

MIDGE KRUGER KRA 1956 - 2013



Midge and her smile are truly missed.

Bessie Kra

Kind-Hearted Midge

When I think of my daughter-in-law, Midge, the first thought that comes to my mind is her generosity. Over the years, I personally witnessed numerous times when she gave her heart to others, especially to family.

Midge was a wonderful mother and wife. She, together with David, made sure that their children had a good foundation and education to enable them to live a truly observant life. David and Midge imparted to their children a love of observing our traditions and Zionism. Today, all three of their children live in Israel and continue our heritage.

Midge's devotion to family extended well beyond her immediate family. Years ago, when she was well, she and David would host an annual Kra-Shragowitz family barbeque on a Sunday in the summer. The children would play games and the adults would have a chance to converse. There was great food and happy memories formed at these barbeques. I am thankful to Midge for providing us with this opportunity to keep the extended family close.

Midge even "adopted" members of the community and treated them like they were family. For these people, she and David had an open house and open hearts where people knew the warmth of family and friends. I believe that these community members were attracted to Midge's sweet and sympathetic personality.

My husband, Rabbi M. Aaron Kra z"l, and I experienced Midge's kindness firsthand. For example, when we moved to West Orange, she was instrumental in finding us a home that suited our needs. She, together with Mady, picked out a house for us on Curtis Avenue so that we could move close to our family in West Orange, live near the shul, and have my mother with us in her declining years. For us, it was a great decision to leave Boston and move to West Orange. Midge was instrumental in helping us achieve this big step.

I am especially grateful to Midge for the attention that she provided my mother, Bubbe Hinda Shragowitz a"h. To this day, I remember how wonderfully Midge treated my mother, especially after we moved to West Orange. Midge showed my mother the utmost affection and consideration. She was one of the people who made my mother feel tremendous love during her final years.

In recent years, I saw Midge caring for her parents in a way that epitomizes kibbud av va'eim. As soon as she discovered her father's deteriorating health condition, her

home became their home. No matter how ill or incapacitated Midge was, she made sure that her parents' needs were provided for on both a physical and emotional level. In fact, Midge's mother was in her apartment in Israel when Midge passed away. It is especially admirable that Midge brought her mother to Israel with her so that Midge could continue to care for her and so that her mother could enjoy Midge's children and grandchildren.

Even over the past number of years, when Midge wasn't feeling well, she tried to be available and helpful to me. She always managed to speak to me four to five times per week on the phone. Through these conversations, we were able to maintain a close relationship and I was able to be informed about her day-to-day life. There was a very strong bond of love between us. It's no surprise that she was one of the people who made sure to be present when I discovered that my husband passed away and, despite her deteriorating health, Midge even went to Boston for my husband's burial.

I loved Midge and I am saddened that she passed away at such a young age. I will truly miss her and her kind ways. I am confident that her legacy of generosity will continue on with David, her children, and her grandchildren.



Mady and Ethan Kra

Our Beloved Sister-in-Law

מרים ליבא

The day we lost Midge, we lost our best friend and a wonderful sister-in-law who acted like a sister to us. Mere words cannot capture how much we loved and treasured her.

Midge's Hebrew name, מרים ליבא, captured the essence of her wonderful personality traits. When בני ישראל traveled in the desert, their source of water was in the merit of Miriam, מרים. Midge too was a wellspring that sustained many people in her life.

On countless occasions over the past 38 years, our family partook of Midge's well of caring and kindness. As young newlyweds with no cooking experience, we received excellent recipes and cooking instructions from Midge. To this day, our go-to recipes for meatloaf, ratatouille and marble brownies are Midge's. In May of 1979, Midge, together with our cousin Marion Jacobson, did a marvelous job catering Yossi's bris right in our home.

Our children were very fortunate to grow up in West Orange with Aunt Midge and Uncle David and cousins Abby, Yoni and Dani. When Yossi was only eleven months old, we did not hesitate to leave him in the care of Midge and David and fly off to California for a convention. Yossi was fed and cuddled right along baby Abby. Midge's only concern was that "Yosselberry Dumpling," her nickname for Yossi, would take his first steps while we were away.

When Rachel was a baby, for a full school year, Midge watched her and adorable little Yoni, in their warm, loving home on Hoover Avenue. This afforded Mady the opportunity to teach. Midge treated Rachel like a daughter, and our appreciation knew no bounds.

About twenty years later, for bride-to-be Rachel, Midge and Abby threw a lovely shower in their Cleveland Terrace home, that was, as always, warm and loving.

Our son Josh also benefited from spending time with Aunt Midge and Uncle David. They would open up their home to him when we went on vacation, and they understood his wacky sense of humor. Midge just laughed when Abby called Mady "Aunt Beautiful", and in return, Josh called her "Aunt Ugly."

Over the years, our families shared beautiful Shabbos, Chanukah, Purim and Yom Tov feasts and some remarkable Pesach sederim. Of course, with so many Kra family members hailing from New England, Thanksgiving was an important holiday that was celebrated with great "relish" at Midge and David's home.

The love that Midge showed her family and friends was embodied by her middle named Liba, ליבא. She loved boundlessly, and was beloved in return. From the moment David introduced us to Midge in 1975 on Simchat Torah in Manhattan, we felt connected. How could we not love Midge? She was sweet, bright, funny and a lot of fun! Through one dark period in our lives, Midge kept our spirits up by telling every dumb-blonde joke she could find on the Internet. We cried and laughed our way through the vicissitudes of life, and it was Midge's positive attitude that kept us afloat.

Midge's funeral was held on the Yahrzeit of רחל אמינו, Rachel our Matriarch, on the 11th day of Mar-Cheshvan:

רַחֵל מְבַכָּה עַל-בְּנֵיהָ

Rachel is weeping over her children

We are crying along with רחל אמינו. Midge's loss leaves an aching hole in our hearts and in the hearts of all whom she loved and nurtured. We shall miss her always.



Josh and Adeena Kra

As I sit thinking back on my memories of Aunt Midge and I keep coming back to the same thought - how wonderfully nice and understanding she always was. You see, most of my memories come from growing up together with my cousins from "up the hill" where we would trek on Shabbosim and Yomim Tovim to spend time together. As a child I was known to be quite a picky eater. I often would refuse my mother's various requests to eat regular Shabbos foods such as chicken and cholent. However, my Aunt Midge in her amazing sweetness would come over to me and whisper that in *her* house, I could eat what I want. Multiple times she offered to make me a peanut butter and jelly sandwich instead of other Shabbos foods (no, I didn't actually take her up on her offer). I don't know how many other aunts have offered their nephews PBJ sandwiches for Shabbos dinner, but that was my Aunt Midge - a sweet, kindhearted individual who would do anything she could to make her nephew more comfortable. In addition, these attributes were not merely limited to her family. I recall how during the above mentioned visits the door to the home was always open with visitors coming and going with the sense that everyone felt as if they were at home. It was a *zechus* to see my aunt "in action" as a true *baalas chesed*.



Yossi Kra

My Aunt Midge always told me she considered me as one of her children. She was so caring and loving.

Given the time of year, I can't help but remember the family meals and barbeques that my aunt hosted, including lavish Thanksgiving dinners. The food was truly delicious, but more special was the atmosphere. Our families spent quality time together and everyone just seemed happy. Thanksgiving will never be the same to me without my Aunt Midge.

My aunt had a genuine interest in the lives of all her extended family. Geographic distance was not a barrier to maintaining meaningful relationships. When it came to immediate family, we all know my aunt's anticipation for her visits to Israel to spend time with her children and grandchildren.

My aunt was very generous. For one of many examples, she didn't hesitate to let Yoni and me borrow a van for an extended trip to West Virginia.

