

## Obituary for Paul Bassen

The Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies is saddened to announce the death of our dear friend and colleague, Paul Bassen.

Paul hailed from Boston, MA, and lived with his wonderfully talented artist wife, Georgia, in a cabin-like house in the woods above Montclair, where he was as likely to welcome and befriend the neighborhood raccoons as his fellow humans. A photographer and explorer, he made the East Bay parks in the hills above his house something of a second home, which he shared with his friends on his “duffer” hikes.

Professor Bassen earned his BA in Philosophy from Cornell, and his PhD from UC Berkeley. He started teaching in the CSU Hayward Philosophy Department in 1968, when the department was much larger, boosted by the intellectual curiosity and soul searching of the sixties. He officially retired and became emeritus in 2003, but continued to teach with us for years.

Paul was highly regarded in the philosophical community. A former colleague, now professor at UC Davis, says, “he was the most genuine philosopher that I ever met.” His publications include, “Present Stakes and Future Prospects: The Status of Early Abortion,” in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. He taught on many subjects, while specializing in the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. A scholar, he had latterly been working on a book-length commentary on Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*.

Our colleague was a central figure in the department, as well as its longest-serving member. He was most active in pursuing the continuing health of the department, determined to persuade students across the board of the good of studying philosophy.

We remember Paul as both loveable and eccentric. His ready smile and quick wit made for engaging company. As a teacher, he had a marked influence on his students, many of whom have stayed in touch. Some credit Paul’s teaching, interests, and humanity with turning their lives around. One of them, now teaching at CSU Monterey Bay, says, “He started as my teacher and ended up a friend for life.”

As yet, we have no information about memorial events.

Paul Bassen, we salute you!