

Ethel Pesin Eulogy by her children Sam and Judy

Our mother was an amazing person, a beautiful soul. She cared deeply about family and friends and about a better world.

Her wisdom, goodness, and great love have inspired and strengthened us throughout our lives. Her dedication to the family and her friends, and her exuberant embrace of life made her a special mother, relative, friend and person.

She was our loving and beloved mother, mother in law of Lou, grandmother of Dara and Daniel and great grandmother of Joseph.

She was a bright ray of sunshine in our lives and her memory will continue to light our path.

We celebrate and honor her wonderful life and her heart of gold.

She was down to earth, humble, and compassionate. She was full of encouragement, praise and support for others.

She was always thinking about the feelings of others and her warm and open heart went out to family and friends dealing with any difficult situation.

She had a powerful and dynamic spirit, living each day with a special combination of strength and kindness. She was always on the go with unlimited energy. In 2005, she said, "I'll be 90 and I'm raring to go".

Ethel was an independent, hard-working and determined person.

One card playing bridge friend called her "the little general" and those who knew our mother would agree with that description.

She was a hard-working businesswoman as co-owner of the locally well-known Pesin's Children's Shop, a dedicated Liberty Park advocate, and of course, a smart shopper and great bridge player. She drove to the suburbs to play bridge until she was 92

and played weekly in NY until she was 95. Her longevity can be attributed in part to her using the treadmill until she was 96, and eating dark chocolate daily.

Her motto was “how can I help?” She would say “I’m very happy to do anything I can to help”. That is her essence and she helped us in countless ways. She once said that we must be grateful for what we have, and for what we can do, and to always try to help people.

Mom graduated Syracuse University in 1935 with a public school music teaching degree and taught briefly at Snyder and Lincoln high schools. She was an excellent private piano teacher for many years. She still played Chopin and Mozart beautifully until her mid-90’s.

Her heart, her smile and her laughter was filled with the music of love.

She was an activist like her father and husband. She met our father Morris at a meeting to express opposition to the Franco Fascists in the Spanish Civil War. They married in 1938 and they shared a sense of activism and concern for justice and peace throughout their lives. Our mother was on the Hudson County Citizens Committee working with many leaders including Ted Conrad, Audrey Zapp, her dear friend Dr. Ethel Lawner, my father and Owen Grundy.

She contributed mightily to the evolution of Liberty Park.

The Friends of Liberty State Park’s award to her at our first luncheon in 2006, read

The Liberty State Park Lifetime Advocacy Award

“In recognition of your unswerving dedication to Liberty State Park for half a century.

As Morris Pesin's wife, and in your own right as a LSP Public Advisory Commissioner, a Friends of LSP Trustee, and an enthusiastic advocate and volunteer, you are a tremendous inspiration to all who know you”.

In her later years, her volunteer specialty was stamping and labeling tens of thousands of envelopes for the Friends' mailings.

Virtually all new people who came into her life heard her tell about my father's vision of the park and his canoe trip to launch the campaign to establish our urban waterfront state park. Our mother took great joy in the Jersey City Summerfest concerts at the park.

My father once stated that he couldn't have accomplished what he did without my mother's patience, encouragement and running the store during his years of City Council and park involvement. In 1986, my father stated, "there have been two women who have shaped and shared my life. One stands in the harbor and the other is my wife Ethel.

The Lady in the harbor needs restoration while my wife has kept herself in pretty good condition."

Our mother shared the joys of Liberty Park and also the stress and speaking out during the commercialization battles. She loved the park and especially the fact that people of all races and cultural backgrounds enjoyed this free and green park behind Lady Liberty. In talking about Liberty State Park, our mother said that my father started a good thing, and that we as park advocates have to stay with protecting it, that "**we have to do it** or we're out of luck!"

In the last 2 years, even with her weakened mind, she continued to give motherly advice such as "we have to do the best we can. Don't be timid or you won't get anywhere. Be careful. Don't worry. You just do - whatever you have to do." And almost daily, telling Sam to "comb his hair because it's looks messy".

At the time of the last Jewish New Year, our mother said "I want everybody to help everybody". Let's pray that the world becomes the loving and peaceful world that she and we all pray and work for.

We must always remember our gratitude to those who came before us, and our responsibility to those who come after us. Ethel and Morris did so. Their ancestors would be proud of them, and they have left us a powerful example of love and community service for us all to try our best to live up to.