On a lighter note, my aunt used to insist on being called an aunt with an emphasis on the "u" and found the pronunciation of "ant" to be amusing. One July 4th when I young, she walked by our blanket as we were waiting for fireworks at night. My father was talking to others away from our spot. We decided I would tell my father that there was an "ant" on our blanket. We always got a chuckle out of the response, something along the lines of "just get rid of it."

Aunt Midge, we love you and miss you.



Rachel Kra Schaum

My Kind-Hearted Aunt Midge

As I write this, I struggle to find the words that I can use to capture the memory of a person who is more than a collection of stories, but a person whose memory is a warm emotion that lies deep within my soul. What can I write to depict my relationship with Aunt Midge, who was a pillar of love and kindness my entire life? Aunt Midge was one of the "snuggliest" people that I knew. This impression came from more than her frequent confinement to bed; it was a feeling that she gave me from repeatedly telling me, "Rachel, I love you so much. I don't think that I could love you any more than I do." She would follow this with a heartfelt smile to express her love.

The tenderness and affection that Aunt Midge provided me started when she cared for me when I was an infant, so that my mother could go to work part-time. While I obviously have no memory of this, I can testify that I have subsequently witnessed a special gift that Aunt Midge had with infants. You could hand her virtually any infant and within minutes, the baby would be completely relaxed. She had a soothing energy, a beautiful voice, and a gentle touch that allowed babies to just "melt" in her arms.

Growing up with the "other" Kras in the neighborhood meant that we would often see each other. I remember hearing my aunt magnificently singing along with the chazzan each Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, eating her beautiful meals when we went to their home the first night of each Sukkot, and devouring her amazing stuffing on Thanksgiving. In fact, as a child, I remember that the grass was always greener at the "other" Kras. They had better breakfast cereals, snacks, TV, and they had Nintendo long before we did! As a child, I remember that one summer they even had a hammock in their backyard. As you can imagine, I loved going to my Aunt Midge and Uncle David's house!

I remember that when my parents went on vacation, they would sometimes send us to my Aunt Midge and Uncle David's home. My Aunt Midge would try hard to accommodate us to make us feel as comfortable as possible. This included catering to my brother Josh's picky eating and my latest diet. While I didn't appreciate it at the time, I can only imagine the difficulty of managing an extra three, demanding, kids.

In recent years, Aunt Midge always welcomed me when I visited her. She would warmly greet me, even as she became sicker and had limited energy to expend each day. (She had a way of explaining her limited energy by comparing it to spoons.) I would often see her push herself to use every last bit of energy that she had when family and friends would come to visit or if she was invited to a family gathering. She would rally herself together because she loved everyone so much. It's hard to imagine that Aunt Midge is not physically with us anymore. But I can tell you that she will forever live in our hearts as a loving and caring person who wanted to give of herself to others.



Judy Kruger

Midge was my sister-in-law for 29 years, yet early on Midge decided to skip the in-law part when referring to me. She always called me sister or sis and over the past 7 years, "forever sister". As her "forever sister" I can vouch for her warm heart, caring soul and unwavering loyalty. Even as her health deteriorated, she sent emails like...."Sis, How are you? I hear you are coming to Israel. Mi Casa et Su Casa. Love, Midge". "Dear Judy, I was with your darling daughter today. She is doing great. Please come visit. Your forever sis, Midge", "Dear Judy, I heard you might be coming!!! I'm thrilled and so is nonnie! Love, FS Midge".

Last but certainly not least, our Palm Beach Gardens vacations were never complete without Midge's Boggle, Jotto and Masterpiece Art Auction game nights often beginning at 2:00 am. However, Midge's most cherished holiday time revolved around her organized, traditional New Years, midnight Kruger-Kra family swim. In fact, for the occasion, Midge wrote a theme song, her claim to fame, which she belted out year after year with as many back up helpers as possible. It went like this: "Oh the weather outside is frightful but the pool is so delightful, and since we're all in Flo-ri-doooo, Let it snow, let it snow, let it snooooooooow!" There is no doubt this song will live on.

I will truly miss my Forever Sis! I am sure you are caring, giving and singing in heaven.

Ruth, Harvey and Hanna Lipkis

I (Ruth) spoke to Midge the week before she passed away. She made a late night call from Yerushalayim and we spoke at length. We had seen Abby and Dov and their children and Yoni and Kim and their sons in July in Modi'in. We told her how much we loved seeing them and what wonderful children she had. She then spoke about how much she loved all her children and how proud she was that they were all in Eretz Yisroel.

May her memory be a blessing. Midge, we miss you.

Uncle Jack, Aunt Joyce and Family Shragowitz

Midge was gracious, kind, and generous to us when she and David opened their home for us to stay in when we had an automobile accident in West Orange. She was so helpful in ways small and large. We also loved going to her family barbecues. Midge was always about family, and community.

We share in your bereavement.

May she rest in peace.

Debbie Arbit

Midge and I were fellow sopranos in Kol Dodi, and we were friends for years. One summer, at the North American Jewish Choral Festival, she (and I) stayed up into the wee hours singing around the piano - Israeli melodies, Broadway show tunes, and everything in between. She did not let the wear and tear on her body from diabetes stand in the way of the joy from singing and music, as it is the dance of the soul. Midge's radiant face will stay with me forever. I love you, Midge.



Joanne & Irwin Asher

Midge was always so wonderfully helpful in ways that absolutely no one else could be. For the past twelve years (since we lost our eldest daughter Elana A"H,) our English grandchildren have come to visit with us every winter and every summer. As grateful as we are for these special visits, it is a challenge to keep four children of diverse ages happily busy for the week or two or three that they are here. I have always been quite concerned that if they do not have a good time, they will vacation elsewhere in the future.

Midge had an embroidery machine, so one day she spent hours with each child embroidering towels with each of them. It was a unique and wonderful experience that required loads of patience, but Midge did it with a full heart and nary a complaint. The product was beautiful.

When our daughter Shira was getting married, somehow, the table seating cards were left for the last minute, and our computer or printer was acting up. It was literally just an hour or two before the wedding, and Midge came over and worked calmly and patiently for a couple of hours until the hundreds of cards were completed with names and table numbers.

Midge and her smile is a presence that is truly missed.

BethAnne Prupis Avezov

I keep trying to write a profound story about my experience with Midge. Mostly because my mother keeps asking me to but also because I want to do her memory justice. But I don't have a story. I must've started writing this piece about 15 times already and every time I delete it. No, that memory isn't good enough. No, that memory isn't profound like I know so-and-so's story to be. I don't have stories. I have memories. I have a missing piece that used to be filled by an incredible woman who would do anything for me even though I wasn't her child. From picking out Bat Mitzvah invitations to helping me get ready for one of my biggest performances in Lincoln Center, there was nothing Midge wouldn't do for me. That's all any kid wants. To feel special outside of their parents since their parents are genetically obligated to do as much as they can. But my mom did one of the best things she could have. She brought me to Midge. I am so thankful to have had Midge at my wedding in February and I look at that photo of her often. Midge was there during all of the important moments and I will be sad to not have her there for the future ones. So no, this is not a story of an incredible time I had with Midge. And no, I am not going into details to show everyone what an amazing woman she was. The truth is that everybody already knows that. This is just a formal declaration that my memories with Midge are just a little bit sweeter because she's in them.

Cynthia Berger

Midge's Mom and my Mom are first cousins (their fathers were brothers) and very close. Their names were Anita Katz and Harriet Katz, and in high school they were known to their friends as Pussy Katz and Kitty Katz. (With no post-James-Bondian irony whatsoever.)

