



Arthur Samuel Reber

March 11, 1940 - September 2, 2025

Arthur Samuel Reber

March 11, 1940, to September 2, 2025

Born in Philadelphia, PA, to parents Jacob Reber and Yetta Gluchowsky, Arthur studied psychology at the University of Pennsylvania – interrupted by a one-semester hiatus when he worked for a traveling circus in California. Wheels to the ground after graduation, he earned his doctorate from Brown University and took his first academic position at the University of British Columbia. In his earliest scientific work at Brown and UBC, he coined a phrase, “implicit learning,” that inspired a multi-decade scientific argument that eventually reshaped theories of memory, cognition, and consciousness. With his scientific research already gathering interest, he later left to join Brooklyn College, where he remained until his retirement, punctuated by sojourns at the University of Innsbruck, University College of North Wales, and again at UBC. Arthur’s research was hugely influential from his very early work in probability learning to his post-retirement work on the cellular basis of consciousness, as evidenced by the honors he received and a special festschrift in his honor hosted by the Psychonomics Society, attended by psychological researchers everywhere from Australia to Europe.

Among Arthur’s other academic roles, his contributions included mentoring

numerous junior faculty and dozens of students at all levels—something he was particularly proud of. He was an engaging classroom instructor, a happy warrior who sparked critical thinking and disparaged pseudoscience at every opportunity.

Arthur had a lifelong interest in gambling, particularly in endeavors which required thought: horse racing (after an early introduction from uncles Lenny and Irv) and poker (after teenage years spent playing poker with friends in the basement). He was well-known in the poker circuit, published two books on gambling, wrote a regular column on gambling, and even had two cash wins in the World Series of Poker. It was his personality as much as his poker skill that garnered him respect. One of his fellow players wrote “He never sought to diminish anyone—especially those with whom he disagreed...his life’s work commanded respect, even if it was sitting at a bar or in a casino or just hanging out.”

After moving back to the West Coast in 2005, Arthur took a couple of years to get the lay of Point Roberts before throwing himself enthusiastically into civic life. He served on Whatcom County advisory committees, helped found and steer PRCAC, held positions as commissioner for PR Water and for PR Park and Recreation, served long on the board of PRTPA, and worked on the Character Plan Review Committee. He was just generally a great civic contributor until his health and energy began to fail earlier this year.

Ever proud of his Ashkenazi Jewish heritage (despite being religiously nonobservant), he enjoyed engaging in verbal and written debates and dialogues, and was passionate about politics. He was a larger-than-life personality, always ready with strong opinions on just about any topic. However, he very rarely held grudges or attacked the messenger; rather than the message. His interactions were tempered by his great sense of humor and ability deliver punchlines with elan—a talent that earned him the PR Ha-Ha

cup in his early years in Point Roberts. He was an exceptional person who will be missed by all who knew him, whether they were on the winning or losing side of an argument.

He is survived by his ex-wife Kathy, wife Rhiannon, son Paul, daughter Emily, stepdaughter Hafina, four grandchildren (Annie, Sam, Myra, and Rose), three great-grandchildren (Lucah, Zoey, and Cameron), and other family members who loved him dearly. Numerous colleagues and former students will preserve his memory. The University of British Columbia will lower the British Columbia, Musqueam, and UBC flags on September 25, 2025 in his honor. His wife and friends will miss his cooking. There was no one else quite like him.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Point Roberts Community Center from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 11. Contributions of food are appreciated, especially vegetarian dishes and low-seasoned dishes to accommodate family dietary practices. Interment will follow at the Point Roberts Cemetery at approximately 4 pm. In accordance with Jewish tradition, those in attendance are invited to bring and place a stone on the site.

Tribute Wall

RS

“ Dear Rhiannon, I have sent a personal condolence message to you at Arthur's e-mail address. Ray Scheindlin

Ray Scheindlin - October 17, 2025 at 01:35 PM

DD

“ Met Art at UBC in 1969..he got me to adopt his hyper-active dog, Frodo...sorry to hear of his passing.
Don Dutton

Don Dutton - September 27, 2025 at 12:00 AM

EG

“ My sincere condolences to you and your family. I worked with him at Brooklyn College and he was a true gentleman. May he rest in peace 🙏🙏

ellen grivas - September 24, 2025 at 12:00 AM