

Obituary for David Bowen (Birmingham)

September 13, 1939 – August 4, 2022

David Ralph Bowen died at the age of 82 on August 4, 2022, surrounded by family at his home in Royal Oak, Michigan. Born in Brooklyn, New York, on September 13, 1939, he was the son of Lewis and Nancy Bowen. He is survived by his wife, Joyce Blades Bowen, children Peter and Amy, and five grandchildren. David was a loving husband, father, and grandfather (Gramps!) with many friends. He was always willing to share his boundless optimism and love of science.

He received his bachelor's degree in physics from Haverford College, followed by his PhD in high energy particle physics from the University of Pennsylvania in 1966. After postdoctoral positions at Cornell University and Northeastern University, he joined Wayne State University in 1975 as a Professor in the University Studies Weekend College Program (later the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies). One of the favorite classes he taught was Creativity, a course he personally developed. In 2007 he moved to the Department of Physics, where he deeply enjoyed teaching introductory physics until his retirement in 2013.

David was a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers) since childhood. Active in the Birmingham Friends Meeting for over 40 years, he was Clerk of the Meeting three times and held numerous other positions in the Meeting. David was also involved in politics his whole life, including working with the Friends Committee on National Legislation, helping with numerous presidential campaigns, advocating for world peace, and being elected as a delegate for the Oakland County Democratic County Convention in 2018.

While well-known for his deep love of Jimmy Buffet and the Florida Keys, he and Joyce also harbored a quiet, more cultured side, with season tickets to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. David enjoyed many hobbies, but he loved sailing and windsurfing most of all. This passion continued through five different sailboats and numerous windsurfers, with countless hours on Stony Creek Metropark and Lake Huron, teaching his family and many friends to sail.