Midge and I were also close friends, and as girls we attended the same school (the MacDuffie School in Springfield.) We were both notoriously bad at gym class—my mother liked to say, "You could sprain your thumb playing tiddlywinks!"--and we endured mocking comments on our report cards from the stern female gym teacher. When we were together in the halls at school, Midge used to introduce us by saying, "We're the Katz cousins: Klutz and Clumz!" Then she would execute this amazingly graceful, ballerina-like arabesque. It always got a laugh.



Joseph Berger

Midge always had a smile for me, always gave me these huge all embracing hugs. She always wanted to know what I was up to and always had something positive to say. She was so much like Anita in that way.

Our family on my mother's side is very small. My mom and Anita are first cousins and both are only children. Anita, Leon, Rick and Midge were pretty much the only relatives in town so we spent many, many holidays together. So much so that they are part of family legend.

Passover, of course, was a very big deal for our family and we invariably wound up at the Kruger house. Most of the relatives were elderly from the Katz side of the family. But it was always such a wonderful, warm, fun and very meaningful experience.

As a teenager, Midge used to joke about hoping that the real, very handsome Elijah would show up one day when she went to open the door for him. One year, I don't recall who talked me into it, but I snuck out just before that portion of the service, put on my grandfather's (Great Uncle Charley) hat and trench coat and waited by the door. When she opened it, I said something like "My fiery chariot is double parked so let's hurry up."

You can imagine her reaction. I know longer recall exactly what happened, there are so many versions now of how she reacted, but personally, I recall feeling excited that I was about to trick one of my favorite cousins.

Kitty and Jay Berger

In Abby's Email, she asked if I would share some memories of Midge. Our most delightful one is of the beautiful Seders we had at the Kruger home in Longmeadow. Our two families gathered together with Midge as the leader. She so enjoyed the service showing off her achievement in Hebrew and singing! Oh, how she got us all to sing and chant everything. Midge and our daughter Cynthia have been good friends as well as cousins since childhood.

I have always been impressed with the way Midge took care of her mother, my cousin, my sister, Anita.

Our thoughts are with you today.



Andrea & Bryan Bier

Our memories of Midge never cease to bring smiles to our faces! Midge had an inner warmth about her that always shone through. She always seemed to have a smile on her face, and when asked how she was doing, she'd always answer that she was fine; she was just never one to complain! She was truly unique in that we never heard a bad word about anyone cross her lips.

We remember being in Israel with our family a couple of years ago, when we saw Midge. There she was on her trusty scooter, maneuvering the crowded streets of Yerushaliyim! It was such a treat to see a familiar face! We stood and talked for a while, and of course her conversation focused on her favorite subject: her kids and gandkids.

Talking with Midge made you feel good about yourself, because she always had sweet things to say, and her compassion and concern were real. She was genuine and sincere—she was real, and that quality always came through. Midge had an infectious personality, one that made you want to be her friend.

Midge, you were a treasured gift from Hashem to your family and your community. We will miss the beautiful gift that was taken back by the almighty, but your memory and the warmth of your smile and your kindness will be with us forever.

Elisa, Mitch, Molly, Abe & Jack Cohen

When we moved to West Orange in 2000, Midge & David Kra were among the many friendly neighbors we met up the hill on Cleveland Terrace. We always stopped to chat with them when they were out with their dog, Murray, or when walking to and from shul on Shabbos.

When our kids were born, Midge always loved to see us outside playing and would always stop to talk and say hello. Molly, Abe and Jack loved seeing Murray run around the front yard.

In 2009, Mitch and I were honored with the Young Leadership Award at AABJD. Abe and Jack were only a year old and too little to stay up all night. Midge and David graciously offered to babysit for us during the dinner. They stayed in a separate room with them, played with them, and put them to bed. It was a huge relief knowing that the babies were in good hands. Midge was beaming at the opportunity to play with the babies.

A few weeks after the dinner, our youngest son Jack had a seizure while at home. I was home with both Abe and Jack and totally beside myself. Abe was screaming and crying while Jack lay on the living room floor shaking. I called 911 immediately. Within minutes, two ambulances and a fire truck showed up. I was relieved to have medical personnel come to help but was even more relieved just moments later when my front door opened and in walked Midge. The first words out of her mouth were "I'm here to help you" and when she saw Abe crying she picked him up and without a word put him in the highchair to feed him lunch. Midge stayed with Abe while I went along with Jack to the emergency room, put him in his crib for a nap, and waited until my parents came. I was so grateful to Midge for coming to the rescue when she did; she truly was an angel sent over that day.

We were saddened to hear of Midge's passing. We always enjoyed seeing her when she was on her way to Israel (she had the biggest smile on her face when she was on her way to see her children and grandchildren) and hearing about her trip when she returned.

May Midge's memory be a blessing to all those who knew her.

Ann Dershowitz

Whenever I would meet Midge, she would have an upbeat, optimistic attitude, a sense of humor and perspective, and a kind word to say. She was a gentle soul, and I miss her.



Debbie Druce

I was always pleasantly surprised when I would see Midge come to a shul affair on her scooter. She was always happy , upbeat and talkative. She was this way when I met her in her home and on one special occasion when we both to our surprise, found ourselves waiting on line at Kenedy airport as our kids were making aliyah on Nefesh B'Nefesh. She told me how she would miss Abby and the kids and how much she wanted to be in Israel as well.

Last year, when Midge was ill, she told me how much she missed not being in Israel to be with her children. She told me about Abby, the new baby , and the work Abby' did as a midwife. She talked about her sons and their connections knowing our sons.

A month ago, a special moment of connecting with Midge z'l came when a friend called to tell me that she had passed away. I was standing in the kitchen opening a book of Tehillim to locate psalm 130 for the opening verse for a Rachel Imeinu event that evening. After hearing of her passing I looked down at the psalm to check that this would be the one to read in Midge's memory, and I saw that I had opened up to psalm 133. As I read the psalm, the words, "Hinei Matovu MaNayim, Shevet Achim Gam Yachad" sprang forward and I knew this psalm was meant for Midge. Every word related to her utmost desire for peace between fellow man and love for Israel. We read the psalm in her honor at the opening of our meeting for the yartzheit of Rachel Imeinu.

Amy Feldman

Midge a.k.a. Margalit in Jerusalem would always end our phone conversations with, "love you honey!" I am convinced beyond a doubt that I was not the only recipient of this heartfelt greeting because Midge had a heart of gold. She extended both her heart and home to any and all who were blessed to have known her. Upon our arrival in West Orange in the late 80's I was introduced to Midge and the Kra family. She and David took us in under their wings as they were apt to do and a true friendship began that has forever changed my life.

For over 20 years we have laughed together and cried together, shared good times and bad, sought counsel from one another and been there for one another whether it be in person, over the phone, or an email. I was overjoyed when she came to Ruhama and Akiva's wedding in Jerusalem this past October. Having her there with Abby meant the world to me.

I danced with her in her wheelchair never thinking for a moment that this would be the last time I would see her in person. I knew she was sickly but I believed she was absolutely unstoppable. Hadn't all her trans Atlantic flights to Israel to visit her children and grandchildren proved that? I was privileged to talk to her on the phone after the wedding. She was feeling badly and had to hang up but then she called back again after awhile and apologized for having to get off so quickly. I was about to visit her the night I got the terrible news. She will always be a part of me because she keeps visiting me in my dreams. May her memory be blessed.

Love you, honey.

Gonzalez Family

"Margery Krugar Kra was a genuine, friendly and trust worthy person. She believed and trusted me when I came to this country with nothing. She had the patience and love to teach me everything I know about my job and life in this country. I will always be thankful to her and Kra Family for everything they have done and continue to do for me and my children. We will always love you Midge."



