

EULOGY - MARJORIE SEGAL - FUNERAL - DECEMBER 19, 1990

At first glance there seems to be a old world/new world dichotomy that describes the life of Marjorie Beatrice Segal.

On the one hand Debbie remembers that when she lived in Saskatchewan as a small girl how Mom would hitch up the team of horses and rush to deliver a baby: a very old world picture.

Yet Marvin emphasizes as a working woman she was ahead of her time.

She was, like the old world would have its women, an introverted soft spoken, cultured lady. Yet even before it was considered a woman's virtue she was fiercely independent.

I believe that if one digs just a little deeper there is no real contrast. Those old world qualities of which we spoke were, for the most part, superficial. What distinguished Marjorie was her ability to grow with the times. So many of us, when we age, become stuck at some point in our past. Marjorie was blessed in that she had the capacity to make every age her own.

Her loving relationship with her husband David was an example of this trait. They lived happily with one another for many, many years. They loved each other dearly. They spent time together,.

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did many things together, in fact for many years they worked side by side in David's business in Saskatchewan.

David was a passive easy going man, must less decisive than Marjorie. David & Marjorie had the courage to challenge the cultural norms that demanded that the male was to be the dominating partner. Throughout their marriage they moved their relationship closer and closer to the egalitarian norms that would be the dream of the nineties.

She was a working woman during a time when most of her contemporaries stayed home with their children. This may have sometimes caused a perception of distance, but she tried very hard, especially when the children were older, to be a good mother.

Debbie remembers the loneliness her young family felt when she pulled up her roots and moved to Prince George. Marjorie cared enough to come to live with the family and help them adjust to a new life. That scene was almost identically repeated when she broke up her home and moved to Edmonton to prepare the way for her granddaughter Samara.

Her relationship with her grandchildren was an example of how modern Marjorie truly was. At a age when most people had difficulty coping with changes in society, Marjorie was able to discuss with her grandchildren such issues as safe sex and drugs without embarrassment.

Benita and Samara and Robert were blessed to have a grandmother with whom they could talk about issues of importance, not just a supplier of cookies and milk and chicken soup.

She did not make friends easily, but she was well liked by everyone who know her. She she married David she adopted his family, During these past 14 years since her husband's death, her close relationships with Minnie and Ethel were both meaningful and comforting. They would spend many a night in each other's company watching hockey and talking over family gossip. Her husband's sisters became her sisters. And indeed her apartment house, with sister-in-law and cousins and an aunt, was almost a family ghetto.

Marjorie spent many a year in live-long Saskatchewan, which perhaps accounts for her blessing of longevity. Another reason may be the importance she attached towards supporting her synagogue. Having lived far from any significant Jewish community, her affiliation with Beth Shalom was one of the first things she did when she arrived in Edmonton and she maintained that affiliation in her remaining years.

Debbie remarks that after this year's High Holidays, Marjorie spoke of attending services more frequently. We pray in the traditional prayer of our mystical ancestors that she will find meaning in her presence with God in the world to come.

Marjorie was born on New Year's day 1908. The new year was an apt time to celebrate the birth of one so refreshingly modern and so often renewed. In a few days there will be another new year, only this time Marjorie won't be here to celebrate.

Our tradition asks us to say the Kaddish on the anniversary of one's death and I am confident that Marjorie's family will do so. But perhaps on New Year's day on this year and in years to come there should be a special memory reserved for Marjorie who ushered in each year with the capacity to grow to love and to care.