



Irene Ginzburg Epstein, 98, died peacefully Saturday morning. Irene has been a beloved member of the Seattle Jewish community since immigrating here in 1946 after surviving the Holocaust.

Born January 2, 1924 in Warsaw, Irene always spoke fondly of her childhood and greatly admired her parents. When the war came to Poland, her mother helped her escape the Warsaw Ghetto under a false identity. After many harrowing experiences, she was liberated by the bombing of Dresden, where she was working in an underground factory. She then served as an interpreter for the American military and helped thousands of refugees. Her service earned her admission to the US, and as she wanted to go as far from Europe as she could, she boarded a train to Seattle. She later learned her mother, Carola, had also survived and fled to Palestine, but her younger brother, George, and father, Leon, had been killed.

Once in Seattle, Irene was supported by Jewish Family Services and taken under the wing of Minnie Bernard. She met Irving Epstein, and they married in 1947, creating a home in the Seward Park area. Irene and Irv had three boys, and Irene attended Seattle University and then worked as a language teacher at Catharine Blaine Junior High School, where she was recognized for her exceptional teaching and loved by her students.

After moving to Mercer Island in 1969, Irene retired in the mid 1980's. But grandchildren and an active social life didn't keep her busy enough, and she worked in real estate for ten years.

She was an avid bridge player throughout her life and kept her mind sharp with crossword puzzles and memorization exercises, such as reciting a randomly ordered deck of cards. At 98, she fulfilled a lifelong dream of becoming a published author with a book of humorous poems she wrote before and during the pandemic, "To Laugh Is To Thrive: Senior Humor in a Pandemic."

Irene was a phenomenal cook. Her brisket was legendary, her gefilte fish a family favorite, her chopped liver divine, and her mandelbrot a staple. She never attended a party without bringing a dish, most recently her famous lemon poppyseed cake (and she takes that recipe to the grave!).

Irene is preceded in death by her beloved Irving, who adored her, and her great-granddaughter and namesake, Naomi Irene. She is survived by sons and daughters-in-law, Larry & Rosie, Ron & Olga, and David & Lorena; grandchildren Laura, Rachel, Sara, and Alex, great-grandchildren Charlie and Tessa, sister-in-law Muriel Epstein, and many nephews, nieces, and cousins.

Funeral services will be held at Herzl Memorial Park in Seattle at 11am Wednesday, June 29. Donations can be made to the Holocaust Center for Humanity and Jewish Family Services.

# Guestbook

The guestbook has been extended permanently.

3 posts



Vivid Recollections was purchased for the family of Irene Ginzburg Epstein by Lisa and Bob Berman.

We loved your mom, fabulous life she had! Thinking of all of you celebrating her today and always.

LISA AND BOB BERMAN

June 29, 2022

Thinking of all of you today and sending my love. What a great lady and I will always cherish the times I spent with her. No one makes brisket and gefilte fish like her! She was an amazing lady!

LISA HORTON BERMAN

June 29, 2022

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'Madame Epstein' was my French teacher at Catherine Blaine Jr High, in the late 60s. I loved her, and credit her with igniting my love of the French language. It looks like she had a long and wonderful life, and I'd like her family to know she made a big difference to me, and no doubt hundreds of others. RIP, Madame. ❤️

JANE ELLIOTT

June 28, 2022