Ruth Grebenau

I remember when Mark and I were considering whether to come to West Orange to live. We did not know Midge and David then; Midge was the friend of a good friend, Lesley. I remember Midge and David, with their young children and ours playing in the background, welcoming us to West Orange. I remember the comfort, ease, openness, and friendship. I felt perfectly at home.

I remember, not long after we moved to West Orange, David and Midge giving Mark and me a ride to and from Lesley's funeral. It was raining—the sky was crying tears—one or more of us articulated that. It was a great comfort to go with them. I take comfort now that Midge is together with Lesley.

I remember Midge always being so friendly and welcoming and open, no matter how long it had been since last contact—as if we just saw her yesterday, and as if each person she was with was her best friend.



Tani & Aaron Herman

Midge always greeted me with warmth and a loving smile. No matter what, she always exuded a happiness, and made you feel that she was so happy to see you. I am deeply saddened by her untimely passing – but I know that she will have a lasting impact. She brought me one of my closest friends, and for that I will always be grateful. I know that she has brought down her warmth and good-spiritedness to her children and grandchildren. May her memory be for a blessing.



Barrie Jacob

When Midge and I were both little more than new brides, we lived in the apartments on Terrace Circle, in Teaneck. There a remarkable community of young, inspired women organized a parsha learning group where each prepared and presented one Aliyah to the group, while the rest of us nursed our babies, rested our pregnant bodies, or jotted notes. It was grass-roots dveikut.

I also learned with Midge (and Murray) many years later, probably for the duration of about a year. While her health had definitely declined, Midge's enthusiasm for Torah, and her sharp intellect were very much present, and it was a delight to be so warmly welcomed to her home whenever I showed up.

She had a very special spark, and we miss her.



Fredda Katcoff

Among the men in Midge's life was one with four paws. Midge always credited me with naming Murray. However, there is absolutely no truth to the rumor that Murray was named after Joel's cousin Murray. Knowing my lack of affection for the entire canine species, Midge always and fondly reminded me that Murray and I shared the same birthday.

I met Midge almost 28 years ago, when I was on bed rest while pregnant with my daughter Elizabeth. One day Andrea Sultan arrived in the Mitzvah Mobile—then in the guise of a station wagon with wooden panels. In her tow was a quirky, bubbly person named Midge. When Randee joined us we became the Birthday Club. For almost 28 years we celebrated each other's birthdays in every kosher restaurant in Essex County. We knew exactly what Midge would order. French fries swimming in ketchup accompanied by a piece of meat that Midge invariably described as "black and blue" and "ready to moo." The routine—along with an infinite supply of dog jokes and prank cards and props—never got old.

Midge was simply there at every important point in my life. There was never a crisis, mine or another's, that Midge was not there for. When that same Elizabeth was hit by a car on Pleasant Valley Way during Succot, Midge and Mitchell walked to St. Barnabas. When family members passed away, Midge helped me cover mirrors. And when my kids had lice, Midge checked me.

When Elizabeth was married just over a year ago, Midge dragged herself on one of the hottest days of the year to the wedding. By this time we all knew the price Midge would pay for attending. Every outing extracted its toll. Each hour outside meant an equal number of days in bed.

I called Midge the Friday before she passed away. She told me that she was "in heaven." Indeed, nothing delighted Midge more than sharing pictures of her grandkids.

Next week our Birthday Club is dining again. We will always have an empty chair. There will never be a better friend.



Paulette Kolchin

There are so many memories of Midge that are running through my mind. I could call Midge with any problem and she was a sympathetic listening ear. She truly was a "good friend." We delighted in each other's happy occasions and shared worries and sad times too.

Back in the olden times, mothers did not come into the room while the baby had his bris. It was considered too upsetting, so we waited together for the baby to be brought back and did our best to talk about other things. We were so happy for each other as our families grew.

When my son needed ear surgery for a benign tumor, Midge researched the condition more than I did. This was long before the Internet. She must have gone to the library to get all the information that she shared with me to help us deal with the situation.

I remember Midge's son's bar mitzva. She was sitting in a reclining chair because of a slipped disk problem and we danced around her. She had planned a milchig luncheon, but the caterer instead made a fleishig buffet. Midge took the whole mix-up totally in stride. Despite her pain and the celebration not being as planned, Midge had a smile on her face. She didn't let "things" get her down.

I think one of the nicest things Midge ever said to me was when we were on the phone and my mother was dying of cancer. Midge understood how distressing it was for me to watch my mother declining and suffering. She was sensitive to the unmentioned fear that the same thing could happen to me. She said, "Don't worry Paulette. If you ever are sick like that, I'll come smother you with a pillow." It was funny and comforting at the same time.

Midge had the most pleasant telephone voice. She was not a complainer and it would take persistence on my part to learn how she really was doing. Despite her health challenges, throughout her life, Midge took care of others. She never complained about having her mother move in with her. She would comment on how much fun they would have together. She did everything in her power to give her mother the best possible quality of life.

Midge will be missed by many people. Her loss leaves a huge void. I wish that I could pick up the phone to call Midge and tell her how sad I am that she is no longer with us. I know that she would have a wise and sympathetic response for me!

Yaffa and Larry Liebman

Midge and David were one of the first couples we met when we moved to West Orange in 1983. Being that we lived on the same block we would see them come and go. Midge always had a smile on her face and rolled with the punches. When our daughter started Kushner in 1993, we experienced one of the worst winters ever. Back then people would be called early in the morning as to school closings. We were "callers" that year and had many occasions to speak to Midge before the crack of dawn. One specific day we remember that Presidents Day was taken away as a vacation day since there had been so many snow days. When we informed Midge of this change, she said oh that's not good. Yoni's Bar mitzvah is scheduled for Presidents Day.



Cantor Riki Lippitz - Kol Dodi Chorale

Midge Kra z'!, was a beautiful neshama, inside and out. Her singing voice was like her soul, light and playful, warm and effusive.

She sang with the Kol Dodi Chorale for years, and was beloved of all who knew her.

When she returned this past year to rehearse for our 20th anniversary celebration, I went to sit next to her every time I wasn't conducting.

The lilt of her voice and her joyous, optimistic spirit are still so vivid. No matter what the hardships, she saw the beauty of life, and inspired us all to do the same.

May the song of her spirit echo amongst us, and inspire us, forever.



Sheba and Stanley Mittelman

Midge has a very special place in our hearts, not for a specific instance that we can recall but just for being herself. She was one of the sweetest people we have ever met. Midge was one of those amazing people who always thought of something kind and nice to say to you whenever she saw you.

She was soft -spoken and gentle and would go out of her way to help a friend and neighbor.

A case in point-I had posted a note on West Orange shuls, requesting advice about nursing care. Midge was in Israel and even though she was far away, she reached out to me with an idea. Instead of just responding by email, I called her and spoke to her for a short time. She sounded so wonderful on the phone! More like the Midge I remembered from years ago and not the lady in the wheelchair.

Stanley and I both cherished her warmth and smiles. We watched her and David and how they took care of their parents and how close they were with their brother and sister-in-law. What role models of Menschlichkeit! It was a privilege to know her.

Hella and Irwin Novick

We always thought and considered Midge as one of the most "giving" persons we've ever known.

We were always referred to as "My Adopted Parents" for the many years we knew her.

She had amazing patience and time for everyone even as we enjoyed watching her teach our grandson to crochet.



Gail, Mitchell, Eli, Roey, and Tali Novick

Midge was there from the very beginning of our family.

Midge was a very important part of our wedding. She designed and crocheted the kippah Mitchell wore. She was the head of a committee tasked by Gail with making sure Mitchell got to sleep at a reasonable hour the night before the wedding. She coordinated numerous other details.

