone you love. Memorial gifts can be made in Renny's name to Black Lives Matter Seacoast (<https://www.blmseacoast.com/donate>) or 350NH (<https://350nh.org/donate>).

And since the only person who could do justice to the story of Renny Cushing was the man himself, we will let him have the last word.

In 1986, Renny wrote in his biography for the first of his nine terms as New Hampshire State Representative that his priorities were “family & friends - their dignity, sacrifice and labor. Simple dreams for a better life in N.H. Effectiveness without losing principles or sense of humor.”

Job well done.

Ohana.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAR 19. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Rivermill at Dover Landing  
2 Washington Street  
Dover, NH 03820

# Tribute Wall

RK

“ *When I think of Renny I think of integrity. He was an inspiration to me in his work for social justice not the least of which was his progressive, life-enhancing work with the Clamshell Alliance, as well as his efforts against the death penalty. Renny stayed true to his roots and his word and lived out his beliefs with dedication and commitment. I will keep his memory alive in my heart, with his many friends, always.*

*Love,  
Ross King*

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**Ross King** - April 04 at 03:03 PM

RR

“ *Many people have written about the wonderful things that Renny did as an adult. But I remember him as the Bob Cushing with whom I went to high school. I last saw Bob and met his wife at a reunion our class had many years ago. Bob still had the twinkle in his eye when he introduced me to his wife. I remember that you also had a quiet sense of humor and I remember wishing you well and telling you that I thought you were the bravest woman in the world. Bob was a unique and passionate person, and I knew your life together would not have many dull moments.*

*When I read the obituary, I laughed out loud when I read about his suspension from high school for growing sideburns. As I remember, he first came to school with a full beard. I think the sideburns were an effort at compromise without giving in. I always thought that for a 17 year old he had an impressive beard and thought that the school officials who suspended him were perhaps a little jealous of his ability to grow such facial hair. I don't think any of them could have done so. I do not mean to make light of his memory or his death, indeed my eyes are filled with tears as I write this. He did much in his life that helped a lot of people. He also quite probably had a lot of fun. I know that his family will miss him desperately. My heart goes out to you all.*

*Rachel McCarter Roberts WHS '70*

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**Rachel A Roberts** - March 19 at 11:06 PM

TW

“ *My first year as a State Representative, I would drive up to Concord with Renny. He would come to the dorm at Phillips Exeter Academy and pick me up for the 50 minute ride to the State House. Wow did we talk up a storm, I learned so much about New Hampshire during that year. Thank you Renny... Soul Sistah Jackie K. Weatherspoon*



The Honorable Jackie K. Weatherspoon - March 19 at 09:26 PM



“ *"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way." Thank you, Renny for knowing the way, going the way, and showing us the way. We will follow in your footsteps and continue your work.*

~Representative Cassie Levesque,



Cassandra Levesque - March 19 at 07:45 PM



“ *Rest In Peace, Noble Warrior, Renny Cushing*

*By MLK "Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."*

Charlotte DiLorenzo - March 19 at 09:37 AM

@H

“ *Renny, You are one of a kind. So glad to have known you and the kind of man you were in your dedication to your beliefs for each and all of us. So many details about you here that I did not know. Kristie, daughters and rest of the family so sorry he has left, and has left you with dear memories and his spirit is still encircling you. What a fellow Renny was. Kath Allen*

@ho - March 18 at 07:41 PM

KO

“ The best part of the National Conference of State Legislatures' annual conferences was getting to hang out with Renny in person. Here are photos of: 1) Renny (and other legislators) touring a cannabis infused product manufacturer in Seattle, and 2) him with my Marijuana Policy Project colleagues after the passage of his resolution against federal interference in state marijuana laws (Matt Simon and Bob Capecchi).

