



Irina Beresten

September 13, 1932 - May 12, 2024

Irina Beresten,

Of Mequon, a kind soul and friend to many, passed peacefully at the age of 91 on Sunday, May 12, 2024. To describe Irina only by her perseverance and strength is to know only half of the story. With an unmatched zest for life and a wellspring of love in her heart, one might not believe so much life was packed into one person. A teacher, a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and most of all a friend, she truly was larger than life.

Ever the proud and steadfast matriarch, Irina's family was her greatest joy. She is survived by her loving and devoted daughters Marina and Elena, her beloved grandchildren & great-grandchildren Anna (Allan), Julius, Zachary and Solomon, and Lexi & Becca. In her passing she is preceded by husband Leonid, son Konstantin and son-in-law Erwin.

Born in Leningrad under the former Soviet Union in 1932, Irina was exposed to many of life's hardships at a young age. Under the care of her single-mother Reveka and uncle Misha, she was forced to flee her home during the Second World War. Eventually she settled in Moscow where she would meet the love of her life and husband of over 50 years, Leonid. Irina's life was dedicated to her work in early-childhood education, specializing as a speech therapist. Her determination for a better life led her family to the United States,

fighting for over ten years for permission to emigrate. Always the opinionated patriot, not a day went by without Irina's deep appreciation for the opportunities America afforded her family.

From her first days in the United States, she quickly became a fixture of warmth within the Milwaukee Jewish community. Whether braiding challahs with her son-in-law Erwin at Le Parve Bakery, translating for Russian hospital patients, or helping raise her own grandchildren, Irina was never willing to give less than one-hundred percent of herself.

A relationship with Irina is beyond what words can capture. When together, there was never anyone more important in the world than you. Her bright blue eyes always twinkled with life when sharing stories from her time on stage or telling an anecdote that made the whole room cry with laughter (especially her infamous crude jokes). As a voracious reader there was not a biography of a famed performer Irina hadn't read - one can only imagine she viewed these celebrities as her friends and colleagues. But her favorite company to keep was that of her cherished family and friends. To Irina, there was no greater stage than around the dining room table with loved ones. And no greater act of love than preparing a bowl of chicken soup and cutletas.

A true testament to her character, Irina could befriend anyone no matter their age or background. She could spend hours making funny faces with a toddler or lending a patient ear to a friend or family member who needed her. Irina leaves behind a legacy of love for those who knew her and for life itself. Her laughter and smile will forever remain in our hearts. She will be greatly missed.

Graveside services 11 AM Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at Spring Hill Cemetery, 166 S. Hawley Ct, Milwaukee. Memorials to the ALS Association, <https://www.als.org>.

als.org/

Cemetery Details

Spring Hill Cemetery

166 S. Hawley Ct.
Milwaukee, WI 53214

Previous Events

Service

MAY 15. 11:00 AM (CT)

Spring Hill Cemetery
166 S. Hawley Ct.
Milwaukee, WI 53214