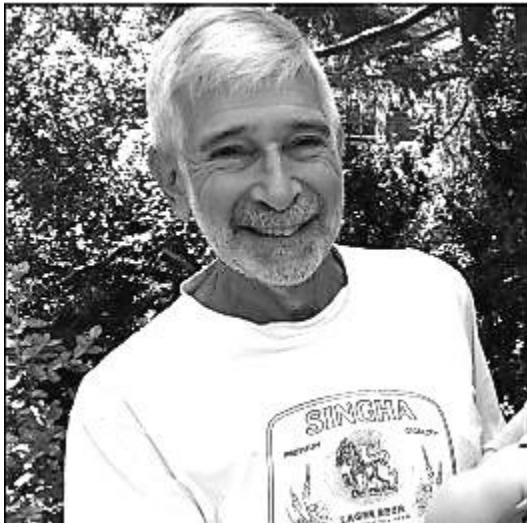


Michael Farbman

November 20, 1943 - April 16, 2023



Michael Farbman, retired USAID Senior Foreign Service Officer, died peacefully April 16, 2023, at home in Falls Church, VA. He is survived by his wife, Susan, three daughters and their families, including five grandchildren, and his sister, Bette Silverman. A memorial gathering will be planned for autumn. Condolences may be made at <https://novacremate.com/>

Mike was devoted to addressing inequality around the world, traveling to at least 74 countries and residing in ten over his long career. He loved nothing more than learning about and from different cultures. Wherever he visited, he enthusiastically sampled the local cuisine – the hotter the better. He was in every way an enthusiast – of food, people, travel, exercise, humor, music. He loved to get to know people and is remembered for supporting and encouraging his colleagues. He loved every aspect of food– exploring markets, gardening, cooking for family and company, and especially trying new foods. He was puzzled, though, that others might not equally enjoy spicy chilis! Mike was an avid runner and bicyclist. In DC’s coldest winters in the 1980s, he skated along the canal to his office. He ran 10K races on weekends, accumulating a collection of race t-shirts that will long outlive him. He ran a marathon at age 50, averaging 8.5-minute miles. He skied, played tennis and volleyball, and worked out daily. His children learned that Christmas presents would be opened AFTER Dad finished his run. When Mike liked something, he loved it. He once nearly drove his car onto a neighbor’s lawn because he was laughing so hard at the memory of a Far Side cartoon. Music was a large presence in his life, covering an extraordinary range of styles from doo wop to traditional Georgian songs. He loved to sing along with every word. Family was a treasure in his life. He adored his grandchildren. He and his sister remained best friends his whole life, and his children and extended family were a regular source of fun and new experiences. Numerous friends and colleagues became adopted family.

Mike was born in Newark, NJ on November 20, 1943, and grew up in Maplewood, NJ. He received his bachelor’s degree from Indiana University, and his Ph.D. in economics from Cornell University. He spent seven years as Lecturer in Applied

Economics at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. He served as a consultant to the ILO's World Employment Program in Geneva, Switzerland, doing field research in India. His teaching, research, and writing focused on the causes of income inequality in the US, the UK, and India. In 1977, Mike joined USAID's then-Technical Assistance Bureau as an economist, responsible for developing a portfolio of employment and enterprise development projects. During his seventeen years in this capacity in Washington, he helped secure for USAID a leading role among donors in designing assistance techniques that generate jobs and promote training, investment, and technology access for micro- and small-scale enterprises as a means of improving the well-being of those in poverty and stimulating economic growth. Mike's work as head of the PISCES project ("Program for Investment in the Small Capital Enterprise Sector") is credited as the "genesis" of USAID's microfinance assistance. The book he edited on the project led to application of the lessons learned.

In 1994, after serving as Director of the Asia/Private Enterprise Bureau's office that promoted employment policy analysis and enterprise development activities, Mike converted to USAID's Foreign Service. He served as Mission Director in Morocco and in Albania; as Regional Mission Director for the Caucasus; as USAID Chair and Professor of Economics at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces; and as Mission Director in Kosovo. He retired from USAID in 2008 and received the Administrator's Outstanding Career Achievement Award. After retirement, Mike worked on long-term and short-term contract assignments for USAID, including as PSC Senior Regional Coordinator at RDMA/Bangkok. He was active as a volunteer with the International Waldenström's Macroglobulinemia Foundation (IWMF) and was recognized with its Judith May Volunteer Award in 2021. The family requests that in lieu of sending flowers, contributions be made to the IWMF (<https://tinyurl.com/iwmfgive>) To plant a tree in memory of Michael Farbman, please visit our [Tribute Store](#).