

*June 18, 1932 - October 26, 2018*



*Vernon Bruette*

Vernon loved life. He was a spiritual person and explored his journey at Metropolitan Community Church and in the Al-Anon Fellowship. At the same time he delighted in his gay life, colorful clothing and beads, food (particularly bread pudding), friends, music and talking about his beloved Wisconsin. Although not a sports fan, he sported his Green Bay Packer shirts, jackets, scarfs and hats. He loved color. Even when working at the staid New York Academy of Medicine he wore loud ties. Most of us knew him for his wonderful beads.

Vernon Ray Burette was born on June 18, 1932 in Green Bay Wisconsin. The son of Clarence and Leah Bruette, he was the youngest of four children. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin, studied at Harvard, and later moved to New York City to study Library Science. His first job as a librarian was at The New York Academy of Medicine. He later worked at Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx, and then became Head Librarian at Harlem Hospital. He retired in 1997

Vernon had many interests but the three main ones were his MCC church, the Al-Anon Fellowship, and music.



He loved his Metropolitan Community Church and Rev. Pat. With the church he served the LGBTQI community. He was a devoted member for 35 years and served as a board member, Deacon, and co founded the Gender People group. He attended conferences and retreats. He volunteered often in the office, bagged groceries at the PWA pantry, and slept over in the youth shelter.

Vernon loved singing. He had a beautiful high tenor voice. He was a beloved member of the Village Light Opera Company for twenty-five years, singing in many productions. He served on the board. He was honored there for his great participation and dedication. He also sang with the Downtown Men's Glee Club, the Greenwich Village Singers, and was a ringer in many choruses. He was featured in the premier of the Gospel Opera *Gethsemane Park*. He was a chorus member in several of Martina Aroya's "Prelude to Performance" productions for up and coming opera soloists.

As a long time member of the Al-Anon fellowship he was a sought after speaker and sponsor and guided many members. He was asked to speak at the Lois W. luncheon while Lois W. (co founder of Al-anon) was still alive and active in the fellowship. He held the post of librarian for several meetings and you can be sure that the Al Anon literature was well stocked and always available. He often volunteered to take calls in the New York Intergroup Office. He kept track of special talks and retreats and provided announcements to several groups on a regular basis.

He was an incredibly generous soul. Daily he listened and encouraged friends. When friends needed a place to stay he often offered his apartment until they could get back on their feet.

In March of 2016 a small mass was detected on his pancreas and he received the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. He was treated at New York University by Dr. Diedre Cohen, his oncologist, whom he trusted completely and loved. He so wanted to live that he always asked for aggressive treatment. He could not tolerate the first round of chemotherapy. He lost weight and his hair and became a beaming, bald, slim Buddha. He was very grateful for the weight loss!

Until June of this year he did well—the mass was localized and he was able to travel and continue his life, singing, climbing the steps to MCC, going to meetings and meeting many of his friends in his homes away from home, New York City's coffee shops.

In June he began to complain of stomach aches and his appetite decreased. Over the summer his symptoms worsened and on October 25th he was rushed to the NYU ER. Scans revealed the cancer had metastasized. He died peacefully the next day in NYU Hospice care, in a beautiful room overlooking the East River, surrounded by his friends.

Vernon always said that we are created in the image of God. That makes us perfect children of God. He believed God loves us and only wants our good.

He is survived and well remembered by his many friends, his sister Eloise, nieces, nephews, and his friend Juan.