

Gretel Mayenknecht

IN MEMORIAM: Born August 19, 1927, Gretel Mayenknecht passed away suddenly in the early hours of Mother's Day on May 10, 2020. She was 92. It was somewhat poetic because it was an annual – if not daily – reminder to her husband, her two sons, and everyone who knew her of how she consistently dedicated herself to her family. She literally gave all of her considerable life force to be the best mother she could be. Besides, she always said – with that knowing, blue-eyed smile – that “every day was Mother's Day”. She was a strong presence, powerful influence, and the glue that kept her family together until her dying day. The beneficiaries of her unconditional love, caring generosity and often profound wisdom were her husband Hans (who predeceased her on September 30th, 2015), sons Thomas and Richard, granddaughter Alexa (Tawnya Ritco) and grandsons Christopher and Timothy and granddaughter Chloe (Beverley Williams) and Randi Sternberg. A veteran of the hospitality industry in Montreal and Toronto, her love of fashion and magazines was gleaned from her years working for the American army in the textiles industry in the years of reconstruction immediately following the Second World War. Gretel was the love of Hans's life – and he was hers – for more than 60 years of marriage. Coming to North America as young German immigrants in the early 1950s, Hans and Gretel met as neighbours in an apartment complex in Montreal. When Gretel moved out to a larger apartment nearby, Hans gave her a radio as a house-warming gift, only to call her less than a week later to ask if he could come over to listen to it. That savvy move led to their wedding on April 23, 1955, and to a life of committed partnership, shared leadership, global travel, and above all, wonderful parenting. Even as a grieving widow in the last five years of her life, she served as a bright north star and guiding force in the lives of her sons, extended family and friends. She is survived by her sons and grandchildren, her sister Katharine (Kätha), and predeceased

by her father Heinrich, mother Elisa, brother August and sisters Analise and Ella. Gretel lives on not only as part of her sons and her grandchildren, but in all of their hearts on the strength of her love, memory and legacy as a “boys’ mom”.

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