



Robert Schurko

JUN 3, 1970 - FEB 20, 2026



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Dr. Robert Schurko (Rob), an internationally renowned research scientist, beloved teacher, and cherished son, brother, uncle, nephew, and friend, passed away peacefully on February 20, 2026, with family by his side, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. Born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Rob grew up in Garden City during the 1970s, enjoying a typical, fun childhood filled with friends, activities, sports, and delivering the Winnipeg Free Press on his paper route. As a young person, he possessed a combination of intellectual curiosity, creativity, and a keen sense of humour.

He was a gifted musician - able to play piano by ear and taught himself guitar - and could always offer a thoughtful perspective or amusing commentary on whatever topic was being discussed. Rob attended St. Paul's High School, where he played football and rugby. His academic journey began close to home at the University of Manitoba, where he completed both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Chemistry. He went on to earn his Ph.D. from Dalhousie University in Halifax, followed by postdoctoral work in the United States (including SUNY, the State University of New York, Stony Brook, and the University of Illinois Chicago). His early promise blossomed into a distinguished career that spanned continents and scientific communities. Rob spent nearly two decades as a Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Windsor, where he was known as an inspiring classroom presence and supportive mentor. An award-winning researcher, he focused on developing and applying advanced magnetic techniques to understand the structure of materials at the atomic level - work that helped scientists make sense of substances too complex for conventional methods. While the technical details were intricate, the impact was profound: his innovations helped push the boundaries of how scientists explore the molecular world, with applications ranging from pharmaceuticals to materials science.



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In 2019, Rob joined Florida State University in Tallahassee Florida and the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, widely known as the MagLab - one of the world's premier research facilities for high-field magnetic science. In 2020, he became Director of the NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance) and MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) User Program, leading a global community of scientists and advancing tools that allow researchers to peer deeper into matter than ever before. His work was recognized with many prestigious awards, including the Regitze Vold Prize for outstanding contributions to magnetic resonance, and his election to the Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine of Florida - honors that reflected decades of breakthroughs and leadership. Additionally, he was recently elected a fellow of the International Society of Magnetic Resonance (ISMAR) for his innovations in the field of solid-state NMR, and he will be posthumously recognized later in 2026 with the Eastern Analytical Symposium Award for Outstanding Achievements in Magnetic Resonance. Colleagues remember Rob not only for his intellect but for his generosity as a mentor and collaborator. Many former students and postdoctoral researchers credit him with shaping their careers, and he was admired for his clarity of thought, his encouragement of independent inquiry, and his readiness to support the successes of others. Despite the demands of his work, Rob maintained a devotion to guiding and teaching the next generation of scientists, often working side-by-side with students in the lab and in the classroom. As Rob once said, "That combination of technology, collaboration, and discovery is what keeps me excited every day." Friends and family will recall Rob's sharp wit, his wide reading, and his capacity to engage deeply on topics both serious and whimsical. He was incredibly well read and held a thoughtful (and often spirited) point of view on almost everything. Conversations with Rob were rarely superficial, whether discussing politics, literature, science, music, religion, or the latest restaurant discovery, he brought curiosity, conviction, and humor in equal measure. Rob was also deeply well-travelled. His academic career took him across North America, Europe, Asia and Australia, and he embraced every opportunity to explore the places he visited - not only the laboratories and lecture halls, but the culture, history, and of course the food and drink. On one trip to Europe for a scheduled



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seminar, Rob made a special detour to visit the small village in Ukraine where his grandmother was born. It did not take long before he located the 140-year-old house where she grew up. There he was warmly welcomed by relatives and neighbors, turning what began as a simple visit into a meaningful reconnection with family history.

Rob's passing leaves a profound void, but his legacy endures in the many lives he touched - personally and professionally. He is survived by his mother, Michelle Schurko, his father, Walter Schurko; his sister Catherine Schinkel, her husband Jonathan, and nephew Owen; his brother Andrew Schurko and his wife Teresa, and their children Jonas and Alina. He also leaves behind many close childhood friends who remained a cherished part of his life, even after many years of living away. Cremation has taken place and a celebration of Rob's life will take place in Winnipeg and will be announced at a later date.

Reflecting Rob's deep commitment to scientific discovery and mentorship, it was his wish to establish an endowment at the University of Manitoba. Those wishing to honour his memory may make a donation through the University's giving page (<https://give.umanitoba.ca/>) toward the Dr. Robert Schurko Memorial Graduate Scholarship. Donations may also be made to CancerCare Manitoba at <https://www.cancerfdn.mb.ca/in-memory/>. Rob's warmth, wit, and wisdom - his love of science, music, learning, and laughter - will long be remembered by all who knew him. Rest in Peace - Vichnaya Pamyat



Tribute Wall

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Hiyam Hamaed sent a virtual gift in honor of Robert.

February 25 at 8:46 PM



Hiyam Hamaed lit a candle in honor of Robert.

February 25 at 8:45 PM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Robert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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