Midge and David catered our first meal as newlyweds. We did not get to eat during the reception. They arranged for our food to be packed up, set up a folding table in our new home (their old house), with candles, champagne, and the food. After the reception, we arrived home to this catered surprise. What a nice way to start off married life.

Midge was a great friend. She was a tremendous resource for recipes, supplies, and ideas. She was always available to help when needed.

After our first son was born, Midge became his first nanny. She watched him one day a week. She took on the moniker of "Aunt Midge" (pronounced in the New England manner – rhymes with "font"), which is how our children refer to her to this day. She treated them as her "American" grandchildren.

Thanks to Midge, all our children spent years growing up in a bedroom containing a calming, educational "Sesame Street"-like motif which had been created by a professional artist. Midge had the bedroom so painted when she owned the house, and the artwork was present in the house when purchased.

Midge would come to our house every evening to help Gail with the 3 little children under 3 years old.

Midge always had a song or tune on her lips. She introduced our children to music, and is probably largely responsible for their love of music. Like Midge, they are singing all the time.

She never tired of listening to or playing with our children. She always had plenty of toys with which they could play. And Murray.

Visiting Aunt Midge or borrowing something from her at her home (2 doors away) was the first place our children were allowed to walk by themselves.

We all miss Aunt Midge greatly.

Mitchell Novick

Midge was family.

I first met Midge over a Shabbat lunch. She and David had recently moved into West Orange, and David invited me for lunch. As Midge told the story, she was unprepared for guests and did not have sufficient food. So, she asked David to stall for a few minutes as she whipped up something with tuna fish in the kitchen.

A few years later, Midge began working as my office manager. Without any formal training in the field, she took to the work with her unique brand of enthusiasm. The first day of work, she showed up with a pen and pad, and to improve order and work flow, began preparing a never ending string of checklists. Some of her developed checklists continue to be used today.

Midge was very involved in many activities which required her to keep in touch with countless individuals. In those old days before widespread e-mail and texting, one used the telephone. To add efficiency to her phone usage, Midge typed the entire AABJ&D Sisterhood phone directory into her Palm PDA (smartphone predecessor).

Midge also got our office involved in the annual Amit Purim fundraiser. We had one of the earlier small office laser printers. For many years (working with output from David's computer program to process the contributions), we printed the individual "Happy Purim" cards which were placed in the Purim baskets that were distributed around the community.

Midge became my personal clothing, etiquette, and dating consultant. We had an annual "office shopping day", during which she would help me pick out appropriate business suits and clothing for dates. She would often critique how I looked before I went out, along with helpful ideas and suggestions.

Our office hosted an annual Sukkah party for those in our office building. The permanent location quickly became the Kra's sukkah. Along with the enticing food spreads, Midge helped get everyone living in the Sukkah for a while with entertainment. One year, many were watching the televised presidential debates in the sukkah; another year, the World Series in the sukkah.

Midge helped start a trend when she had one of the first birthday cakes in New Jersey with a photo printed on top; the cake was imported (via Federal Express) from Gus & Paul's bakery in Massachusetts.

When Midge and David decided to move to bigger quarters (around the corner), they even sold me their house.

Lynda Novick

I first met Midge when I was a PH.D candidate at Penn and she was an undergrad. Midge sublet my apartment for a summer and we became friendly. When I moved to West Orange Midge was already living here. She was warm and welcoming and invited us for a Shabbat meal. Through the years we remained friendly, but weren't intimate friends. We talked occasionally, e-mailed, and were face book friends. However, when I received the shocking news that I had recently developed LADA, latent autoimmune diabetes (which has the same characteristics as childhood diabetes or type 1 diabetes), Midge was the one person I could turn to for guidance. She patiently answered my queries and advised me. She gave me invaluable suggestions for handling issues. Despite what she herself was experiencing, she counseled me with a smile and a sense of humor. She spoke openly. Until I experienced the frustration of trying to manage this disease, I never fully understood the devastating daily impact this insidious disease has upon one's life. It was then that I realized how incredibly brave and strong Midge was. She made an indelible impact on me and I believe on everyone she met.

Abby Prince

Midge hosted my surprise birthday party. I think there had just been a huge house repair - could have been to remediate termites, but for Midge it was never an issue to be the hostess, for any cause. I will always remember her warmth, her openness, and her sharing. We also sang together in the choir which was a great pleasure to share.



Sheri Prupis

Lucy & Ethel

I simply would not be alive today if it was not for Midge's attention to detail. She made the doctor's appointment that led to my diagnosis and ultimate complete remission. Every day throughout that difficult year, Midge was there for me. And my kids. And my parents. And my brothers and sister-in-law. When I couldn't eat, she sent David out to get me chocolate milk shakes. And it went both ways. When Midge began to have trouble with her feet, she would let me rub cream on them; very few people got that honor.

One of the great joys in life is having a great girlfriend. Someone who totally gets you and you totally get. We had our Lucy and Ethel moments. My favorite was when Midge took me to the emergency room... I couldn't sit on the examine table because of discomfort, so I sat on a regular chair, and Midge, wearing a medical boot, sat on the exam table. The doctor came in and began to ask Midge how she was feeling, why she was wearing the boot, they discussed lots of medical things. When suddenly Midge said -- wait -- I think you need to examine her (pointing at me).

We had many Lucy and Ethel moments. And they went both ways. My other favorite Lucy and Ethel moment, well, that one is for me to keep.

Midge had a way to make a person feel as though she were the most important person in the world. She was honest and good and loving and caring. She made my life better in every way.

Midge made me food and nourished my body

Midge talked with me and nourished my mind

Midge loved me and nourished my soul

Every inch of my being misses her.



Suri and Joe Rapaport

Midge is both difficult and easy to write about. Difficult because the paper is obscured by the tears in my eyes, and easy because there is so much good on which to focus: her upbeat personality, her good humor, her never-ending acts of chesed, and her intelligence, to name but a few. But I would like to concentrate on Midge's courage and determination.

In 1988, Yeshiva University presented a three part lecture series on Torah U'Maada (Torah and Science) the focus of which was what courses and disciplines were permitted to a Yeshiva student. One of the lecturers was Rav Aharon Soloveitchik, my junior year rebbe at Yeshiva College.

Rav Aron entered and took a seat on the stage of a packed Lampport Auditorium at Yeshiva College. I was shocked by his appearance. One of his arms gesticulated wildly as it constantly jerked up and down. Prior to speaking, Rav Aron grasped the jolting arm and locked it between his two thighs so that it could not move. I later was appraised that the arm was a resultant effect of a stroke that had been suffered by Rav Aron. Rav Aron could have hidden in his residence, but no, he pushed himself, assuming a giant role in Jewish affairs.

So too with Midge Kra. She was seriously ill. Yet she physically cared for others. Midge and David were integral members of our Navi study group. Often Midge lacked sensation in her extremities. Some nights, she could barely walk, yet she willed herself to attend our study sessions. And how we admired her for that courage and determination.

The Kra children, Abby, Yoni, and Donny, all live in Israel together with their own children, Midge and David's grandchildren. The rigor of visiting Israel with equivalent medical issues would daunt a lesser human being, but not Midge. Her determination, her courage, her love for her children and grandchildren propelled her over oceans and continents to be with her family.

And so it was, that on 10 Cheshvan, 5774, Hashem requested Miriam Liba's eternal presence. Midge died in her sleep, having spent nearly 2 months with her children and grandchildren.

It is not only her family that mourns her, but also her friends who feel the pain. The West Orange community is poorer by her passing.

Hashem is Miriam Liba bat Lieb Moshe's heritage, and may she repose in peace on her resting place.

