



Joan Segelbaum Strouse

December 13, 1927 - July 25, 2019

Joan Segelbaum Strouse

She worked for Eugene McCarthy before his famous anti-war campaign for president, helped steer Minnesota Planned Parenthood when women's reproductive rights were under assault, and was a civil rights pioneer in the North Star state.

Maybe the pure trait that held her apart, however, was that Joan Segelbaum Strouse genuinely loved people. She had a marked warmth and kindness that could not be missed, and she listened, understood, and enjoyed people.

Strouse died this past July 25 in Palm Springs California at age 91 surrounded by her children and her beloved brother Stan. She smiled and kissed them all before departing. It was calm, peaceful, and beautiful.

Born in Duluth, Minnesota to Helena and Charles Segelbaum, she was an athletic kid who played baseball, tennis, and bowling, and had fun playing "pirates" running through the woods of 1930's Duluth.

Joan attended Duluth Central High School, then headed to Milwaukee Downer (now Lawrence) College before transferring to the University of Minnesota Journalism School. It was there she met Lester Strouse Jr., a handsome, eloquent guy who'd worked in army intelligence during World War II. After brief stints as a reporter at the Cloquet Pine Knot and the Grand Forks Herald, she returned to the Twin Cities and married Lester.

They drove to Mexico for a honeymoon before settling in Saint Paul, where Lester III was born in 1953. Dede followed in 1955. Soon after her daughter's birth, Joan worked on the

House of Representatives campaign of a young Gene McCarthy. “Clean” Gene changed Dede’s diaper while Lester Jr. mixed him a very dry martini.

Chuck was born in 1959, and over the next few years, as schools were being desegregated, she and several other women drove kids from minority neighborhoods to more affluent areas in St. Paul. Joan met Muhammad Ali and introduced Jackie Robinson at an NAACP gathering, then drove him around town.

Tommy, her fourth child, was born in 1968. Back then, Joan was active in the NAACP, the League of Women Voters, and Minnesota Planned Parenthood.

Joan and Lester built a lively social life with great friends like Emmy Lou Jacobs, Harold and Mickey Smith, Burt and Darlene Rudolph, Don and Rhoda Mains, Harold and Suzy Gelman, Arthur and Margaret Stone, Bobby and Jean Rubenstein, Harry and Muriel Weinstein, Jerry and Marjorie Silverman and many more. Both she and Lester were avid golfers. Though he was more enthusiastic, she scored three holes in one.

Beginning in the 1990s, they traveled regularly to the Southwest of France, where Dede had moved. When Lester Jr., a successful insurance salesman, retired, they moved to Palm Springs’ famous Mission Hills Country Club, where they lived an active life for decades. After Lester died in 2013, Carol Zavala did a fine job of caring for Joan, who contracted Parkinson’s Disease. They were like sisters.

Joan died peacefully at Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage, California. She is survived by her four kids, Lester, Dede, Chuck, and Tom and her seven grandchildren -- Thomas, Alexandre, and Sophia Esterle; Jacob, Daniel, and Taisa Strouse; and Guthrie Baggett-Strouse; brother, Stanley Segelbaum.

A Graveside Service will be held at Mount Zion Cemetery, 1670 Payne Ave., St. Paul this Friday, August 2, at noon. An informal lunch reception will follow. In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions to the League of Women Voters, where Joan worked for decades.

Cemetery

Mount Zion Cemetery

1670 Payne Ave.
St. Paul, MN,

Events

AUG **Graveside Service** 12:00PM

2

Mount Zion Cemetery
1670 Payne Ave., St. Paul, MN, US

Comments



“ In my memory, Joan is fixed in her mid 40's. I can still picture her and your dad cajoling Lester, keeping an eye on Dede, and making sure that Chuck and Tom stayed away from the likes of Tom Lewis and myself..... My thoughts are with the Strouse family, in this time of sorrow and celebration. Karl Simer, Fanny Bay, BC Canada

Karl Simer - July 31, 2019 at 10:59 AM



“ My heart goes out to the entire Strouse family. Joan was a fabulous, caring woman who gave tirelessly to family, friends and community. From childhood I knew she was guided by principles, and had deep strength. I wish I was going to be in town on Friday to celebrate her her life. May her memory be for a blessing. Andy Gellman

Andy Gellman - July 29, 2019 at 08:44 PM



“ Stan ... I am so sorry to learn about your sister Joan's death. May she rest in peace.

Ted Margulis
Reseda, California

Ted Margulis - July 29, 2019 at 07:16 PM