



Phoebe Snowe

June 11, 1952 - February 19, 2025

Brian Rosenwald, aka Phoebe Snowe, 72; of Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood; co-owner of Taste Food & Wine, retired VP at Amtrak; collector of wine, china, and books; passed away February 19, 2025, peacefully at home in Chicago's Rogers Park.

Born in Evanston, raised in Glencoe, Brian graduated from New Trier High School before studying journalism at Fordham University in the Bronx.

Brian worked as a reservation and customer service agent at Amtrak and rose amongst the ranks to serve as General Manager of the Santa Fe line. The position took Brian from Washington, D.C. to Boston, to Chicago, to Detroit to Los Angeles. Brian then served as the GM of all western-bound trains and was tasked with refining the Coast Starlight Express (Seattle to LA). He oversaw the rebuilding of vintage cars and created an exclusive club for sleeper car occupants. Brian scheduled on-board wine tastings and entertainment and gave a controversial and characteristically visionary 100% service guarantee. It was all a monster hit. Brian was proud to be an excellent boss who believed in his employees. He retired as a Vice President at Amtrak in 2013.

Shortly thereafter, Brian moved to the Sherwin on the Lake (a lovely apartment complex in Rogers Park) and was finally able to live openly as

Phoebe Snowe, a dynamic and fashionable woman (in honor of a railroad model Brian met). Phoebe found great freedom and acceptance in Rogers Park, where there really is room for everybody. A longtime wine connoisseur, Phoebe embarked upon a new labor of love, becoming co-owner of Taste Food & Wine on Jarvis, where she conducted richly informative and entertaining tastings; no one who attended came away without greater knowledge of wine, and greater love.

Phoebe is survived by her dear friend and former spouse of 33 years, Susan Hinda Rosenwald (nee Kolson) of Evanston, IL; son Alex (Madeline) Rosenwald of Fairfax, VA and one daughter in Elmhurst, IL; two grandchildren (plus one on the way); and siblings Larry (Cynthia Schwan), Kent (Cecily), and Cynthia Rosenwald. She was preceded in death by her parents Alan Kenneth Rosenwald and Charlotte Heitlinger Rosenwald. She leaves behind many dear friends including her business partners Sandra Carter and Renee Labrana.

Phoebe has chosen for her body to be directly cremated and wishes for her cremated remains to be scattered near those of her late parents by the maple trees in New Harmony, Indiana.

A celebration of Phoebe and Brian's life is being held Saturday March 8, 3-6pm (eulogy service time TBA) at Taste Food & Wine, 1506 W Jarvis Ave., Chicago, IL 60626.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in her name to GenderCool: <https://gendercool.org/our-story/>

Arrangements by Inclusive Funeral Care, 773-370-2959 or www.InclusiveFuneralCare.com.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR 8. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Taste Food & Wine
1506 W. Jarvis Ave.
Chicago, IL 60626
<http://www.tastefoodnwine.com>

Eulogy service time TBA

Tribute Wall

CH

“ Instantly likeable, kindness, sincerity, and optimism on display with every word she spoke ... I miss you every day. Chase

Chase - October 19, 2025 at 12:23 AM

DM

“ I got to know Phoebe after I moved back to Chicago in 2013. I felt as if I had known her forever. We shared so many laughs that my stomach hurt wether at a friends house after deciding to clean out her kitchen or at Taste helping her make it a new and vibrant venue for all. I miss her every day. She was so kind and had a wonderful upbeat way of looking at her life and those of her friends. I will miss her but will cherish the years of friendship that we shared. God bless and keep her and her family.

Diane Batten Manning

Diane Manning - March 18, 2025 at 05:19 PM

KC

“ I had the opportunity to work under Pheobe's supervision twice in my career. Once as an OBS Service Chief and again as a ticket agent in Niles, MI. However, demands and logistics kept me from knowing her well. As the years passed, that changed a bit. Most notably, I was working as the night agent at Indianapolis when Phoebe came through to check on those Parlour Cars that were destined for the Coast Starlight. We had an opportunity to sit and discuss things a bit without the stress of working conditions. How I regret I didn't know to ask her about those early days she spent at Amtrak. Regardless of your passion in life, may you live it to its fullest as Phoebe did.

Kent Cooper - March 04, 2025 at 02:27 PM

JR

“ I had the extreme privilege of knowing and working for Brian while at Amtrak. Brian’s skill at customer service was pure genius and his Coast Starlight train with Parlour Car was simply a gem to behold. Every Parlour Car employee was trained in the art of wine tasting and customer service skills. His service design rivaled those of the finest cruise ships. Amtrak West President Gil Mallory and Vice President Richard Phelps all use Brian’s Coast Starlight as a marketing tool to state rail agencies to demonstrate the true service delivery capabilities of Amtrak. Most importantly Brian’s people skills were key in inspiring employees to take the high road when faced adversity. He was a true giant in the passenger rail industry. One of a kind that will be missed by everyone that he touched.