Dorene Richman

I'll select one of my oldest memories of Midge from when she still lived on Hoover. Sue Kelin and I were vice presidents of programming for AMIT back in the days when we had a monthly board meeting and also a program meeting every month. We didn't like the invitation postcards which the National office sent out, so Midge told me she would do the computer work to help me design attractive invitations. And help she did. We sat month after month for hours together, giggling and figuring out the prettiest font, the nicest graphic, the best layout. I always marveled at Midge's patience and good humor, no matter how long we sat and worked. And I took away something that always brings her voice to mind—Midge taught me a word I sometimes use, a typical Midge word, and I hear her still, I'll hear her forever: "Oopsie."



Barry Rodin

One very hot Summer day several years ago I was invited for Shabbos lunch at a neighbor of the Kras. Upon leaving the neighbor's house after lunch I realized that I had forgotten to put on my air conditioner at home, so I decided to drop in on the Kras.

When I got there, there were no Kras to be found because they were probably all asleep. Since I was tired, I decided to also take a nap, so I found an empty bedroom and lay down on the bed.

When I got up I found David sitting in the den and was worried about what he would say finding me there, but he just said: "Hi, Barry."

Later, Midge assured me that I should feel free to stop in any time.

Midge always referred to this incident as: "Barry and the Three Kras."

(reminiscent of: "Goldilocks and the Three Bears.")

Randee Rubenstein

M : missed terribly

I : had infinite compassion

D : dared destiny

G : greatest heart

E : elephants were her favorite

K : kept in touch with all her family

R : raved about her kids and grandkids

A : an aria she loved to hear

Abby, Yoni and Dani,

You might wonder why I chose an acrostic to memorialize your Mom. The reason is that it provides a special memory for me. Your Mom had a surprise 30th or 35th birthday party at the kosher restaurant in Bayonne. I wrote an acrostic for that party and your Mom read it and then yelled out "Someone loves me!". I always remember the exuberance and appreciation expressed. I can visualize it as if it was yesterday. Your Mom and I were friends for over 35 years. She, Fredda, Andrea and I got together for each of our birthdays yearly. There were years when we were all so busy that those were the only times we saw each other. However, we always made it happen. When Ari was young and your Mom knew I had my hands full, she would come over on Shabbas. Because of her great heart, she loved Ari and played with him and helped me tremendously. Your Mom never saw barriers. She just felt the heart of the person.

Midge on her scooter: Not only can I imagine her weaving her way through throngs of people in Mea Shaarim, I remember being on a bus (have no idea where we were going) waiting in front of the shul and there comes your Mom on her scooter riding down Curtis Ave coming to catch the bus. I'm petrified riding down Hoover Ave in a car, much less speeding down on a scooter!

Shul telephone system: I will miss her voice on the messages.

I miss Midge.

May her memories be a comfort to all of you. She loved you all so much.



Gila Salzman

I first met Midge over 12 years ago at the Granit Hotel during Pesach that year. Midge had the most beautiful, unusual outfits! After one unique outfit after another appeared on the various days of Yom Tov, I finally got up the gumption to ask where she bought her artsy clothes. Well this perfect stranger was very friendly and explained how she shopped in Florida when she visited her parents. I could tell right away from her smile that she was a sweet person and later we became extended mishpacha when my daughter Amira married her nephew Yossi!



Vicki and Moshe Schreiber

After not seeing Midge for several years, I had the zchut of sitting with her at a wedding only recently. In spite of the obvious decline in her health, Midge was so happy to be part of this simcha and, even more than that, spoke so excitedly about her plans to make Aliyah as soon as next year. Midge's enthusiasm for the future, and her love for Israel, made an indelible impression on all who were privileged to know her.



Jacob Schulder

As a close friend of Yoni's up through high-school, I was often dependent on his and David's extreme genius in science and math. As I was most concerned with practicing my basketball skills, Yoni was always the person I called when I needed help learning some concept that he had already mastered months, if not years prior. As a result, I often found myself at the Kra home. Whether it be a Shabbat, Sunday or weekday afternoon, Midge's warmth was palpable. She always greeted me with a smile, knowing full well that I was taking away time from Yoni when he could have been furthering his own academic development.

I distinctly remember a Sunday afternoon during my freshman year in Frisch when I needed help understanding osmosis the day before a biology exam. Yoni tried to explain it to me numerous times, but it simply would not register. Then David gave it a shot; same result. I remember getting very frustrated and Midge, with a smile as warm as the sun, simply looked at me and said "Jacob, it's going to be ok."

Turned out she was right. I don't think I did too well on the exam, but Midge was correct. Things turned out ok after all.

We will miss you Midge Kra. You were a very kind and good woman.

Mali & Steve Schwartz

The years fly by so quickly– it seem like it was just yesterday that Midge’s daughter Abby, and my daughter Tani, were in playgroup, nursery school, elementary school, high school and Brovender’s together. They remain close friends to this day.

What do I remember about Midge - her ineffable way of bringing warmth and humor to the ordinary, her easy laughter, and her way with people. She was a terrific raconteur – and I remember some of her tales – about the Southern branch of the family (I found out that some of her mishpacha were the Warner Brothers of movie fame) and how she spoke about her upbringing in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Over the years Midge began to speak about her diabetes – it became just another thing she had to do – when she took out her insulin pump and explained why she had to use it. She was very open about her condition, but in the beginning I certainly didn’t realize how serious it was. I found out later that Type I diabetes can be quite debilitating.

Yet although Midge made rarer appearances in shul, whenever I saw her, she had a smile on her face and a cheerful disposition. She was grateful whenever anyone showed her a kindness or included her. One of the last times I saw her, she mentioned that the doctor had told her to stay off her feet, since she had such poor circulation. Yet she still had a lot to live for.

After all, her beloved mother was under her care and she traveled frequently to Israel to see her kids and grandkids. What a blessing that she was in Israel and was able to see all of them for what turned out to be the last time. And although Midge suffered with diabetes for so many years, her spirit remained strong to the end.

May her memory be a source of comfort to all her family and friends.

Myra Shoub

I have hesitated writing down these memories for two reasons; (1) after over 28 years I could never capture all the memories I have of my Midge and (2) many of my best stories begin with the words "don't tell anyone in West Orange..." But I was from outside the West Orange community and safe. Not only did we share diabetes and a Jewish life different than the one in which we had grown but we became soul sisters. We bitched about life and a disease tearing both of us apart a piece at a time. Every few months one of us would fall apart with each other and declare a "pity party". We would cry and rail at the unfairness of it all for a few hours, getting it out. Afterward we would stuff it all back in the hidden places and make a lunch date or a doctor appointment together. You might have seen us in the aftermath sharing the lunch, shopping or coming back from an appointment in New York - laughing at the names of porno movies on the old 42nd Street and making up new ones - or sharing goofy kid or absurd Kushner stories (lashon hora and all). We held each other up as a safety net and soldiered on laughing and crying. I traveled all the way up to a hospital in the city for 5 minutes to change her pump site and bring her a 6 pack of diet coke. Then she unceremoniously kicked me out of her room. She once declared me not worth the money after speeding to my house and getting a \$150 ticket to keep me company while I was recuperating from one of my surgeries. Then she, Nancy Caplan and I climbed on my sleeper couch and watched a chick flick. I so miss my sister from another mother.

Now that she is truly gone I will break a promise and share one of my favorite and on-going memories, the quintessential "don't tell anyone from West Orange" story. Even from Olam ha'baah she is disapproving. I can feel it.

