

Jewish Healing Center  
LOS ANGELES



*We remember*



Spring 2010

## TRIBUTE JOURNAL

Since 2001, as Los Angeles' first Jewish Hospice service (JHPLA), we have been privileged and honored to enter the lives of nearly 700 families at one of the most crucial and difficult times for them—the end of the life of a loved one.



The spectrum that is covered by these families is a wide one, from ethnicity, to socio-economic level, to primary languages spoken and yes, even to religion practiced. What has united these diverse families has been their decision to bring death back into the home as an integral part of life. In a familiar setting, surrounded by family, pets, friends and loving caregivers, each was able to approach the end with a maximum of comfort with a minimum of intervention.



Each individual is as unique as their thumb-print, and so is their passing. Our work as witnesses to the writing of the last chapter of their lives allows us to support these individuals and their families by revealing the hidden treasures that are embedded in the sadness of separation and loss. They in turn share their journey with us, each one sacred. In this way, each departing soul is a teacher.

We would like to single out three individuals who allowed us to care for them at the end of their lives and celebrate the light that those lives provided us all.

IRENE GUTSON

LEE WEINSTEIN

NANCY MYSEL

Under flap



## EVERYONE HAS A NAME

*Everyone has a name  
given to him by God  
and given to him by his parents*

*Everyone has a name  
given to him by his stature  
and the way he smiles  
and given to him by his clothing*

*Everyone has a name  
given to him by the mountains  
and given to him by his walls*

*Everyone has a name  
given to him by the stars  
and given to him by his neighbors*

*Everyone has a name  
given to him by his sins  
and given to him by his longing*

*Everyone has a name  
given to him by his enemies  
and given to him by his love*

*Everyone has a name  
given to him by his feasts  
and given to him by his work*

*Everyone has a name  
given to him by the seasons  
and given to him by his blindness*

*Everyone has a name  
given to him by the sea and  
given to him  
by his death.*



## IRENE GUTSON

Anesthesiologist

1952–2010



**My mom was born in Paris** on April 11, 1952. Born to Rita and Gershon Gutelzon, both holocaust survivors, Irene Gutson (changed when they immigrated to the US) began the all too short journey that was her life. Raised on a chicken farm in Chino, California, my mother had an ox's work ethic. She graduated from the UC Riverside's Deans List, and went on to become the top-notch anesthesiologist who raised me. I don't want to go so far to say that it is a real, "rags-to-riches" story, but I am extremely proud of what she accomplished with what she was given. Truly admirable, something I only hope to match.

Irene was a garden enthusiast with a strong affection for depressing films. Irene loved to wake up in bed with the dog by her side, feeling a fresh breeze, and look out French doors to watch the hummingbirds feed on her secret garden. But most of all, Irene loved me. Loved me to the moon and back.

At the age of 58, Irene Gutson died of metastatic breast cancer. Cancer she had been fighting for 14 years. We had started the devastating journey when I was only 8 years old, which never got easier as the years past. My mom was a single mother, and I am an only child,

making us the Pierrot and Pierrette, the Bonnie and Clyde, the matzoth ball and soup of each other's lives. When I was up, she was up, and when she was down, I was down—we were connected.

My mother made fabulous female friends who became family. She was the type of person who could be extremely close with a Republican Catholic, a Jewish yogi, a Chilean economist, and a WASPy interior designer. Not only did she befriend these women, she also bound them together for a common purpose: to ensure the health and happiness of my life. I now have my very own pack of eight mothers I turn to guide me through this hard thing called life. She fostered a present-day version of the Biblical Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah sitting in that red tent.

When my mother died two years ago, my world stopped for an uncertain amount of time. There is a sort of haze around that entire chapter of my life. What

I can say is it was a chapter of absolute despair, utter aloneness, and complete panic.... A really great time; I recommend it highly.