*Thank you for being such an incredible champion for justice and humanity.*

*-Karen O'Keefe*



Karen O'Keefe - March 18 at 05:25 PM

GK

“ Dear Kristie and the entire Cushing family; I am so sorry for your loss. (Despite this a technology we live in, it took me several days to find this obituary and memory post (I would have posted sooner). Renny's accomplishments were many but a common thread through them all was his selfless and caring attitude and sense of down to earth goodness that came out of his "common man" way of thinking. Years ago (about 1982) I took a job working as a laborer at the Seabrook nuke plant for a year or so. I was never enamored with the plant and nuclear power in general but needed a job and the money was good. I recall being at the Cushing residence one night and Renny chastising me for working at the establishment he had so doggedly fought against. (And yes a beer or two may have been involved). Renny in his calm demeanor more or less forgave me but that memory stuck with me and I eventually quit for greener pastures (no doubt to Renny's approval). I could go on but my words would be trumped by the many beautiful posts left thus far. In lieu of more words are links to a poem and orchestration which are symbolic of Renny and his passing; most would agree. R.I. P. Renny and thank you for all you did for the common man. With love and respect, your friend - Geordie King

[https://www.bing.com/search?](https://www.bing.com/search?q=fanfare%20for%20the%20common%20man%20youtube&cvid=1bb101f26965422)

[q=fanfare%20for%20the%20common%20man%20youtube&cvid=1bb101f26965422](https://www.bing.com/search?q=fanfare%20for%20the%20common%20man%20youtube&cvid=1bb101f26965422)

<https://allpoetry.com/Crossing-the-Bar>

Geordie King - March 17 at 05:44 PM

NB

“ Renny organized an 8 person delegation to go sit in on the Entergy office in New Orleans in conjunction with the final push to close Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor. We were assisted by some amazing public interest lawyers from Tulane, but Renny was the heart and soul of this action. I was honored to be a part of it, and am sorry Renny won't be around to make more good trouble.  
Nancy Braus, Putney, VT

Nancy Braus - March 17 at 08:44 AM

C.

“ Dear family and friends,  
Renny was such a good man and I know how much he will be missed. My prayers and sympathy. God bless and peace always.  
Cheryle Prakop-Good

C.G. - March 16 at 10:52 PM



“ Dear Renny,  
I miss you so much. You are the one who guide me on the road abolishing the death penalty, you are the one who help us to understand the voice of the victims and help us to talk to the victims in Taiwan. You are a true friend to Taiwan, you are the best friend to the Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty. Thank you for everything that you did. I will working to end the death penalty endlessly, just like you.  
Love and Big Hug,  
Hsinyi LIN from Taiwan



Lin Hsinyi - March 16 at 05:55 AM

SA

“ Renny, you will remain a powerful source of inspiration to many, well beyond what you could have imagined in your wildest dreams. Certainly I will miss you my friend and I will never forget how lucky I was to cross your path. Hank and I are both heartbroken but we will keep in our hearts for always the strength of your convictions, your energy and your kindness. Rest assured we will continue the fight! We convey our very best to your loved ones, please don't forget what a strong mark your life will leave in a world gone mad. You will remain a star among the stars, thank you for everything!

Sandrine Ageorges-Skinner - March 15 at 08:37 PM

LV

“ Renny was a great warrior in the struggle for justice, I will miss having him at my side and watching my back.

Larry Vogelmann - March 15 at 11:19 AM

AU

“ Despite political ideology, Renny Cushing should be a role model for anyone embarking on public service for his honesty, his fidelity to the principles that motivate him to become a politician, and his tireless perseverance. RIP Hon Renny Cushing.

Alejandro Urrutia - March 15 at 07:44 AM

LL

“ The Honorable Robert Cushing was indeed a Good Man. He was so kind to me during my time in the 86-88 Legislative Sessions. He supported the person he wanted for President regardless of pressure to support someone else. Renny was for Right and he will be remembered by many for his kind, caring ways. Take your rest Representative Robert Cushing.  
Former NH Representative  
Linda Long  
GA.

Linda Long - March 14 at 06:37 PM

RH

“ Remember those who weave color into our lives, leave us with a tapestry of beautiful memories. To Renny's family, may the memories you've kept tucked away in your heart wrap you up in comfort and bring you special peace. You are in my thoughts, now and forever.  
Representative Heidi Hamer - Manchester

Representative Heidi Hamer - March 14 at 06:35 PM

RK

“ To the Cushing family there is no one whose loss is greater than your own but the loss of Renny has hit all us beyond words. His activism; his humanity and his humor will live in our hearts forever. I find myself wondering have I done enough in this world to make an impact. While Renny was stolen from all us too soon and he had so much more to give... but the truth is that he did more than enough and it is time for all of us to carry on for him. Renny you will be missed every day. Thank You for sharing so much with all of us.

