



Shirley Hellman

October 28, 1929 - May 30, 2013

Shirley Hellman died peacefully at Kansas City Hospice House on May 30, 2013. A memorial service will be held at 10:30am on Monday, June 3rd at Congregation Beth Torah, 6100 W. 127th Street, Overland Park, KS.

She was preceded in death by her husband, "Baker Ben" Hellman, just last year after 63 years of marriage.

She is survived by her daughter, Marcia (Chuck) Perkins, of Overland Park, KS and her beloved grandchildren, Stephanie (Amanda) of Springfield, MO and Jeffrey Perkins of Houston, TX. Others she would consider are friends and family, new and old, and the many care assistants at The Atriums over the past 7 years who became family and friends.

Shirley was born October 28, 1929 at St. Joseph Hospital in KCMO, the only child of Hyman and Mary Lansky.

She was a lifelong area resident, attending Wyandotte High School and just recently reconnecting with classmates at a 65th high school reunion. While at Wyandotte, she loved doing background clerical work and facilitating for many of the extra-curricular clubs and activities. Ed Asner recently teased her about helping launch his life-long career from their shared radio show at Wyandotte High.

She spent her youth alongside her parents at Hyman's Bakery at 5th & Minnesota in KCK. A blind date on New Year's Eve led to a courtship and Thanksgiving wedding to Ben Hellman, an Army veteran and journalism graduate from MU. Despite Shirley's warnings of long hours and hard labor, Ben joined the family business, working at Hyman's Bakery until the area was demolished for urban renewal. By then, daughter Marcia was too old to nap on stacks of flour sacks so Shirley immersed herself in Camp Fire Girls, room mother, PTA president and taking on tasks of fighting social injustice and discrimination.

Shirley and Ben had a wonderful marriage. They were quirky and silly and often teased but fit each other perfectly. Shirley organized, and Ben did. They baked and generously donated to Beth Torah (where they were founding members) as well as to many of the arts they enjoyed. If you were a fan of the arts, you knew Shirley. Often in matching t-shirts, she and Ben soaked in the pleasures of Missouri Rep, Lyric Opera, KC Ballet, Unicorn, Kansas City Symphony, Quality Hill, Starlight, Theater in the Park, and more. Shirley and

her granddaughter, Stephanie, are known for sharing 19 years of the Nutcracker Ballet, often joking that they don't have pictures of Stephanie with every year's Sugar Plum Fairy only because Stephanie was eventually taller and older than the Fairy ballerina, so she didn't have to do that part anymore.

Becoming a grandma was the most joyous part of Shirley's life. She adored having the time to share museums and parks and picnics and theater with Stephanie and Jeffrey. She was someone they could talk with about anything, anytime, without fear of lecture, judgment, anger, or a mandatory solution...just a loving ear.

Lastly, Shirley was resilient. She faced challenges with pragmatic determination. She often said, "It is what it is" or "We'll just do the best we can with what we've got." A lesson for us all. A life well lived.

Comments



“ Sincere condolences on the loss of your dear Mother. We know only too well about the loss of a 'Mom' this year.... May her memory be for a blessing to you and your family always.

Barb and Steve Stras - June 03, 2013 at 07:13 PM



“ This was a very sweet lady, and a great person to visit with and talk to. I ger to visit many people as a volunteer for Jewish Family Services, and Shirley was always gracious and informative to converse with. She and Ben at the Atrium were just a wonderful couple. May she find peace with Ben at her side and may we say Shalom.

Herb Simon - June 02, 2013 at 01:18 PM



“ We have received notification about Shirley's death. Many, many prayers to you and your family. We will be in touch later.

Nancy Clark/Phyllis Todd - June 01, 2013 at 02:07 PM



“ Dear Marcia, so very sorry to read of your Mother's passing. I remember her fondly from the days at Dorothy Shepherd's Dance school. I think in those days, though, you were known as Marcy, as was my younger sister. I recall your Mother being a very kind person & our family wishes you the peace that happy memories can bring.

David & Gayle (Cohen) Shechter - May 31, 2013 at 10:46 PM



“ Marcia and Chuck...my sincere condolences,

Michael Berlau - May 31, 2013 at 09:01 PM



“ To Shirley's family.

No words can take away the pain that is felt over the loss of Shirley, but in time may your sadness be comforted by your cherished memories and the warmth of family and friends. May you find solace in the promise of the resurrection to Gan Eden. 1 Kings 8:56; Isaiah 32:18. May the peace of God be with you. My deepest condolences.

S. Elaine - May 31, 2013 at 06:58 PM