I was entering my senior year at University of California, Berkeley, when I got the call to come home. I flew 110 miles per hour down the 5, wearing pajamas and tears, and praying to God that she not die before I got home. I met Rabbi Carla when I pulled up to my very front door. A godsend, an angel... well at that time she was more a wonderful shoulder to cry on. We sat on the swing outside my house and she just let me cry. My whole body had been flexed in tension during the drive, and on that bench my muscles numbly quivered and I just cried. In the two days I had been away my mom had shifted from "it could be a month or 3" to "it is happening now," and by the time I arrived she could no longer speak, and rarely opened her eyes. Rabbi Carla explained to me that she met my mother in the hospital when she was signing up for hospice, and that she was here to offer relief emotionally, spiritually and tactically. The Rabbi helped me mediate strained familial ties, deal with letting go, and shortly there after, plan what I had always been planning secretly in my mind, my mother's funeral.

She digested my unqualified anguish and depression, over time helped coax my eternal optimist to come back to life. And I am not saying I am totally in the clear, but every day Rabbi Carla's got my back. I must sound like a hoodlum, but trust me when I say she will support you come hell or high water. She is the most useful "therapy" I have grown from (and I've been going for

most of my life as my mother was a doctor). I consider her my internal advocate, and my channel to reality. She allows me to see all my life's puzzle pieces, and explain why I feel and act the way that I do. Rabbi Carla taught me how to heal.

My name is Rachel Gutson, and I was born on May 29th, 1989. I am the only child of a breast cancer fighter, and the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors and Partisan fighters. When people tell me "You are so strong", I would always say "What choice do I have?" When you lose your only parent at the age of 21, people don't know what to say.

Rabbi Carla knew what to say....

### RABBI HOWARD REMEMBERS...

Irene, know that your greatest creation in your life is a treasure. You have done well.





## LEE IVAN WEINSTEIN

Social Worker and Advocate  
for People with Disabilities  
1946–2011



LEE WEINSTEIN WAS BORN IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS and spent his life and career speaking and acting on behalf of those whose voices often go unheard. Lee marched with Martin Luther King in the 1960s and helped individuals with developmental disabilities to reach their greatest potential during more than 30 years spent working at Westside Regional Center in Culver City, where he rose to the position of Director. Lee was the foundation of the clinical services team, and served as a mentor for co-workers as well as a staunch advocate for all staff and the clients WRC served. Those who worked alongside Lee remember him as “a fearless leader, mentor and friend to countless people in our community.”

Lee and his partner, interior and furniture designer Michael Berman, met in 1980 and were together until Lee passed away. Michael remembers him as “the kind of person you could always rely on. He was like the bright light in a room that was always smiling and everyone was attracted to. He had a way of making everyone feel comfortable and confident.”

“After a series of unfortunate circumstances with another hospice service, Lee and I were finally placed in the compassionate and caring hands of the Jewish Healing Center. Their comforting home hospice care allowed Lee’s passing to embody the grace and integrity that Lee carried throughout his entire life. I feel so strongly about the Jewish Healing and Hospice Center, Los Angeles’ longest continuing provider of Jewish hospice services, that I have joined the Board of Directors in an effort to grow and support these vital services.”

After Lee’s passing Michael wrote a poem in his memory:

### THE FIRST SNOW

*Sunday I witnessed the first snow on the mountain  
it seemed like a dream  
the thought of such beauty without you by my side  
I imagined your smile; your hands  
the joy we felt  
the confusing sound of morning silence  
it seemed too poetic  
the thought of the first breath of dawn;  
the last moment of twilight without you by my side  
you are visible in every canyon and forest;  
dusted by the white light of your gentleness  
it seems impossible  
the thought of cool nights, holidays;  
the electric moon existing without you by my side  
Sunday I witnessed the first snow  
on the mountain  
it seemed surreal*



### RABBI HOWARD REMEMBERS...

Michael first contacted JHCLA when Lee’s condition was rapidly deteriorating. He had been referred to us by a family member living all the way across the country. We spoke and I could hear the panic and distress in his voice. We set up an admission for Lee. While in the hospital, the discharge planner re-assigned Lee to a hospice of their choosing and he called, overwhelmed, to convey the news. After several days had passed, I was moved by the pain in Michael’s voice—a mystery in this field of many mysteries—to call him one more time.

I found Michael in a worse state, having been neglected by the hospice service to which Lee had been assigned.

The relief was palpable once the change was made. Lee’s passing and subsequent memorial service facilitated the process of healing for not just Michael but all those family members and friends who knew and loved this special man.



