



# Harry R. Freeman-Jones

JUN 24, 1946 - FEB 18, 2026



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# Harry R. Freeman-Jones

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**O**n February 18 of this year Harry Freeman-Jones succumbed to a 7-year ordeal with the disease of dementia at the age of 79. He received comfort care in his last hours at Friends of Dorothy House.

Harry was a self-employed artist and a LGBTQ+ activist. He was born on June 24, 1946, in the Adirondacks and lived as a child of nature in a small community called Coreys. Harry attended Saranac Lake High School, graduated from Syracuse University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, and then attended Boston University School of Theology inspired by the assassinations of MLK and RFK but left before completing his program.

Harry was an out spokesperson for the LGBTQ community throughout the 70s and 80s and 90s. He helped found and participated in several different organizations among which the Gay Freedom League, the Gay and Lesbian Conference, and the Gay Lesbian Alliance of Syracuse. He helped establish Gay Pride Day celebrations and parades in Syracuse and a Fair Practices Law which protected gay citizens from discrimination and was a pioneer for the inclusion of bisexual and transgendered individuals in gay and lesbian causes.

Harry was also an accomplished painter, sculptor, and photographer. Among his endeavors are the mural "Sanctus" in the Dean's office complex at Hendricks Chapel on the SU campus, the poster for the "Stonewall 25th anniversary" which appeared in a "Friends" episode on the refrigerator of Ross' ex-wife, and a slide show of various Pride Parades in New York City and Syracuse.

Being a starving artist, Harry held many other jobs to support his art and activism. He worked for Earl Colvin at the Printer's Devil, for Syracuse Cultural Workers, and with Donna Kaplan at the Framing Studio. He also taught an honors course at Syracuse University on LGBTQ culture and politics for several semesters. But he was most proud of his work with medical students as a standardized patient for programs at University Hospital, LeMoyne College and Clarkson University.



## Obituary

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Harry is survived by his beloved and devoted domestic partners Henry Yokel (47 years) and Ronald Mercer (30 years), a sister Jean Freeman, a niece Joanne Peters and nephews Gary Odell, Corey Freeman, and Jeremy Freeman and several great nieces and nephews, among whom are Jessica Sue (Peters) Phoenix and Eric Peters with whom Uncle Harry attended many of their birthdays and graduations. He was predeceased by his parents Martha (Durgan) Freeman and Ross Freeman, a brother Claude Freeman and husband Bob Jones who he married in 1973 in one of the first gay marriages to take place. Harry was also a devoted parent to several cats. He is survived by his cherished long hair calico, Bella, and predeceased by Puck, Cornelia, Merman, Magnificat, Purrsey, Catherine, and Typha.

There will be a celebration of his life at Plymouth Congregational Church in Syracuse on March 7 at 12 noon followed by a light luncheon.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Harry's memory may be made to Friends of Dorothy House 212 Wayne St. Syracuse, NY 13203 or SAGE-Upstate 431 E. Fayette St. Syracuse, NY 13203.




# Events


**Harry R. Freeman-Jones**

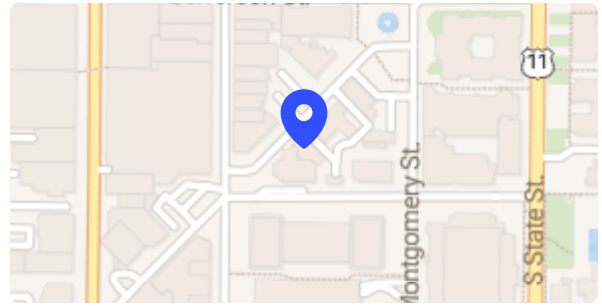
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## Celebration of Life

 **Saturday**, March 7, 2026

 12:00 PM ET

 **Plymouth Congregational Church**  
232 E Onondaga Street, Syracuse NY 13202





## Tribute Wall

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**Austin Paulnack** posted:

Harry Freeman-Jones was brilliant, creative, and well versed in local politics. We often chatted, always in a fast walk, at SU, Marshall St and Westcott in the 70s, 80s, 90s, when I was Community Organizer at Grace Episcopal Church. His Valentine Day decorations at Grace Church were masterpieces of creativity. I always benefited from his ideas and suggestions. Dominus Vobiscum, Harry.

March 1 at 8:55 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Harry by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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