

Eulogy for Evelyn Silverman, *Yocheved bat Yehuda v'Chaya*
Date of Death September 30, 2008 - 2 Tishray 5769
Rabbi Eliezer Havivi

In Mt. Rainier National Park in the State of Washington, there is a grove of trees on a small island in a river. The trees' location has protected them from fires, avalanches and floods for ten centuries. Because of that, some of the trees have grown to gigantic proportions, and because of those trees, the area is known as the Grove of the Patriarchs. These are trees of a strength and magnitude rarely encountered.

Once in a while one of those breathtaking ancient trees succumbs to the force of the winter winds.

At a certain place on the trail, the National Park Service has posted a sign to make sure you sit up and take notice of a surprising phenomenon. Two trees have fallen, having been knocked over in one of those storms, and these two adjacent trees have fallen in exactly opposite directions, with their uprooted trunks facing away from each other. Why, asks the Park Service's rustic wooden sign, would one storm knock down two trees not in the same direction but in opposite directions? The winds, after all, blow one way and not the other.

The answer is also on the sign: Only one of the trees was felled by the storm. The two trees, though, had grown side by side for so many hundreds of years that their root systems had become intertwined—*inextricably* intertwined. When the winds toppled one ancient tree, the other could no longer cling to the earth and in short order it, too, swayed and fell.

So it is, not infrequently, with two human beings. After decades of sharing every day with each other, their roots, the source of their nourishment and stability, grow to be inseparable. When one is felled by the ravages of illness or misfortune, the other finds it difficult to remain anchored, to draw sustenance. Like those trees in the Grove of the Patriarchs, together they reach great heights, and together they return to the earth.

We are here today to lay to eternal rest, Evelyn Silverman, just one year after we brought her beloved Herbert to his eternal resting place. They were inextricably linked. They cared for each other, and once Evelyn's job of caring for Herbert was done, she too, could lay down to rest

Born to Parents Ida and Julius Novakoff who were immigrants to this country, middle sister to Joseph and Eddie, Evelyn was born and raised in Boston. Her father was a tailor, who, with his two sons, grew his business into manufacturing military uniforms.

Herbert was a native of Danville - they met when he was an undergrad at Harvard – he went to med school at UVA, they married in Charlottesville, and there, two things were born – Sandra, and Herbert's active duty posting as a physician in Germany, and his and Evelyn's subsequent love of travel. After the war, they came back to Brookline, and two more things were born – Carol, and Herbert's Medical Practice. . Over fifty years ago, Herbert and Evelyn moved back to Danville, where they lived their lives, to the fullest, with gusto and joy.

Evelyn was a beautiful woman – She was the May Queen in High School, She was outgoing – she could walk into any room and immediately begin talking to anyone and everyone. She had great self-

confidence. She loved fashion and clothes and she loved life, and she loved Herbert. She was proud of Herbert, and was his best cheerleader. She was his helpmate and his rock for 65 years.

She loved to China Paint, and she loved to go antiquing with Herbert, and they loved to play bridge. Evelyn was the matriarch – the driving force in the family. And she loved life. She told Sandra the other day that the bad thing about dying was that you don't get to see anymore you don't get to know what's happening anymore. She felt that she had a full life, and she lived, and died, with no regrets.

Evelyn was a true optimist – she never complained, she was fiercely devoted to her family. , and it was her love for her family that got her through the last few difficult years of her life. Once she became a grandparent, it was important to her and to Herbert not to miss events – She was at every recital, every sport event, every soccer game. She had a wonderful sense of humor. Another side of her was that she was a very private woman, and very protective of her family, perhaps that is why she wanted just her family at the cemetery today.

It is truly fitting, after the life that Evelyn and Herbert enjoyed in Danville, that they established a Nursing scholarship and the named auditorium at the Nursing school at Danville Community College in both their names. In this way, their names and their memories will live on as a blessing in the city that they loved and enjoyed for over fifty years.

Evelyn Novakoff Silverman *Yocheved bat Yehuda v'Chaya*,, left this world after 85 years of life, on the second day of the Hebrew month of Tishray, the second day of Rosh Hashana, in the new year 5769, according to the Jewish calendar, three days short of one year, after the death of her beloved Herbert.

To Sandra and Kenny, and Carole and Bruce;

Elise and Maury, Diane and Parke,

Jill and Marcy;

Six great grandchildren - Caitlyn Austin, Morgan, Hadley and Mason and Hunter

Evelyn's memory will always be a blessing for you. You were blessed to have her, you were blessed to have him, and you, Sandra and Carol, showed them both great *kavod*, great honor, – you fulfilled the mitzvah of honoring your parents by the way you cared for them in their last years. May they rest together in peace and May God comfort you and all your extended family.