

In Memoriam: David McReynolds, 1929-2018

August 20, 2018



Early Friday morning, socialist, photographer, and lifetime War Resisters League member David McReynolds — committed pacifist + socialist — passed peacefully at the age of 88. David was on WRL staff for a large part of his life and remained within our community long, long after.

Presente.

As written by WRL Member Ed Hedemann.

David McReynolds died at 1:30 am, August 17th, a day after being brought to Beth Israel ICU in Manhattan. He had suffered a fall in his apartment and apparently never regained consciousness.

I first met him during a trip from Austin to NYC in 1970, and three years later joined him as a member of the War Resisters League staff. Though we would periodically differ on tactics and politics, he could always be relied upon as a brilliant, challenging, blunt thinker, speaker, and writer, who many times came up with projects — some resulting in his arrest — that would help propel WRL's militantly pacifist message to the wider public.

For those who don't know, David was on the WRL staff for almost 40 years (1960-1999), a long time member of the Socialist Party, who ran for Congress in 1958 and 1968, President of the United States on the SPUSA ticket in 1980 and 2000 — the first (I think) openly gay candidate for President — and for the U.S. Senate from New York in 2004 on the Green Party ticket. An internationalist and former chair of the War Resisters' International, he traveled extensively, many times to war-torn countries, once getting arrested in Red Square during an anti-nuclear protest in 1978.

Born in 1929 in Los Angeles, he moved to the East Village in 1956 and began working for Liberation magazine, before joining the WRL staff. An avid photographer, a collection of his photos can be found at <http://www.mcreynoldspphotos.org/>. All his life he adored animals, most especially cats (sadly, Shaman, his cat — seen in the photo — died shortly after David was taken to the hospital), was a dedicated member of the Bromeliad Society and many other groups that I don't have time to research before this quick post.

Heartbreaking.

Originally posted at the War Resisters League website.

Ed will be writing a more comprehensive memoriam for the Winter 2019 issue of New Politics.