Jack Rich - March 03, 2025 at 02:06 PM



“ We only knew Brian before his transition to Phoebe as our cousin-in-law. He produced two beautiful children and a couple of lovely granddaughters. We remember him as being extremely intelligent and well-spoken. We often rode the Amtrak train from Boston to NYC and DC. We always thought of him as we ate our delicious food knowing that he had planned it all. His friends and family will miss him very much. May his memory be a blessing. Kathe & Dave Bernstein, Massachusetts

KE Bernstein - March 02, 2025 at 07:50 PM

PS

“ I knew Brian in grammar school and high school. I'm so very sorry I never knew Phoebe as an adult. Watching the podcast brings back memories of her character and spirit that transcend years, as well as gender labels. Pure and simple: A beautiful being. May her memory be a blessing.

Peter Switzer - February 25, 2025 at 06:35 PM

JW

“ Brian/Phoebe was my childhood friend in Glencoe, IL. We grew up together at Central School & New Trier East. To me, a person that was brilliant and I looked up to him, but we also laughed a lot together with my other childhood friend Elizabeth (Lizzie) Jackson. I was lucky to reunite at one of our past high school reunions and loved hearing about his work with trains. And surprised he was familiar with the town I now live in, Elko, Nevada. My only sad thought was I did not get to know the Phoebe. RIP Jane White Ward

Jane White Ward - February 24, 2025 at 11:02 AM

DM

“ Ill never forget the first time I met Phoebe. She walked into R Public House, I noticed her at the bar, she walked over to me, introduced herself and stated she was new to the area and asked if she was in good company there, was she able be be herself, fully and authentically.

I assured her she was and that began a fond friendship I enjoyed from that moment onward. She is one of those rare people that you not only know are a blessing in your life, but also in the lives of those she supported.

Right next door, she created that space as an extension of her passion for wine at Taste, to help countless others not only in the love of wine, but of thoughtful conversation, education, genuine friendship and of support for their personal journeys to become authentic in their own way, to their own self, be true.

That spirit, care and compassion for others was matched by her passion for her work, first at Amtrak, which we continue to learn was highly influential and commendable and rewarding in its own right and then in the full life she created for herself here in Rogers Park. She left us far too early. May her memory truly be a blessing.

David Murphy - February 23, 2025 at 08:08 PM

DR

“ Brian and I used to go wine tasting every Friday I'd stay at his house his family even called the room I stayed in Dave's room. We travel together, I remember one time we had so much wine in first class on a plane that we couldn't have another sip. On Amtrak he was a true visionary creating the Coast Starlight Pacific Parlor Car. Then as Phoebe I got a chance to visit her wine store and have dinner with her. I will have a depth charge in your honor. A great person.

Dave Redding - February 23, 2025 at 07:46 PM

DP

“ Brian was my Supervisor at the Michigan Central Depot in Detroit. Great boss and wonderful human being. God rest his soul. Condolences to her family.

Daniel Raymond Peters - February 23, 2025 at 06:51 PM

SH

“ A wonderful soul. 🌿 — Shelby

Shelby - February 21, 2025 at 12:10 AM

CB

A great supervisor and man. I'm so thankful I had the opportunity to know him both professionally and when he retired. A kind and gentle soul has earned her wings. Rest in peace 🙏

Charlene Bartlett - February 21, 2025 at 08:57 AM

MA

Phoebe was one of the best wine tasters I have ever known Her ability to taste wine was in the 2% of wine people. I always asked her advise on what to buy even with a small budget.

Wonderful sense of living and being a caring person for everyone. She dressed beautifully; she understood how to live and what was the real quality in life. I will really miss her....

martha ash - February 21, 2025 at 05:26 PM

MF

“ *Phoebe was such a warm and wonderful member of our community of Rogers Park. I so enjoyed discussing wine and life with her at Taste. I always left with a smile and gratitude for experiencing her incredible knowledge and service. Farewell dear Phoebe.*

Mary Friedlieb - February 20, 2025 at 11:35 PM

TB

I knew Phoebe only in passing and prior to her transition. Met her on the Coast Starlight many years and because her refining of the customer service and amenities n that train, I have ridden it frequently ever since and introduced others to its pleasures. Having ridden #14 just a few weeks ago, I can report, that despite the heartless and unwise downgrading of what Phoebe achieved, the pride in and spirit of service remains with the staff. It is still Amtrak's premier offering in the way of prideful customer service. Phoebe, be assured that your good spirit rides the the Starlight everyday!

Thomas Beaumont - March 19, 2025 at 01:56 PM