

SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

Rebequa Murphy (1953–2008)



If you argued with your parents, would you storm off to tell a world leader about it? That's what Rebequa Murphy tried to do. When she was six, her family visited the Soviet Union (now Russia) and met its leader, Nikita Khrushchev. Immediately charmed, Mr. Khrushchev told Rebequa to come to him if she had any problems. Later, when she disagreed with her mother, she ran to tell Mr. Khrushchev! But he couldn't meet with her, so she and her mother worked it out. Rebequa's bold and fearless nature shone through in everything she did.

A World Citizen

Rebequa was born in Ethiopia in 1953. Her father was an ambassador for the Ethiopian emperor, so she grew up traveling between Ethiopia, India, and the Soviet Union. She met leaders around the globe. Though he wasn't a Bahá'í, her father was a friend of Hand of the Cause of God* Abu'l-Qásim Faizi and Universal House of Justice** member 'Alí Naḵjavání. Her father sometimes mentioned Shoghi Effendi, but she thought he was speaking of a fellow diplomat.

Throughout Rebequa's travels, her empathy grew as she saw severe hardships that people faced. She wanted to help. As a teenager, she and friends formed an orphanage for about 12 homeless kids in Ethiopia. She continued to focus on service all of her life.

Rebequa attended college in Alaska, where she befriended some Bahá'ís. She began attending their meetings. One night she learned that Shoghi Effendi,

whose name she had heard as a kid, was actually the Guardian and head of the Bahá'í Faith. She explored the Faith, and within a week, at age 18, she became a Bahá'í.

She was devoted to the Bahá'í Faith, traveling all over the world to share its teachings. She said, "We must never forget the purpose for which we live—to bring about the oneness of the human family."

Global Service

Rebequa earned her master's degree in International Development. From Brazil to South Africa to Japan, she consulted with governments to help them build peace and leadership.

Kids' spiritual education was vitally important to Rebequa. She and her husband, Robin, raised three sons, and she consistently supported other families and kids. She often met with youth, encouraging them to find paths of service. She said, "You live in a world that divides you . . . intentionally associate with people who are fundamentally different than you are . . . stand up for your convictions."

Rebequa served the Bahá'í community in many ways, including as a representative to the United Nations. Later she was a Continental Counselor, helping to guide Bahá'í communities with her blend of wisdom, devotion, and joyful laughter.

In 2008, Rebequa passed away at age 55. The Universal House of Justice praised her "fervor for teaching, her close and caring relationship with youth, her capacity for showing genuine love and affection . . . and her ability to enkindle in the hearts of the friends the desire to serve."