Representative Patricia Klee - March 14 at 05:16 PM

LT

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Liz Tentarelli - March 14 at 05:09 PM

DL

“ I had the privilege of getting to know Renny through our shared work on gun violence prevention, ending the death penalty, and many other progressive priorities. We joked, we laughed, we did good. Renny was a true mensch. His family should be proud and we all should be grateful to them for sharing Renny with us.

Representative David Linsky (D-Massachusetts)

David Linsky - March 14 at 04:58 PM

CM

“ Such a good and compassionate man...the repeal of the death penalty meant so much to many of us...followed his path since Seabrook marches. How his loss will be felt by family and friends!! My sympathy to all.

Carolyn Marvin - March 14 at 04:57 PM

JH

“ To the Cushing family, you have our deepest sympathy and unwavering support. Wishing you peace, comfort, courage, and lots of love at this time of sorrow. Our heart goes out to all of you at this difficult time.  
We only knew Renny for a short time, but it was enough time to know what an incredible man he was and his wonderful sense of humor filled our hearts with joy. He will be dearly missed. May his legacy and beautiful memories fill all of your hearts with love and laughter!  
Lee and Jackie Herbert

Jackie Dalton Herbert - March 14 at 04:47 PM

EZ

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Elizabeth Zitrin - March 14 at 04:42 PM



A day that will always be remembered <3

Wendy Chase - March 14 at 05:44 PM

BM

“ Billie Jean Mayberry lit a candle in memory of Robert R. Cushing Jr



Billie Jean Mayberry - March 14 at 04:41 PM

RR

Renny was kind, a great listener, a skilled political strategist, and wicked smart. To say he'll be missed is an understatement to say the least. It was an honor to serve with him in the NH House

Robin read - March 14 at 09:12 PM

DD

I met Renny when he was 16. I picked him up at the toll booth in Hampton and we drove to Roxbury where we painted rooms. He had an effect on every chapter of my life. I wish I had learned everything he had to offer.

Dudley Dudley - March 15 at 11:40 AM

SN

*"Think where man's glory most begins and ends, And say my glory was I had such friends. W. B. Yates Those were the first words to cross my mind when I heard that Renny had gone home. I can only hope that he counted me in. To the Cushing family, thank you for years of sharing this good man. To the girls, he never spoke to me without sharing how each of you was doing. He shines his light on all of us now. May you find comfort in knowing how very loved, respected, and admired he was.*

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**Sheila Nudd** - March 15 at 07:46 PM

BB

*Renny was, and always will be, My Hero. He lived a life of adventure, zest and commitment to his high ideals. It was such a blessing to have known and admired him for 50 years. He was a phenomenal legislator, able to get things done by reaching across the aisle, without ever compromising his ideals.*

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**Bob Backus** - March 17 at 12:49 PM

TT

*All of us from Hampton were so incredibly blessed to have such a man in our midst. He will be sorely missed*

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**Toni Trotzer** - March 17 at 04:43 PM

MH

*Thank you Renny for your tireless work to ensure fairness, compassion and decency for everyone. Deepest condolences to his family that he loved so dearly. He was a kind and remarkable man. Rest In Peace.*

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**Mary Beth Hollingworth** - March 19 at 07:30 AM

HM

*I wish I could have videotaped Renny's Memorial Service Saturday. There were so many moments and words to try to remember. But sometimes, when I am either videotaping or photographing a scene, I get smart and put the camera down to soak in all the imagery in front of me. Yesterday, I soaked it all in.... the majesty and the simplicity of the man we were all there to memorialize, his friends and family who were added to our memory banks! Renny will continue to be loved and missed. It is up to us to live up to his standard of honesty, integrity, and fearlessness to help make the world a more justice-filled place for everyone!*

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**Herb & Karen Moyer** - March 21 at 05:07 PM