

Ronald Christopher Perera died peacefully in his home in Yarmouth Port, MA on August 4, 2023, after being diagnosed with lung cancer.

Ronald was the fourth son born to Guido R. and Faith P. Perera on Christmas day 1941. He grew up in Boston, attended Groton School and Harvard University where he earned a bachelor's degree and master's degree in music. He also served in the U.S. Navy.

Composer Ronald Perera, Elsie Irwin Sweeney Professor of Music at Smith College, retired in 2002 after teaching there for thirty years. His most characteristic works were those that set words to music: the operas *The Yellow Wallpaper*, on a libretto based on Charlotte Perkins Gilman's story of that title, and *S.* based on John Updike's novel; and song cycles for voice and varied instrumental forces, including *The White Whale* (Melville), *Crossing the Meridian* (Ruth Whitman), *Three Poems of Günter Grass*, and *Apollo Circling* (James Dickey). He also composed many choral and orchestral works, including those for instruments or voices with electronic sounds. He set texts by Sappho, Dickinson, Francis of Assisi, Cummings, Beston, Frost, Longfellow, Ferlinghetti, and Mary Oliver. His compositions have been published by E.C. Schirmer, Boosey & Hawkes, and his own Pear Tree Press.

He received awards or fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Paderewski Fund for Composers, the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the Massachusetts Arts and Humanities Foundation, Harvard University, and ASCAP. Ronald's music was performed in the United States and in Europe. Performance sites included the Washington National Cathedral, Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, the yearly convention of Opera America, Alice Tully and Merkin Halls in NYC, the Manhattan School of Music, and Smith College. Performers included Coro Allegro, Chatham Chorale, New Amsterdam Singers, the Lontano Ensemble, Eastman Musica Nova, artists from the Chicago Lyric Opera, and Boston Musica Viva.

Ron was deeply and genuinely engaged with everyone he encountered. A long, thoughtful conversation was his signature, and his generous attention made everyone feel that they were the most important person in the room. Ron was passionate about his family history in the town of Yarmouth Port, and sailing his catboat *Ella Bray*. He enjoyed British television mysteries, chocolate ice cream, and single malt scotch. He was a gifted writer who privately published biographies of both sets of grandparents and a memoir entitled *My Musical Life*. He loved playing the piano.

Ron is survived by his wife Judith (Jay), his three daughters Lisa Perera, Katie Patterson, and Rosie Perera; three sons-in-law Gary Lowery, Michael Patterson, and TC Tolbert; four grandchildren Michael, Adam, Anna, and Harper; his brother Lawrence Perera, sisters-in-law Joan, Elizabeth, and Frederica Perera, and several cousins, nieces, and nephews. A funeral service will be held at St. Andrew's by the Sea in Hyannis Port, MA on August 15 at 11 a.m.