

Funeral of Lucinda (Cindy) Benbow Labell  
*Ilana bat Avraham v'Sarah*  
Date of Death 2/19/09 25 Shevat 5769  
Rabbi Eliezer Havivi

Chaim Nachman Bialik, the Jewish Poet laureate, penned these lines:

*Acharay Moti, sifdu kacha li: re'u - haya ish, v'aynenu od...*

After my death,  
Say this when you mourn for me -  
There was a woman - and look, she is no more.  
She died before her time. The music of her life suddenly stopped.  
How sad! There was another song in her -  
Now it is lost  
lost forever

So it is with our friend Cindy Labell - the song of her life stopped, with melodies and harmonies and stanzas and movements left unwritten.

Cindy was born in 1952, a first born child to Bob and Reba Benbow, in Greensboro, soon joined by siblings Ann and Sam. Bob sold insurance, and they moved about some within North Carolina when Cindy was a child. She graduated from Grimsley High School in 1970, and then UNCG.

In High School, Lyn's sister Dorothy and Cindy were best friends, and so Bob and Reba were known in the Labell house hold, even coming to Seder one year. Years later, Lyn was walking down the street, and at the corner of Elam and Walker, he ran into Bob Benbow. "Do you know who I am?" asked Bob. "Yes, you're Mr. Benbow", Lyn replied. "No, I'm Bob," he said, and immediately took Lyn upstairs to his office to introduce him to Cindy who was working as his secretary, and so it started.

Cindy's uncle was an agronomist at Colorado State, and took Cindy with him to Lahore, in Pakistan for a year. There were some letters that went back and forth between Cindy and Lyn, she came back eventually, after a side trip to Israel together with Mindy Kutchei, Lyn and Cindy began to date, and finally married in 1977 in a 105 degree summer day at Benbow Lake in Oakridge. Eight years later, Jesse was born, and Cindy became mom not just to her daughter, but to all of Jesse's friends, through elementary and high school – she was a second, and very cool mom to many of them.

Cindy held a variety of jobs. She was a gravedigger for the City of Greensboro – the only woman in her crew; she worked with a lot of burly men, and predictably, beat them all at poker. She worked for many years at Datamasters, first as a secretary, and eventually as a recruiter – a senior management position matching IT folks with potential jobs.

Cindy was involved in a lot of social justice and non-violence causes, active in social change. She and Dorothy ran a café that the government tried to close down, but failed when blocked by two women at the door, and she tutored youngsters from the poor side of town.

Cindy had a lot of hobbies and interests. She loved music. She played the piano; they went to Merlefest for many years. She and Lyn bought a house on Scott Avenue and fixed it up. Cindy painted watercolors and did sketches, mostly of nature things. She grew organic vegetables and had a big garden behind the house. She put up preserves. She loved to have her hands and feet in dirt

Cindy loved antiques. Her house is full of antiques that she and Lyn's cousin Liz Berger found and bought together. For a few years, Cindy and her sister Annie had a small antiques business in Eden. Beauty was important to her – her own beauty, and the beauty of her surroundings. She had a great memory for color. She had a great sense of style. Even when she was really too weak to travel, when Liz and Mark bought a new house in Indianapolis, Cindy insisted on flying out there so she could see how the place was decorated.

Cindy was a great cook. She and Mindy put together many Seders at Passover times, and Rosh Hashanas and Thanksgivings.

Cindy loved the beach – she would sit on the deck and paint, or read – she was an avid reader - , she loved to take long walks at Ocean Isle. She loved to make Shabbat dinners at the beach with Lyn and Liz and Mark and the three cousins.

And she loved the mountains, too – she loved the colors and the smells of flowers and the space there. In later life, she took up water aerobics at the Y, and developed a cadre of friends there – the African American women in the aerobics group called her “Baby” .... And she loved that.

And Cindy was a keen judge of character – personally, and professionally. She had strong opinions, she was to the point, she was truthful, she had the ability to read others and empathize. She had high expectations of herself, of her family and of those who she was with.

In the early '80's Cindy converted to Judaism. She had known for a long time that this was something she wanted to do, Lyn at the time, was teaching Math at B'nai Shalom, and it was yet another example of Cindy marching to the beat of her own drummer.

Three years ago, Cindy and Lyn started to see symptoms of the disease that would ultimately put an end to her life. She had surgery, aggressive treatment at Duke; she was in a clinical trial. Through it all, she continued to live to the fullest – She travelled to Bali and Singapore. She went to the beach and the pool. She never gave up, never said- “Why me?” she understood that some flowers live to maturity, and some do not. She got frustrated with her own limitations, sometimes, but then got over it, and moved on. She had, throughout her life, a large circle of friends who sustained her and nurtured her before her illness and over the last few years as well.

Lucinda Cindy Benbow Labell, *Ilana bat Avraham v'Sarah*, left this world after 56 years of life, on February 19, the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the Hebrew month of Shevat, in the year 5769.

To those who loved Cindy and whom she loved the most –

To Lyn – Cindy's lover and helpmate and husband for 31 years – She worked hard to train you. You shared values, you enjoyed each other's company, and music and driving to the beach and working on the house. She just enjoyed being with you.

You and Cindy cared for each other, and challenged each other, and helped each other grow – and your care for her over the past three years was a comfort to her, and moving to all of us who watched the two of you during those years;

To Jesse – you and your mom had a powerful mother and daughter relationship, with all of its pulls and pushes. But your mom knew that you were blessed with a kind spirit – She knew that would always be kind to those around you and she took great pride and comfort in that piece of your personality. Jesse – 18 months ago, you moved back home to help take care of your mom. That was exemplary *kibud Av va'em* – fulfillment of the commandment to honor your mother.

Bob and Reba – It is against the natural order of the world, when parents bury a child. Our hearts ache for Cindy, and for you. You were always a close knit family; you were Cindy's best friends. Together, you gave her life, and joy, and guidance and comfort for almost 57 years.

Nat- you and Cindy, and Helen had a complex relationship over the years, as befits a daughter in law – She gave you her greatest gift – Jessie, and she knew how grateful you were to her for that.

Liz and Mark Berger, and Jacob and Leah – Liz - you and Cindy were the soul mates, and the three cousins grew up like siblings.

Sam Benbow and Diane, and Zoe and Drew

Ann and Bill Timberlake

David and Leti Labell, Dorothy and Brent Smith

Mindy Kutchei and Lynn Gibbs and Miriam Barkley and Paula White, and Tricia Nagorsky,

And all who loved Cindy,

Our hearts and our arms reach out to each other in comfort and consolation. The lively music of Cindy's life was suddenly stopped, but the memories of her music, her life, will always be a blessing to all of us.

Liz Berger, who is Lyn's cousin, will offer words of tribute and remembrance.

Burial will follow immediately at GSO Heb Cem, HPRoad at Vanstory. When we are there will have the opportunity to participate in one last kindness we can offer Cindy – after we lower her coffin, we will each take a few shovelfuls of earth, and place them gently into the grave, to make sure that Cindy is buried properly by those who loved her during her lifetime.

Shiva – visitation will be at the Labell home 101 W. Keeling, through Friday morning. Minyans – memorial services will be at the Labell home today through Thursday afternoon at 5:45 PM each day.

Please rise for the El Maleh Rachamim, the memorial prayer