

Eulogy of Marilyn Nelson  
*Meara Fruma bat Chayim Pinchas u'Devorah Feiga*  
Date of Death 10/12/08, 14 Tishray 5769  
Rabbi Eliezer Havivi

The passing of Marilyn Nelson leaves us sad that we will no longer be with her, but at the same time, we are grateful for the memories of a good and loving human being.

Marilyn Nelson was a character. You only had to know that most people called her Marlyn, even though her name was Marilyn, but originally Mary Francis, to know that she was a character.

Marlyn was born in 1921, an only child to Hyman P. Zall and Dora Fye Fleishman Zall, in Fayetteville NC. Her parents divorced when she was young, and her mother was killed in a traffic accident when she was 12 or 14. Her mother's sisters, Aunt Florence Blumenstein and Aunt Ida Waitman took her in and raised her. After high school, she earned a two year business degree at a local college and was sent by her parents to Baltimore to find a husband. She lived with a cousin, Helene Shugar Fleishman, did office work, and met Julius. Julius eventually journeyed to Fayetteville to be approved by Hyman and Marilyn, and they were married in 1946. Marilyn's father, Hyman, had a general store, and Julius went to work for him in Fayetteville, settled there, and Frank was born in 1947.

Marilyn was a religious Jewish wife and mother. She kept house, she cooked and made sure that there was a meal on the table at the end of a day, she made Shabbos and Yomtov, and she came to shul when she could. Her main concern was her family. Later in life, she became a real estate agent, and had some rental properties that she looked after.

For many years, Hyman lived with Marilyn and Julius. Frank remembers that when he was a boy, Hyman helped to take care of him, and when Frank was a teenager, he helped take care of Hyman.

Marilyn like to bake - some of her signature dishes were her pineapple upside down cake, angel food - because it was parve, apple and cherry pies, and different kinds of noodle kugle- a milchig one and a parve one. She made her own chopped herring.

And Marilyn made sure that Frank was fed and cared for. She was protective, and proactive. When Frank went away to college, Marilyn fussed and mad sure that he had what she thought he needed. And later, when Frank met Ellen, and they were married and had children; Marilyn and Julius would come for weekends up to Greensboro, and visit with them, or meet them halfway, and take the kids for the weekend. Marilyn's grandchildren remember tongue sandwiches, and two-dollar bills that Marilyn used to give them and a dinner bell with which she announced mealtimes.

Marilyn and Julius were part of a social group of eight couples in Fayetteville called the Tinklers. The women were close; they share recipes, and played cards on Saturday night after Shabbos ended. They had a tin cup, and when they put coins in, it tinkled, hence the name. They saved up, and every now and then went away together to the beach together.

Julius died in June of 1992 after being ill with multiple myeloma. They were married for almost 50 years. Marilyn stayed in Fayetteville for about four years afterwards. She was active, but one day fell in the driveway and broke her hip. During her hospital stay, she was so eager to leave, that the doctors had to put restraints on her to keep her in her bed. When Ellen came to visit, Marilyn innocently asked her for

her cuticle scissors. The next morning, the hospital called to report that Marilyn had cut through the restraints, gotten out of bed, fallen and broken her arm. The family refers to this episode as “the great escape.”

For the last twelve and a half years, Marilyn lived in the Blumenthal Home. First she moved to Blumenthal in Clemmons. Bunny’s mom was already there, it was kosher, and Marilyn was relatively happy there. After a while, the home there closed, she moved to the Masonic home, and then finally to the new Blumenthal Home in Greensboro.

Marilyn had a lot of personality. She was a worrier; she was suspicious of the world. She reviewed every grocery store receipt, she kept track of her phone calls and checked the phone bill every month, She hoarded money in the basement, She was suspicious of kashrut at Blumenthal, worried about the propriety of religious services there, and of course, complained about the food. . She drove her doctors crazy, questioning them about every medication and every procedure. She collected and rarely discarded. She was overprotective of her Frankie. In an effort to keep roaming Alzheimers patients out of her room at Blumenthal, she put a big stop sign on her door, as if that would stop them.

And with all this, she was remarkably likeable – She was always happy to see visitors. Before she launched into a complaint, she always greeted you warmly, she kept up with, and sent her grandchildren clippings from newspapers. Even during her last years at Blumenthal, Marilyn had a zest for living - I remember how she used to scoot around the halls in her wheelchair. She was very hard of hearing, but somehow would hint that her hearing loss was only selective, and not complete, even as she told you that she couldn’t hear you. She cared a great deal about Yiddishkeit, she loved when Frank brought her to shul.

Mary Francis Marilyn Marlin Zall Nelson, *Meara Fruma bat Chayim Pinchas u’Devora Feiga*, left this world after 87 years of life, on erev Sukkot, the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the Hebrew month of Tishray in the new Jewish year 5769. To those who knew her and loved her

To Frank and Ellen – your care for your mother was exceptional. The Torah tells us that the mitzvah of honoring parents is to bring them in and take them out – in other words to do for them what they need – and that is exactly what you did for your mother. Your devotion and care to your mother – your kavod to her and your commitment to that mitzvah is truly exemplary, and a model and inspiration to everyone.

To grandchildren- Philip Aaron and Elissa and Dori

To Sylvia Sclar and Marlene

Bunny and David;

Sandy Doberis and Michael and David Brooks;

Lynn and Michael Greens;

Joel Fleishman and Neesee

Ann Goodman,

and to all who knew Marilyn and mourn her passing, We reach out our arms to comfort and consol each other. May Marilyn’s example and her life and our memories of her teach us how to live, and may her memory always be a blessing.