



Selma Kravit Shapiro Obituary

December 3, 1924 - May 3, 2011

Selma Kravit Shapiro died at her home on Tuesday, May 3rd, 2011. Selma was born in 1924 and grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts. In the early years her strong interest in the arts and social service was encouraged by her mother, and she attended art classes at the Museum of Fine Art in Boston. At the behest of her father to gain “practical” skills, she later majored in Business at Hickox Business College. It was ultimately those two skills sets that she so marvelously combined into leadership endeavors throughout the rest of her life both at home and at work. Selma married Ted Shapiro in October of 1945 and moved to Oak Ridge, Tennessee as part of her husband’s involvement with the Manhattan Project. Although the move South was considered temporary in the beginning, she loved it from the moment she arrived. They started a family in 1947 and after 66 years of marriage they have four children, 5 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren. While the children were growing up in Oak Ridge, Selma was an active mother, involved in many community and school activities. She was a troop leader in Girl Scouts, President of the National Council of Jewish Women, and involved with Parent-Teacher Organizations in schools where her children attended. During her involvement in NCJW, an organization with a focus on social services and community, she helped prepare two wonderful cookbooks- “Oak Ridge Cooks” and Oak Ridge Cooks Again”. Selma was a great cook, influenced by her mother who turned her own passion for cooking into a catering business known as the Southern House Hotel in Brookline, Mass. Selma saw the cookbooks as a chance to hand down some of what her mother had taught her, and her children are especially grateful for teaching them to make her famous “chocolate roll”.

After twenty-seven years as a stay-at-home mom and community volunteer, Selma began to look for job opportunities. In August of 1973 she interviewed for a job at the Children’s Museum of Oak Ridge (CMOR). She was hired as a Museum Educator and Coordinator of Exhibits/Activities. A few months later she was asked to be the Executive Director. Selma was the heart and soul of CMOR for 32 years, and leaves behind a legacy cherished by the entire community. Numerous awards came along in the wake of her leadership at CMOR. Selma received the Governor’s Award for the Arts in 1973. Selma was also the first to win the Gordon Holl Arts Administrator Award from the Tennessee Arts Commission in 1987. This Award recognized her commitment to the museum, having doubled the

budget nine times and increased the membership 600% in her first eleven years. Selma was the national president of the Association of Youth Museums from 1986 to 1988 and helped its membership bloom from 38 museums to over 170 museums in only two years. Selma was inducted into the American Association of Museums Centennial Honor Roll in 2006, a tribute to individuals who have worked to innovate, improve, and expand how U.S. museums serve the public. She was a prolific grant-writer and she continued to bring in tremendous financial support to CMOR throughout her career. In 1993 Selma won the Rotary Club of Oak Ridge's Vocational Service Award, to recognize her career in service to the community. She continued her involvement in community affairs after her retirement from CMOR by returning as a volunteer and remaining active in Rotary, both places full of cherished friends. Selma, along with her husband and family, was an active member of the Jewish Congregation of Oak Ridge for over sixty years, involved there with loving friendships that became like family members to her.

Selma has a large extended family spread out all across the country. She devoted much of her life to long travels to visit with her siblings and encouraging lasting friendships between the cousins, aunts, and uncles. She is preceded in death by her sister Evelyn Clark and Brother Harold Kravit. She is survived by her husband Theodore, her sister Barbara Stearns, her daughter Sandie and son-in-law Barry Guryan, daughter Susan McCarthy and partner Jim Bauer, daughter Ronnie and son-in-law Jim Bogard, and son Philip and daughter-in-law Mary Shapiro; Grandchildren Jonathan and Rebecca Guryan, Cory and Rob Karpf, Nigel Lay, Derek Bogard, and Jordan Bogard. Also surviving are great-grandchildren Max, Gabby, and Andrew Guryan, Emme and Miles Karpf, and Trevor Bogard, and many loving nieces and nephews and friends.

The Funeral will begin with receiving of friends at Martin's Oak Ridge Funeral Home at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, followed by a service at 2:00 p.m. Burial will be at Oak Ridge Memorial Park following the service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge, 461 West Outer Drive, Oak Ridge, TN 37830 or the Jewish Congregation of Oak Ridge, 101 West Madison Lane, Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Comments



“ My condolences go out to the family of Selma Shapiro. I didn't know her long but enjoyed talking with her when I was working at the Children's Museum. I admired her passion for CMOR and what she did do improve Oak Ridge. She will be greatly missed.