I spent a lot of time in bed with Midge. No, not like that... Even though it was truly innocent she was horribly afraid that if anyone from West Orange found out there would be plenty of lashon hara and scandal. When she couldn't get up or out of the house I would run (or limp) upstairs and plop onto David's side of the bed. There we hatched nefarious plots, planned synagogue programs and bnai mitzvot, trips, our joint doctor appointments and lunch dates. We shared secrets, read books and watched daytime TV (rather Midge watched soap operas and I bitched because I hated soap operas). She introduced me to Law and Order and CSI. I recuperated there in her company, she recuperated there in my company. There I harangued her about her procrastination and denial about seeing the doctor and made her doctor appointments myself. As soon as I left she cancelled them or later conveniently forgot to go. I yelled and she once didn't talk to me for 3 months. She shared her great misgivings about my then husband way before I did. I was angry, so I got up and flounced out of the house. Needless to say, time proved her correct in her assessment of his character.

When I was preparing to leave New Jersey to return to Chicago she bought me a new electric blanket. Ostensibly this blanket was to keep me warm in the colder Illinois winters. Really, it was for me to climb under, call or skype her, to continue the ongoing conversation from afar. The warmth was emotional and highly symbolic.

One of the first things I did after Yoni called me that October afternoon, was to hurry home and to hysterically search for the blanket. I put it on the bed and climbed under it. Never mind the temperature was in the 70's. During the last month, from under the blanket, I have spent many sleepless nights and hours of dream time with my images of Midge. It is from the vantage point of under the blanket I decided to share this story from among all of our shared stories. Now, at 5 a.m. on this cold November morning, I am going back to my blanket, relieved to have finally spilled our one "secret" sister story.



Adina Shoulson

Midge was such an important part of my childhood in West Orange. I can't remember how old I was when the Kras moved across the street, but only Abby was born, I must have been 10 or so. My mom had recently started working and wasn't always home when I got home from school. I would often go visit with Midge. She was kind of a big sister to me--so easy to talk to and so supportive no matter what the topic. I have fond memories of sitting in her kitchen or in the den talking about friends and life. I remember General Hospital and cooking her special pasta with sauce and cheese. Whatever we did, I felt grown up and a deep sense of belonging.

When Yoni and Donny were born, I enjoyed being a big sister and babysitter. I recall, fondly, being thrown up on numerous times after jiggling them around a bit too much soon after a feeding. But still, Midge made me feel special and capable, like a friend and a family member.

Other memories crowd my head as I write this--greeting Midge as I picked up Abby in our matching winter coats to catch the bus to school, visiting in their sukkah, singing zemirot, talking about new interests. As my children were born, I would bring them over to meet Midge when I visited West Orange and she would ooh and ahh over them. As my children grew, visiting Midge and Murray became a much anticipated activity.

Of the many wonderful midot that Midge modeled, the one that most impressed me and that I hope to emulate was her love and devotion to her parents. Their visits were such exciting events and as they grew older Midge never wavered in her patience and care for them.

Midge and I share a birthday, May 25th. She always said I was a great Sweet Sixteen present. On my next birthday and the many that follow it, I will not only mark a year of my life, but celebrate Midge's life and her contributions.

Robyn Shoulson

Midge was always a bright light.

I spent many Shabbat afternoons with her. She was such a loving and devoted daughter that she included her mother in our visits, never making her aware of her diminished state. Rather we sang Gilbert and Sullivan songs together (and Broadway favorites, too) which brought us all back to our youths.

Her love of music and singing was so strong that, even as she became less and less able to be a full member of Kol Dodi, we went together to as many rehearsals as she could make. She served Kol Dodi by managing their website for as long as she could.

And we always rode home from rehearsals singing.



Murray Spiegel

Midge had a special, unusual relationship with me. At the Kol Dodi rehearsals, she invariably came to me and patted me on the head. "I always have a special closeness to you – you remind me of my dog, Murray."

Randi Spiegel

Murray and I both sing in Kol Dodi. In 1996, the choir was rehearsing a medley of Israeli folk songs. Because Murray and I are folkdancers, we were asked to dance the dances while the choir sang the songs. At the end of one dance, the man typically lifts and spins his partner around. As I passed Murray, I mouthed "I'll lift you" as a joke. I couldn't lift him, but it was fun to try. Afterwards, Midge said to me what I told Murray was so sweet. "Huh?? What did you think I said?" She had misread my lips as "I love you." She said it in such a way – so lovingly – that I hated to burst her bubble, but I told her what I had really said and we both had a good laugh.

I always think of her when I hear that music.

Andrea Sultan

When I want to not cry about the loss of one of my best friends I think about our visit to Mini Israel in 2006. We were there for Pesach and spent a full day touring with Midge and David. The day was exhausting and difficult for Midge. She skipped some of our museum stops because getting on and off the minibus and maneuvering around the buildings was hard. But all that changed when we got to Mini Israel and spotted a golf cart.

David didn't want to ride in the golf cart with Midge so I happily volunteered. We were two middle-aged moms, novice golf cart drivers and we had so much fun. (Everyone else thought we were crazy.) Like Thelma and Louise we loved the freedom, independence and adventure we gained from our new set of wheels. We tried to avoid hitting people and not run over baby carriages. We made jokes about everything we saw including spotting and taking pictures of look-alikes (if you want the names you'll have to ask me in person). Pretending we knew Hebrew or just reading the signs made us feel like real Israelis.

We loved feeling free and being alone. We made a stealth junk food run in the cafeteria. Midge had given all her food to my Sephardi children because the snacks contained kitniyot, so we enjoyed our unhealthy treats of potato chips and other nosh that Midge shouldn't have eaten but loved so much. Our adventure in Mini Israel was the highlight of our day.

Over the years Midge and I were always there for each other. I remember when her house was contaminated and she lived with me before moving into her mobile home that was situated on the side lawn. We shared children's birthday parties. She would watch my kids when someone was home sick. She was incredibly kind and did so much for me. She was one of my best friends.



Chani and Shmuel Tokayer

I have wonderful memories of Midge, A"H: Her sweet voice, whether speaking or raised in song, was always uplifting to those in her presence. Our connection was mostly through music, but not limited to that venue. She always had good suggestions as to how to make our choral group better. Her voice added a beautiful strength to the melody - strong but beautiful and not overbearing. Her courage and perseverance in the face of mounting physical challenges were always inspiring. When she couldn't sing standing up, she would sing sitting down. When life threw her a curve ball, she coped with a smile. I remember how difficult it was for the family when they had to live in a motel and then in a trailer after their home was damaged by an exterminator. Yet, she persevered and made that seem normal. Later, it was wonderful to see how she made her mother part of her daily life despite the limitations that each one of them had. I always loved how she referred to her dog Murray with a kind of twinkle in her eye - knowing that is was a very funny name for a dog; but that in itself made everyone's day a little brighter. Midge was the most optimistic person I ever knew. I am thankful that she was able to see all of her grandchildren in Israel and fulfill her dream which had to be delayed for such a long time. I will always remember her smile and her upbeat attitude towards life - and try to emulate her gratefulness for everything she had.

Our daughter Malki has her own memory of Midge. They both worked for Mitchell Novick many years ago. Often, Midge would drive Malki home. Midge, always looking for ways to be helpful, offered to let the newly licensed Malki drive just in order to gain practical experience. She left quite an impression on our 18 year old. May Midge's memory serve as a comfort to the entire family.

Lynne Turk

I don't have specific memories, but I'll always remember moving in to the neighborhood and attending my first Sisterhood and Amit functions and Midge was there greeting newcomers with a warm smile. Her calming voice was a pleasure to hear!

Tova and Howard Weiser

Our memories of Midge are of a woman with a sweet personality and a very positive attitude, even in the face of challenges.

When our granddaughter Shifra was diagnosed with diabetes, Midge made a point of explaining the disease and its treatment to us. She pulled out her pump - encased in an adorable baby sock - and explained how it worked. She made it understandable to us and we felt reassured.

