



## Ann Elizabeth Horwitz

October 16, 1936 - January 9, 2026

Ann Elizabeth Horwitz,

Left us on January 9, 2026, at the age of 89, after living with dementia for over five years. She was, and always will be, incredibly loved and cherished by all those who knew her, be it close family or distant pen pals.

Born in Shell Lake, Wisconsin, on October 16, 1936, Ann carried the small town in her heart throughout her life, never hesitating to pause and say, “it smells just like Shell Lake,” whenever a wisp of clover floated her way. In her own backyard, she kept a pot of Shell Lake chives that were dug up from her childhood garden. The plant has propagated extensions into the backyards of her own children and grandchildren. In them, Shell Lake lives on, just as she does, through the neverending curiosity, wonderment, and whimsy that she’s given to each person.

She grew up with her parents, Walter George and Jean Keeler Hoar. Aunts, uncles, and cousins were never very far away, their own homes just a short walk from her house. Her family in Shell Lake included the Plahns on her mother’s side and the Hoars on her father’s side, a tight-knit community of aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Ann spent her summer days at the Shell Lake beach and braved northern Wisconsin winters, even once sleeping on the porch despite frigid temperatures when her family was remodeling the house. She came from curious people who sought to expand their worlds, not make them smaller. Her father, active in the military during World War I and later a stateside surveyor during World War II, spent much of his time outdoors in nature. Her mother, a nurse during the 1920s, researched the family's history, eventually unveiling a rich tapestry that weaves back to the Mayflower, and beyond that to 17th-century England. Given her childhood steeped in storytelling and exploration, it's no surprise that she went on to study art and history at Carleton College.

It was at Carleton that Ann met Fred Horwitz, her lifelong partner and devoted husband. Showing again her inclination to take the initiative on what she was drawn toward, she boldly asked Fred to a school dance. From there, as he puts it: "her rhubarb pie won me over." Ann and Fred married in 1961 and spent time in Chicago during Fred's medical school years, before settling in Wauwatosa, then Brown Deer, and finally Mequon, Wisconsin. For their wedding, Ann's mother sewed her dress, something Ann repeated decades later by sewing a wedding dress for her eldest daughter, Lisa when she married Alan Goldman.

If ever there was proof that Ann was not just a dreamer, but a spirit that made those dreams possible, it would be the house she and Fred built on a plot of land overlooking Lake Michigan. She had a vision for the home, down to the red and black tartan carpeting in the kitchen. Ann was simply a true believer that anything was possible, like baking a dozen bundt cakes for her younger

daughter Rachel's wedding to Merrick Fruchtman. Ann loved the home she and Fred built together, often saying, "this is my church," when she looked out across the verdant backyard, into the trees that revealed crisp, blue waters beyond. She could often be found out there spying on birds, admiring the deer, or waging war on chipmunks.

While she's known as Ann by many, her family and grandchildren know her as Boppa. "Going by Boppa says it all," Cahler Fruchtman, grandson to Ann, shares. "She wasn't a Grandma or a Bubbie. She was, and the only person who could be, a Boppa." To her family, Ann was someone who howled at a full moon and always took the long way home from the library. She baked upside-down orange rolls every Christmas (a family tradition dating back to World War II) and made sure to drive you by that house with the beautiful architecture that she discovered one day. She was a champion for everything weird and wasn't afraid to be an oddball. Her grandson Elliot Goldman calls Boppa, "one of the few people in this world who made me feel seen and understood." To Elliot, losing Boppa means, "losing a friend, a collaborator, co-researcher of the world—an ally."

A chaser of spectacular cloud formations and lover of vibrant sunsets, Ann embodied curiosity and adventure. She saw many parts of the world that most of us only ever read about in history books. She got to marvel at the Egyptian pyramids, admire the icy expanse of the Arctic Circle, and stand beneath castle ruins in Ireland. Her penchant for exploration can be seen clearly in her grandchildren, like grandson Braeden Fruchtman, who loves most that she always empowered him to wonder at the world. "There was always a reason to wonder," he shares, "and I love that she made me involved in her wonder too." From stacks of magazines curated specifically to Braeden's myriad

interests to calling him about a new bird she spotted, Ann never hesitated to engage others in her sense of wonder.

Those who knew Ann found her adventurous nature to be infectious. After all, it was she who encouraged her husband, Fred, to take sailing lessons at the Milwaukee Yacht Club, setting off a lifetime of sailing journeys that brought them to the Gulf of Mexico and the Mediterranean Sea. Her family has since nurtured generations of sailors, from her daughters to her grandchildren.

Aside from her whimsy, Ann contained a wisdom rarely seen in people. She had hope for our world, having studied and seen so much of it in her time here. When the world seemed to be at its darkest, Ann said, “My parents lived through World War I, World War II, and the assassination of JFK. We’ll live through this, too.”

When asked what Ann might have wanted to become if she could go back in time, she once answered “archaeologist,” a fitting pursuit for one who wanted to explore and reveal the truths about our world and its history. She even once accompanied a friend to an archaeological dig in Utah. An afternoon at home with Ann meant watching documentaries or reading cookbooks. Over her lifetime, Ann amassed a collection of over a thousand cookbooks spanning antiquarian pieces and modern finds. If you closed your eyes and picked a book from her shelves, you may find a tome on breadbaking or a pamphlet about fermentation. “I loved being with Boppa among her books,” shares granddaughter An Uong, wife to Elliot Goldman. “We would spend hours at antiquarian book fairs and I’ll always remember the way her face lit up when she found something that sparked her interest.”