## NANCY MYSEL

Film Preservationist  
1966–2012

NANCY MYSEL WAS BORN IN PATERSON, NEW JERSEY and graduated from Boston University's School of Communications. She spent seven years as assistant picture and sound editor for National Geographic in Washington, DC, where she received an Emmy nomination for her work on the film "The Great Indian Railway." In 1999, Nancy joined the UCLA Film & Television Archive and in 2000, she began her career as a film preservationist, working in collaboration with organizations such as the Film Foundation, Sundance, Film Noir Foundation, the National Film Preservation Foundation and Outfest on an eclectic range of projects.

Nancy was particularly interested in the challenges of the unique black and white cinematography of the noir period and supervised the restoration of re-discovered noir films "**The Prowler**" by Joseph Losey and "**Cry Danger**" by Robert Parrish. Other noir projects she worked on included the restoration and assembly of production outtakes from the 1955 classic "**The Night of the Hunter**" and Fritz Lang's "**Cloak and Dagger**." Outside of the noir genre, Nancy supervised the restoration of films by pioneering female director Dorothy Arzner, documentaries, groundbreaking LGBT works, short subjects and others.

"Nancy was wonderful, sweet and far too shy and humble—and most importantly, she was a tenacious guardian of cinema history, who



set very high standards for all of us. ..." said Eddie Muller, President of the Film Noir Foundation.

In May, 2012, after Nancy had been battling breast cancer for eight years and when aggressive medical treatment was no longer effective, her oncologist referred her to the Jewish Healing Center. As a child she was always comfortable on her own and in her own skin. As an adult, she was also a fiercely private and independent person and she chose to confront her battle with cancer primarily on her own. That's not to say she preferred to be alone, but she would never want to inconvenience or impose. However, during her

final weeks of life, she invited us in—my Dad, Mom and sister Cathy—into her apartment and into the final days of her life. This amazing gift was something that showed the depth of her strength and willingness to share with us. ... She refused to let cancer prevent her from doing what she loved. Along with the support of family, it was this love that drove her to continue to fight her disease and gave her the strength and courage to face each day," recalled her brother Jon.

"We can't over emphasize how very important Rabbi Howard's involvement has been," her parents Allan and Carol wrote, "and how much it has meant to us at each and every turn of our journey—the Jewish Healing Center's choice of a medical partner, shepherding us through the admittance process; continuously monitoring our satisfaction with medical services and immediately intervening with medical staff when dissatisfactions arose—even to the extent of going back to Nancy's oncologist to seek a different recommendation of an anti-itch medication when others failed to provide relief. Beyond that, Rabbi Howard's weekly visits as our "social worker/therapist/spiritual guide", which extended to the inclusion of our two older children, Cathy and Jon, opened lines of communication for us and forced us to confront extremely difficult and sensitive issues in a positive way and to draw strength from each other."

Cathy, Nan's sister, said: "I know I am a changed person after the journey we went through together. ... Rabbi Carla helped all of us to see that the process of Nancy letting go after an incredibly brave fight was more than just a tragic loss of a loved one; it was a journey that we could each be a part of and, if we were willing, take something good from. I took her guidance to heart and it has stayed with me even as I have returned to my routine back in New Jersey. The memories I have of us sitting around Nancy's living room talking, crying and yes, even laughing will be with me forever. With Rabbi Carla's love and support Nancy found the strength

## MARTIN SCORSESE

DIRECTOR

"Nancy worked on many of the film preservation and restoration projects undertaken by my non-profit film preservation group, The Film Foundation. She embodied the characteristics of every great archivist: curiosity, intellect, dedication, tenacity, sensitivity, and a passion for art and history. Through her excellent work, generations will enjoy and study films from the past that will enrich and inform the future."

inside to accept and be at peace with the fact that her life's journey was coming to an end. Seeing it with my own eyes made her passing more bearable. These are but some of the gifts she and Nancy have given me. ..."

### RABBI HOWARD REMEMBERS...

A family grew and changed before my very eyes. This family became part of the JHCLA family and as a result, Allan joined our Board of Directors in June of 2012.

In spending time with Nan, it became clear that this extremely humble and wonderful woman's life was her work. I asked Nan how she would feel about a gathering for family and colleagues celebrating her life and work. With a bit of prodding and encouragement from me, she agreed.

