

Bios for MVFHR Board of Directors

Robert Meeropol

Robert Meeropol is the Executive Director of the Rosenberg Fund for Children. He is the younger son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who in 1953 were executed by the United States Government for “conspiring to steal the secret of the atomic bomb.”

Orphaned at age six, Robert was adopted by the family whose name he bears. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in Anthropology from the University of Michigan and graduated law school in 1985 and was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar.

Robert grew up believing that his parents had been framed and as a teenager harbored a great desire for revenge against those who were responsible for their deaths. He considered himself the family member of murder victims and was not opposed to the death penalty for his parents’ murderers. In fact, he was not opposed to the death penalty in general until while studying law in the 1980s he learned how many miscarriages of justice the U.S. legal system generates. Robert first opposed the death penalty because he felt it required perfection, a standard that humans could not achieve. His opposition is now grounded in his basic belief that the death penalty is a human rights abuse.

For thirty years Robert has worked as a progressive activist, author and speaker. In the 1970’s he and his brother Michael successfully sued the FBI and the CIA to force the release of 300,000 previously secret documents about their parents. In 1990, after leaving private practice, Robert founded the RFC to provide for the educational and emotional needs of both activist youth and the children of activist parents in the U.S. who have been harassed, injured, jailed, lost jobs or died as a result of their progressive activities. The fund defines “progressive activities” as actions taken to further the belief that “all people have equal worth; world peace is a necessity; people are more important than profits and that society must function within ecologically sustainable limits.” It has awarded grants totaling \$1.7 million to more than 200 recipients and has 10,000 supporters nationwide.

“At the age of 43 I finally figured out how to make something positive come out of my horrendous childhood. I learned how to transcend the destruction that was visited upon my family and transform it into something positive for the benefit of other families. The RFC became my revenge, but it was a constructive one,” he says.

On the 50th anniversary of his parents' executions St. Martin’s Press published Robert’s memoir, *An Execution in the Family*. In a letter they wrote to their sons before their execution, the Rosenbergs said they died “comforted in the sure knowledge that others would carry on after us.” Robert carries that trust forward.

Robert has joined the board of Murder Victims’ Families for Human Rights because it “represents a crystallization of my core identity and beliefs.”