



Rachel L. Cassidy

March 10, 2019

The world grew a little dimmer on March 10, 2019, when Rachel Cassidy died following a swift decline due to advanced kidney failure. Her beloved husband and daughter were by her side, and she passed peacefully.

Rachel Cassidy was born Rachel Miriam Liphshitz (later changed to Lewis) in Brooklyn, NY, on September 9, 1937, to parents Morris and Grace, where an older sister, Surelle awaited her. The family moved to Richmond, VA, when Rachel was 8 years old, and she remained "a Yankee in the South" until she moved back north to Poughkeepsie, NY, in 1960, when her first husband, Sidney Friedenber, accepted a computer programming job with IBM.

Being Jewish in Virginia in the 1940s was difficult, and that experience likely influenced Rachel's own liberal approach to life - she welcomed diversity among friends, valued people for who they are and not what they look like or who they love, and she believed deeply in doing the right thing, exercising your right to vote, and loving those you love in the most all-encompassing way.

As a young married woman (just 19 years old), she desperately wanted children, but the process did not come naturally for her, and she had surgery in 1964 in order to become pregnant. She was overjoyed when she delivered Miriam Simma ("Mimi"), in May 1965. Despite her doctor's directive not to have another child for a few years, 17 months later, Naomi Pina ("Nami") arrived on the scene. The two sisters were unusually close, and they brought indescribable happiness to Rachel; she loved being a mom. However, in 1971, when Nami was only four years old, tragedy struck, and Nami died from complications of a strep infection which led to a brain abscess. Her marriage didn't survive the grief.

After several years of forging life alone with her young daughter, Rachel was introduced to an intelligent, funny, generous newly-retired colonel from the Army, Joe Cassidy, and he and Rachel married in January 1978. Joe "rescued" Rachel and Mimi by bringing them laughter, love, family life, and an appreciation for learning, travel and the gift of gab. The two were married 41 years, and together they were a unified team, always together, completing each other, and serving as a role model couple for everyone they met.

Rachel loved to read, write and participate in community theater, the primary recreation in Rachel's life for more than 50 years. She fell in love with being on stage in the early

1960's when she became deeply involved with the County Players in Wappingers Falls, NY. Her contributions there are legendary, as she not only acted (brilliantly), but also stage managed and directed numerous productions throughout the four decades she was involved. Although her day job as a legal secretary at a law firm paid the bills for 20 years, she loved her side-gig as a freelance journalist. She worked as a theater critic for the Poughkeepsie Journal throughout the 1980s and '90s. She was an excellent writer, and this medium allowed her to combine her passion for theater and writing all in one.

Despite having strong ties to the Poughkeepsie community, Rachel and Joe moved west to Fort Collins, Colorado, to live closer to Mimi and her family in 2005. Rachel loved being closer to her beloved grandchildren, Elaina Jae and Adam Robert; they were the heart of her universe. She happily attended all of her grandchildren's extracurricular activities - not only for Elaina and Adam, but also for her "bonus grandchildren," Megan and Trent Wahlfeldt following Mimi's marriage to Stephen Wahlfeldt in 2001 (she called him the best son-in-law ever). Rachel's heart expanded yet again to include another grandson when Elaina married Tray Renfro just this past September; it gave Rachel such joy to be part of Elaina's wedding.

Rachel and Joe developed strong community ties in Fort Collins primarily through Temple Or Hadash, Bas Bleu Theatre Company, the S.O.A.P. Troup at the Fort Collins Senior Center, and the Democratic Party, supporting various liberal politicians over the years. Rachel believed in the legacy of family and love, and she faced her death bravely, on her own terms, having lived her life with no regrets. She was expressively grateful to the staff and nurses at the Good Samaritan Society Fort Collins Village and Pathways Hospice who all provided exceptional care to her in her final weeks. She will be missed everyday by those who love her, but may they feel comfort knowing that she felt strongly that she would be resting peacefully with her precious daughter Nami in that unknown place that welcomes us all eventually.

Rachel was laid to rest in a graveside service performed by Rabbi Hillel Katzir on Tuesday, March 12, at Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins, aided by Chris Goes of Goes Funeral Care & Crematory. In lieu of flowers, please consider donations in Rachel's name to the Torah Fundraising project at Temple Or Hadash or to the Staff Assistance Fund at the Good Samaritan Society Fort Collins Village.

Comments



“ Joe and Mimi my heart aches for you. I will always be grateful for Rachel's encouragement and support of my initial faltering steps with County Players and her belief that I had something special to offer. She meant the world to me and I feel blessed to have known her. I will keep your family in prayer.

Paulette Sibert (Moore) - March 26, 2019 at 07:16 PM



“ My condolences to Rachel's Family on your loss. Joe and Rachel had a great love. I have fond memory of Rachel driving Joe and I around to the VFW and American Legion halls with a flyer for a Veterans For Peace event. Lost a brother to cancer this past November and empathize with your grieving. peace and understanding, - Paul Gessler

Paul Gessler - March 21, 2019 at 12:15 AM



“ Oh, Joe and Miriam, I'm so sorry to read about the death of the Mighty Rach. You guys were a big part of my life when you were in Poughkeepsie and we all did theater. I'm holding you in my heart. Susan Deane-Miller

Susan Deane-Miller - March 18, 2019 at 07:51 AM



“ Sorry to hear about Rachel. She was a special lady! I will always remember her and Joe. When they would become separated from the other while shopping I would hear one whistle for the other. Always knew when they were in the store.



Schanna Preuit - March 17, 2019 at 10:28 PM



“ Joe and family - please know our sorrow for your loss and know that you are in our thought and prayers . You were such wonderful roll models and neighbors. With deepest sympathy
Jeanne & jack gensch

jack & jeanne gensch - March 20, 2019 at 02:32 PM



“ May the love and dedication that Rachel had in her life continue to thrive in all of you!

Kirsten Hartman - March 17, 2019 at 02:22 PM



“ 6 files added to the album Memories Album



Mimi Wahlfeldt - March 17, 2019 at 10:23 AM



“ So sorry to hear about the passing of “Rakk,” our beloved friend and neighbor for many years. love to Joe. Andy and Janice Endsley

Andy and Janice Endsley - March 17, 2019 at 08:02 AM



“ Joe & Mimi,

We are both so sorry to hear of your loss. We always enjoyed our days with all of you at County Players.

With sympathy,
Robin and Patty Moore

Patty Moore - March 17, 2019 at 04:11 PM