Lesley James - Acquaintance - May 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ I would like to express my deepest sympathy to Ronda Bogard and her family in the loss of Ms. Shapiro. I greatly admired her for her dedication over decades to realizing her dream of a museum and activities center for children, a place that was to be not only educationall, but lots of fun. That was how it was for my children and their visiting cousins. Ms. Shapiro did not seek a large stage because she did not have a large ego. She just wanted to "light a candle" in her small corner. She did and her example should inspire everybody to try harder. One person can make a difference and certainly she did.

Janet Westbrook - Oak Ridge, AZ - Admirer - May 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ To Selma's wonderful family, I met Selma only 3 years ago. After moving here from the North and visiting the Museum with my grandchildren, I knew I wanted to help out at this wonderful and uniques institution. I volunteered to be on the Board of Trustees and Selma took me under her wing to show me how things were done in the South and how to soften my Northern edge. She was always kind, patient and full of passion that was contagious. We all will miss her and her astute guidance. You have wonderful memories that will help you through this pain in your arts.

Pat Imperato

Pat Imperato - Oak Ridge, TN - Board Member CMOR - May 06, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ Ted and family,
Ben and I are very sorry about your loss. We attended the service and thought it was wonderful. Each of the speakers -- daughters, son and son-in-law -- gave beautiful tributes. Each let us know entirely different sides of Selma, and we know it must have been very difficult to speak. We were greatly touched. Our sincere condolences to all of you.

Connie Adams - Oak Ridge, TN - longtime friend, lake neighbor - May 06, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ Selma used to drive Nigel and me to Hebrew school on Tuesdays and Thursdays in elementary school. We'd always stop for a candy bar on the way. In high school and college, I worked at the Museum during the summers. Selma was my first boss and wonderful mentor. She is one of the main reasons I went into education. May her memory be for a blessing.

Claire Robbins (Feldman-Riordan) - Gettysburg, PA - Family friend - May 06, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ It is difficult to imagine a Children's Museum of Oak Ridge without Selma. She was the driving force that brought it from grass-roots beginnings to national prominence. I have known Selma for almost 25 years and it has been a privilege to spend most of those years working for her as a volunteer at the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge. I have so many memories of her that are flooding back to me now. She was an inspiration to me as an adviser and a friend. Selma never tried to promote herself in any way; all her time and efforts were directed toward the betterment of CMOR and the lives of children. Through hard work, integrity and dedication she made a lasting contribution to the community and especially to the welfare of children. I will miss Selma more than I can express.

My sincerest condolences go to Ted, Selma's children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and her whole extended family. You have been so important and dear to her and she was so proud of all of you. Over the years I have heard so many wonderful stories about all of you. She truly loved you very much.

Margaret Allard

Margaret Allard - Knoxville, TN - Friend - May 05, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ I have been a volunteer, board member, and now staff member. All for one of the most dedicated, special women I will ever know Thank you for all you have taught me and shown me about people. I love you and will miss you every day! You have finally gotten your reward and I know you are no longer in pain. I love you and miss you ever day. Dawn

Dawn van Eek - Oak Ridge, TN - Friend - May 05, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ My mother has lost one of her dearest friends. I remember lots of times seeing them together at the Museum. She was such a great gift to my mom. We will all miss her. Mary Ergen

Mary Ergen - Goodlettsville, TN - family friend - May 05, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ I first became a friend through the Girl Scouts. Her daughter, Ronnie, was in my troop at one time. She lived not far from my home and I always considered her a good friend. She asked me to work at the Children's Museum at the front desk, which I did for four years. As we all know Selma was a special person, who enriched many lives in Oak Ridge. She will be missed.

Mattie Galyon - Oak Ridge, TN - Friend - May 04, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ I am so glad that I had the opportunity to know and work for Selma at the Children's Museum! She will be greatly missed by the community and museum, but her legacy will live on! Know that Oak Ridge is celebrating Selma's life along with your family!!

Anna Uptain Denison - Knoxville, TN - Friend/former employee - May 04, 2011 at 12:00 AM