

Obituary - Ruth Morris

1936 - 2012



The cheerful and smiling Ruth Morris passed away on 19 April 2012, aged 75. She battled breast cancer for seven years and after many treatments, the cancer was too aggressive for her to survive. Her son, Aaron, says: "We are comforted knowing she is no longer in pain, but we miss her so much. She was a bright light, an inspiration in all our lives."

Born in London's West End on 11 May 1936, Ruth was the daughter of Jacob and Fanny Rappaport. She had two younger sisters and a younger brother. Ruth grew up in a rough neighborhood and, being deaf, she was teased by local hearing kids. Fortunately, she was protected by local prostitutes, misfits and foreigners, who were building new lives for themselves in London. These people were kind to Ruth and fond of parents, who did not judge them and were fluent in their languages.

During World War Two, aged four, Ruth was part of the *Kindertransport* and ended up in a temporary Residential School for Jewish Deaf & Blind Children in Pewsey, Wiltshire. Her sister Jessica joined her later at the same school. The headmaster asked Ruth to help take care of Deaf and blind refugee children who joined the school after fleeing Nazi-occupied countries. From that experience, Ruth would continue to dedicate her time and make friends with other Deaf and blind people throughout her life. After the war, she finished school at the permanent Residential School in South London.

Ruth was active in the Jewish Deaf Association Club. When she was 18, the group met at Buckingham Palace to see the Queen return from her Commonwealth tour. Here, she met her husband Percy. She was impressed with his good manners. She said he looked like a professor.

They soon married, in 1955, began a family and emigrated to the United States in 1963. They were married for 57 years before she passed away.

Ruth loved to hunt for bargains. She got so much pleasure from her treasures and never tired of telling her family exactly how much she had paid ... down to the penny! She had a wonderful collection of tin cans - hundreds of tin cans in all shapes and sizes. Each had a story and was displayed in customised cabinets. She loved to talk about them.

She had a strong appreciation for the arts and was a member of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. When she retired she learned to paint and never lost enthusiasm for her hobby: the walls of most rooms in her home still display her paintings.

She also loved helping people and she combined both loves when she volunteered for 25 years at the Los Angeles Braille Institute. Her mission was to help deaf and blind students learn art through crafts so it might bring them much joy as it did her.

Ruth was an extrovert and loved dancing and entertaining with her humour, sharing her smiling personality with whoever she met. She worked at a sweatshop, as a data entry clerk for LA City Hall and as a data clerk for the Veterans Administration office and travelled everywhere by public transport.

Her family was fascinated by her humorous way of explaining scary moments that she experienced during some bus rides home from work. Her favorite story convinced her and her family that she needed to learn to drive. She began:

"I was sitting on the bus talking with my friend when I saw her expression turn to worry. I saw a man walking slowly down the aisle holding a knife in his hand. His eyes were squinting, his face was in a grimace and he was yelling at the driver. I felt a lump in my throat. The driver stopped the bus, got up from his seat and shouted: 'Get off my bus!' Like a miracle he got off without incident."

Ruth loved to travel and, living carefully, managed many trips with the children. She visited cities in Europe, Israel, China and the USA.

Ruth will be missed by her many friends at JDA, her husband, Percy, sons Aaron and Jacob, grandson Isaac, sisters Jessica and Deborah, nieces, nephew, great-nieces and great-nephews.