

Eulogy of Richard Ian Rothstein
Reuven Yitzchak ben Nachman v'Rachel
Date of Death May 8, 2009; 14 Iyar 5769
Rabbi Eliezer Havivi

In the world of music there is one symphony which is different from all the rest. The conventional symphony has three, four, or perhaps five movements, but there is a symphony that has only one movement. The reason is that the composer Franz Schubert never finished it. Schubert wrote the first movement, put it away in his drawer, and before he could finish it, he died. Hence its name: The Unfinished Symphony.

Though Schubert did not finish his symphony, the entire world is the richer, in that we have heard this wonderful piece of music. Despite the fact that it breaks off before it is complete, it is nonetheless, a masterpiece.

An unfinished life is, in many ways, like an unfinished symphony. There is great sadness and regret that we did not see that life lived to its fullest. At the same time, we feel that it is far better to have had the few years granted to us, than to have nothing at all. The passing of Rich Rothstein leaves us sad at the thought of the unfinished years, but grateful for the wonderful memories of his life.

Richard Rothstein was born in Brooklyn, NY in 1954, to Rochelle and Nathan, younger brother to Pam and Ellen. He grew up in Lynbrook, on Long Island, went to Valley Stream South High School, SUNY New Paltz, and finished a masters Degree in Public Administration from American University in Washington, DC.

Rich worked at a wide variety of jobs over his life time – in a consulting company for the Defense Department, in retail, in management teams, and more recently, in Greensboro, for Barnes and Noble, Piedmont Aviation, and Sealy Mattress.

Rich's mother Effie, and Wendy's mother Estelle, went to the same hairdresser in Hewlett, and had long schemed to get their children together. When they discovered at some point that both of their children had recently moved to Florida, the time was right for action; next month would have marked 27 years that Wendy and Rich were married.

Rich was known, by those who knew him best, as sweet, funny, and having an inviting smile. He had a quick wit, he was compassionate, and loved to make people laugh – he had a sharp mind, he loved animals, and he loved to give to others – sympathy, advice, guidance. He was often able to find the good in people, and to find the positive in situations in which he would find himself.

Richard and Wendy moved to Greensboro in 1996 – in part to be closer to Wendy's brother and sister in law – Marshal and Jackie Reiss. In just a moment, Marshall, who perhaps after Wendy knew Richard best, will offer words of remembrance.

Richard Ian Rothstein, *Reuven Yitzchak ben Nachum v'Rachel*, died Friday, on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Iyar, after 54 years of life.

To Wendy, whom he loved dearly,

To his sisters Pam and Ellen and their families, to Jackie and Marshall,

To relatives and friends – our hearts and arms reach out to you in comfort and consolation. We pray that Rich's memory will always be a blessing for you.