In many ways, Ann brought her yearning to be an archaeologist to life when she started volunteering for the Milwaukee Public Museum, where she excavated period costumes from storage and helped to restore, organize, and curate the expansive collection. She eventually worked for the museum as a costume curator under a grant. During her two decades there, she revolutionized the museum's costume systems and carried out countless restoration efforts to bring the pieces back to life. At home, her sewing talents were put to work on creating clothes for porcelain dolls, and her passion has been passed onto her children and grandchildren, who each work with their hands in their own ways to create, be it sewing or baking.

Her love of culture and history touched many corners of what Milwaukee had to offer; she and Fred were frequent patrons of the local symphony, the Milwaukee Ballet, the city's plentiful art museums, and so much more. Most notably, she shared her love of culture with family and friends whenever she had the opportunity. Her grandson Sean Guo, married to granddaughter Halley Goldman, remembers sitting in her carpeted kitchen in Mequon, "listening to classical music or opera" together on her trusty CD player. "So many of my memories of Boppa are with her in the kitchen," says granddaughter Halley. "Sitting at the kitchen table, enjoying the gorgeous view of the lake, or her toes petting a puppy." To this day, the smell of vanilla reminds Halley of Boppa and her kitchen, because of how it lingered when spilled onto Boppa's butcher block island, wafting through the air long after a bake was finished.

Halley and Sean have a son, August Guo, great-grandson to Ann, who is just approaching one year in this world, yet already expresses a curiosity and wonder for everything around him. She lives on in how he cracks a smile to a

stranger or takes joy in the littlest of wonders.

Despite her dementia diagnosis five years ago, Ann was herself until the end. In moments of clarity, she would look into your eyes and say, “love you, kiddo.” Even just weeks ago, the mere mention of “cookbook” made her eyebrows raise while she slumbered. Her family is incredibly grateful for the tender, loving, and joyful care provided to her by the generous and skilled staff at Discovery Commons. Her nurses treated her with dignity and supported her throughout her journey with dementia.

Her adventurous spirit and unique sense of wonderment will be deeply missed but forever held close by her husband Fred Horwitz; children Lisa Goldman, Rachel Fruchtman, Alan Goldman, and Merrick Fruchtman; grandchildren Halley Goldman, Sean Guo, Elliot Goldman, An Uong, Cahler Fruchtman, and Braeden Fruchtman; her great-grandson August Guo; and her Plahn, Newbold, and Horwitz relatives. May her memory be a blessing and a reminder to always choose the adventure.

Funeral services 1 PM Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at Congregation Sinai, 8223 N. Port Washington Rd., Fox Point. Interment at Mound Zion Cemetery, 14510 W. North Ave, Brookfield. Memorials to the Milwaukee Public Museum or the Alzheimer's Association.

# Cemetery Details

## Mound Zion Cemetery

14510 W. North Ave.  
Brookfield, WI 53005

# Previous Events

## Service

JAN 13. 1:00 PM (CT)

Congregation Sinai  
8223 N. Port Washington Rd.  
Fox Point, WI 53217

# Tribute Wall

JR

“ *Ann was consistently caring and vivacious! We are so ever grateful that she accepted us as friends! She is no longer with us in reality but always in our hearts and minds!*

*Terri and John Ridley*

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**JOHN RIDLEY** - February 08 at 01:53 PM

JK

“ *Ann had a sparkle that she generously shared. She could fry cookie dough when the boat oven quit, stop everything to go watch the sun set, and rearrange letters of words that brought a smile.*

*We will hold Ann in our hearts.*

*Our deep sympathies to Fred and the family. Love, Matt and Jody*

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**Jodiene Koblenzer** - January 10 at 05:35 PM

YS

*I'm so pleased I got to know your mom over the years of our friendship. Sending lots of love to you all. Love, Yael, Nat and all the Steins*

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**Yael Stein** - January 10 at 06:05 PM

TW

*I truly share in your sorrow in the loss of Ann. She was a hoot! Funny, feisty and nurturing. Her smile lit up the whole room. I will miss holding her hand and singing with her.*

*Thank you so much for entrusting her to our care at Discovery Commons.*

*I'm so glad that I was a part of this journey with Ann and your family.*

*Your loyalty, love and care for Ann was remarkable.*

*My prayers are with you all.*

*Shalom*

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**Tracy Wagman** - January 11 at 12:36 AM

DM

*Ann was always so friendly with a big smile when we said hello to each other. She was a very kind person. I think one has to be flexible when married to a boater! Our sympathies to Fred and family! Dorothy and Al Meyers*

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**dorothy meyers** - January 11 at 11:52 PM

TL

*WE DIDN'T KNOW ANN WELL, BUT WITNESSING THE LOVE HER FAMILY HAD FOR HER SAYS IT ALL. IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT "LOVE LEAVE LEAVES MORE BEHIND THAN DEATH CAN TAKE AWAY. M.AY HER MEMORY ALWAYS SHINE BRIGHTLY*

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**THE IAUWASSERS** - January 12 at 09:55 AM

JG

*Terry and I wish to express condolences for your loss. Ann was a very special person and the world certainly benefited for all Ann contributed during her lifetime. Jay and Terry Goodman*

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**JAY GOODMAN** - January 17 at 12:03 PM