It came to pass on August 12, 2012—two months after her death—at the Bridges Theater at UCLA. It was a memorial tribute with laughter and tears, a fitting send-off on what would have been Nan's 46th birthday.





WE REMEMBER

The Jewish Healing and Hospice Center would like to express its gratitude to the CHAPLAINS who have served our client families during this time:

Rabbi Diane Cohen  
Rabbi Ronnie Cohen  
Chaplain Elihu Gevirtz

Jeanette Abramoff	Mary Cook	Harold Howard	Avraham Merav	Jack Schneider
Steve Adler	Irene Davidson	Marsha Jacobs	Beatrice Minstein	Randon Schoenthal
Louise Armenta	Suzanne Dorsett	Hazel Janosky	Helene Moder	Christopher Schwemmer
Hubert Aronson	Sandy Dubin	Joseph Jones	Deborah Moorer	Diana Scott
Ernie Auerbach	Frances Ezrin	Judith Kaplan	Nancy Mysel	Nat Sherman
Lisa Auerbach	Eileen Freeman	Tatyana Keizer	Arnold Nedelman	Mary Sholty
Irving Axelrod	Julie Garfinkel	Kelly Kinsey	Carolyn Nelson	Fawnn Sneddon
Jacqueline Bandura	Middie Giesberg	Yaffa Koresh	Margie Neufeld	Seymour Stern
Avril Barker	Lawrence Gelman	William Landau	Gloria Nimmer	Barbara Tulk
Bruce R. Barnard	Frances Glazer	Ellie Lazaroff	Joseph Parker	Susan Vantrees
Irving Bellings	Ruth Goldberg	Burton Levine	Elaine Pasternack	Joe Waldorf
Brenda Berman	Ernest Goldenfeld	Anabelle Levine	Charles Picou	Evelyn Wallace
Eugene Herman Bloom	Sandy Greene	Benjamin Levinson	Alexandra Eileen Pollyea	Lee Weinstein
Phillip Bohl	Irene Gutson	Sylvia Marrmarosh	Michael Prendes	Lillian Wirth
Faina Davydovna Bukhina	Frances Hale	Anne Mason	Benjamin Rakoff	
Frieda Chesner	Elsa Hamilton	Mildred Mayer	Rita Reier	
Estelle Chester	Roberta Herman	Sylvia Meals	Lilly Ruff	
Jack Colker	Marie Hoegemann	Ruth Mellinkoff	Ruth Schacht	

“If I’d only known...”

Although we have helped over 500 client families facing crises, often working with these families over a period of months, and reached more than 2,000 individuals, including family members, we daily encounter people who wish they had been aware of our services at their time of need.

*Do you know people who could benefit from our services? Please put them in touch with us.*



**RABBI CARLA HOWARD** is the Founder and Executive Director of Los Angeles’ first Jewish hospice service, Jewish Healing Center of Los Angeles. She combines rabbinic ordination with a unique background of pre-medical studies, clinical work in women’s medicine and midwifery, and success as an entrepreneur. Rabbi Howard is on the faculty of UCLA’s David Geffen School of Medicine and the Academy for Jewish Religion rabbinical seminary, and serves on the Bio-Ethics Committee of Santa Monica/UCLA Medical Center.

A cancer survivor herself, Rabbi Howard lives in Los Angeles with her husband, two children, two dogs and a cat.





# WHEN TO CALL

- ♥ When hospice care is needed
- ♥ To understand what hospice care is and if it is appropriate
- ♥ For crisis intervention
- ♥ For management care services (interfacing with medical providers)
- ♥ For spiritual counseling/direction for individuals, couples and families (both local and long distance)
- ♥ For caregiver and patient support during long-term illness
- ♥ For bereavement counseling

## Jewish Healing Center

LOS ANGELES



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JHCLA is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) not for profit institution. The Center is dependent on the community which it serves and welcomes your generosity and contributions.

Please check our website for *Refa'einu*, our Community Monthly Healing Services, and for other activities, including volunteer opportunities.

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**OUR MISSION** is to provide compassionate care for those individuals affected by serious illness and other life crises through a multi-faceted approach to healing, based on the wisdom of the Jewish tradition. We serve the entire community regardless of affliction.