We also remember how she lit up when she spoke of her children and grandchildren and of how much she looked forward to spending time with them in Israel. We were impressed when we saw the baby blanket she knit for her first grandchild. It was done with great skill and much love.

She was an inspiration to us and to all who knew her. We will miss her smile and her sweet voice. We hope the memory of all of her good deeds provides some comfort to her family.

Nadine Wruble

My memory is one of a warm, caring welcome to a brand new, first time Mother, over 32 years ago. I moved to West Orange without knowing anyone in the community. Midge automatically invited me to her home, where we spent many afternoons with our young babies sleeping, talking, laughing and watching soap operas together. I also remember the Lebovics, a lovely couple who would give learning groups weekly, where Midge would graciously host these gatherings. I met friends those first several years in West Orange, and I will always remember Midge's welcoming, open home. She was a true balaboosta.



Saul Zimmerman

In 1997 when Sherry and I announced that we were making Aliyah, that I would continue working in America for an unspecified period and that I was looking to rent a space to use for two weeks each month while I was in America, Midge and David graciously offered to let me stay with them. They offered me my own fully furnished room on the ground floor of their house, and they didn't even want to accept any rent. At first, we all thought it might be a very temporary arrangement, or that it might not work out. After all, it takes very special people to open their home to someone who's not a member of the family for an extended period of time. Having a house guest with access to your kitchen, bathrooms, and living room isn't always convenient or private. The guest also shares space in your refrigerator, mailbox, driveway, and washing machine. He sometimes arrives from a flight at strange hours. Midge and David were remarkable to have made the offer in the first place, and more remarkable for keeping the arrangement in place for ten years. Furthermore, they always opened their home to Sherry and our children when they were in town. Their kindness, and their friendship, gave me a home away from home and certainly made my difficult commuting life much easier. More importantly, it set an example of hospitality that inspires others and, in effect, raises the level of Chesed in the entire community.



Sherry Zimmerman

I remember walking over to Mady's house one Shabbos afternoon 34 years ago to meet her sister-in-law, Midge, who was going to be moving to West Orange. Little did I know how intertwined our lives would become over time. Abby and Benji were in the same play group and nursery school. Midge hosted a weekly *shuir* that I attended. Our husbands got along well together, and we teamed up in an Amit scavenger hunt that ended on a train to Hoboken. When Saul and I moved to our house on Conforti Avenue and finished the basement, Midge came to rescue me the morning my hot water heater cracked and began to leak water all over my brand new playroom and office. She had telephoned to say hi and as soon as she heard my problem, she was there to selflessly help me empty the contents of the heater into buckets and dump them down the sink, and then use a wet vac on the carpets so there would be no mold damage.

Midge was my Amit Women co-president for two years. When Saul and I announced or plans to move to Israel and that Saul would be commuting, in a little more than a heartbeat she and David graciously offered for him to stay with them whenever he was in the U.S. They also opened their home to our family – whenever I or our kids were in the U.S., they were welcome at Midge and David's. It was always great for me to come to Midge and David's – they always made me feel welcome, and we always enjoyed each other's company. Saul recuperated from three major surgeries at Midge and David's – for one, they graciously offered him their bedroom, which was more spacious and comfortable than his room. For another, they set up a Shabbos *minyán* in their home so that Saul, who was a few days post spinal surgery, could say *kaddish* for his sister's *yarzheit*.

When Midge was relatively healthy, I remember marveling at how she could work for Mitchell Novick, travel to Florida to help her parents, serve on the First Aid Squad, sing in a choir, and host tons of people, whether they were just passing through West Orange, coming as Shabbos guests for her and David or their children, or needed a place to stay for an extended period of time. She made a Pesach Seder pillow for Saul that we treasure, as well as embroidered baby towels and blankets for our grandchildren. Midge also facilitated my reunion with a long lost cousin of mine, Tzippy Amiri, who was friendly with Midge when she lived in West Orange. When Tzippy got a copy of our family tree and saw a common West Orange connection, Midge helped her get in touch with me. It turns out we'd met long before through Midge and never knew we were related.

Saul and I were looking forward to Midge and David's *aliyah* plans. We'd visited them many times in their beautiful apartment on Jabotinsky Street and gone to their grandson's brisses and Donni's graduation from a pre-army program. Over the past few years, we saw Midge's health deteriorate dramatically, but hoped that once she was happily ensconced in Jerusalem, close to her kids and grandkids and no longer having to fly back and forth, she'd stabilize and we'd see each other more often and be able to do things together, her scooting around Jerusalem and me walking alongside her. I had been looking forward to going to lunch with Midge at Cup o' Joe's after I returned from my last U.S. visit (she was staying for 2 months and we'd only been able to get together for one afternoon a few weeks earlier), but that was not to be. I miss my friend's sweet voice, gracious hospitality, entertaining stories, and ability to get along with and keep up connections to so many people. I still look forward to David's *aliyah*, but there will be a big void that my fond memories of Midge will only partially fill.

Midge's D'var Torah

Many people think prayer should be spontaneous. A family waiting for news of a loved one in the emergency room may pray to HaShem to make him better. Before a test, we might pray to do well. But our synagogue prayer is regimented. We have to say proscribed words at certain times and preferably in a synagogue. We must say the words in a language that not all of us understand.

Why don't we wait until we feel grateful to pray? I'll tell you a story.

Moshe was very excited about an NCSY trip to go rappelling. He gave his parents a waiver to sign because it might be dangerous. His parents researched and decided not to let him go on this trip. They felt it wasn't safe. Moshe got very angry, told his parents that he hated them, and locked himself in his room.

Moshe was only thinking about his feelings. He was not able to see that his parents were only concerned about him. He forgot that his parents had always cared about him and cared for him. They had a history of giving him love and compassion.

If parents designed the world, this child would wake up every morning and say, "Thank you, Mom and Dad, for taking such good care of me." This would indeed be an ideal relationship with our parents!

Shouldn't our relationship with HaShem be similar? We must thank Him constantly throughout the day. If we left the timing to spontaneity, it would be too easy to say, "I'll daven later." But you might never get to it! The great scholar Israel Abrams said "he who prays in any time and in any manner is likely to pray in no time and in no manner."



Midge's Ride - The Biblical Zoo of Jerusalem Scooter Project

When Midge visited Israel, she would rent a scooter and drive around the streets of Jerusalem, running errands, seeing friends, and going to shul. She even found herself stuck on her scooter in Meah Shearim as people poured into the streets on the day of the passing of Rav Ovadia Yosef. Although it took her two and a half hours, she was able to navigate through the throngs of people and get herself home. The scooter gave her the mobility and independence that she so valued.

As many of you know, Midge loved anything having to do with elephants. She had an extensive collection of elephant figurines from all over the world. She even had pins, necklaces, and purses all covered with elephants.

Every time Midge came to Israel, her grandchildren wanted her to join them at the Biblical Zoo for a picnic dinner by the elephants, as they would often do when the weather was nice. The problem was how to get her around the zoo, as it is very hilly and difficult to navigate with a stroller or wheelchair, let alone both. The zoo has wheelchairs they lend out, but no scooter to get handicapped people around the zoo. Unfortunately, the zoo has limited capacity to allow handicapped parents and grandparents to enjoy this special experience with their children and grandchildren.

In Midge's memory, we would like to organize the donation of a scooter to the Biblical Zoo detailed to look like an elephant. We'd like to help those with limited mobility to enjoy their time at the zoo with their children and grandchildren. Seeing the elephant scooter being used at the zoo will serve as a testament to Midge's drive to help people and how far she would go to make others happy, despite her limitations.

We hope that you will join us in honoring the memory of

מרים ליבא בת משה לייב

in this meaningful way.

שתהיה זכרה ברוך

