

Dorothy Feldman Eulogy

By Heather McLoud

There are many things Dorothy Feldman will be remembered for. Grandma was a skilled artist, and a lover of animals, but especially horses. Some of my favorite memories of her are the look on her face when she talked about her Arabians. Also, she was terribly stubborn and resolute in her opinions.

My grandmother lived 100 years, I'm sure in part due to that stubbornness. There is no way to adequately express the depth and meaning of a life that long, but I think the true measure of a life is how it affected everyone else. Grandma influenced me in so many ways. During my childhood, I witnessed her joy and awe when lighting Shabbat candles. I saw the satisfaction she took in feeding us when we came to visit. I remember seders painstakingly prepared and served.

The joy Dorothy took in Jewish ritual was complemented by a deep commitment to our ethical tradition. This is what truly marked her life as a Jew in relationship to the Divine. Grandma's delight in and commitment to her Jewish faith inspired me to follow in her footsteps. There are so many memories...the time she asked for my forgiveness during the Days of Awe for a way she had slighted me. The Judaica books she gifted. Her company at services.

Beyond these memories, it is best to describe Dorothy in relationship to others. She had a difficult childhood with a demanding mother, and the pain and resentment hounded her for many years. But as her mother aged and developed dementia, Dorothy chose to be a loving, devoted caregiver all the way until her mother's death at 103. This was an ethical choice, and an effort of will, on her part.

Another lesson she taught me: After her mother's death, when grandma was in her 80's, she realized that bitterness was poisoning her. She went to therapy, worked hard, and I never heard her speak a harsh

word about her mother again. Change is possible, is demanded, as long as we live.

Dorothy loved her children Mark and Miriam to distraction. She cared for Mark through his long struggle with chronic illness and buried him with grief and honor. As grandma succumbed to dementia, the thing she held onto the longest was her ability to recognize her daughter Miriam. She would greet her with a huge smile. “Oh Miriam, how did you get here?” Every visit through the week would be marked with the same delight and love.

She also had a rich, passionate marriage. Her devotion to her beloved husband Joe endured for a lifetime. As happens in the best marriages, Joe and Dorothy developed mutual goals based on their convictions. One of their goals, particularly, has served to shape their descendants: their belief that education is paramount. Throughout their lives, they prioritized this, a choice which continues to bless us all. Dorothy was an integral part of the web of relationships in the Jewish community. She served the community and its members to the best of her ability and had many rich friendships through Mount Sinai. As well, after Joe’s death, she donated and curated a Judaica library at the synagogue.

Dorothy left no ethical will for us except for the example of her life: love of God, faithfulness, generosity, the importance of learning, and a devotion to being the best person she could be. May we all honor her through emulation.

I could go on and on. I want to go on and on. The effect of my grandmother will resonate through many lives for many years and I grieve her death.