



## Barbara Joyce Leve

May 14, 2020

A light went out on Thursday, May 14th, 2020. Barbara Joyce Leve, loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, passed away from Alzheimer's disease at the age of 87 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

In her presence, you stood in sunlight. She had empathy that was rare, insight that was uncanny, and was a consummate listener. This rare ability shaped those who knew her. You always felt better and nourished in her presence.

Born in Chicago, Barbara along with her older sister, and parents left "The Windy City" during WWII and headed for Los Angeles. Moving into her grandfather's hotel in Hollywood, Barbara manned the switchboard at eleven and became a keen observer of life. A latch-kid since kindergarten, she was wise beyond her years and this fact shaped who she became – tough, tender, and street smart.

Walking up the brick walkway of her friend's home at age 16, she heard the piano music of Rachmaninoff through an open window. She entered the house to meet the pianist, her future husband, Jerry Leve.

Jerry and Barbara were married in December of 1951. Each considered the other their "soulmate." Jerry described their marriage as two separate oak trees with separate, sturdy roots whose branches intertwined. They raised two daughters, Caren and Julia.

After her daughters left for college, so did Barbara at age 40. While at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles she found her gift and passion – writing. Graduating in the spring of 1981 with honors in Creative Writing, she went on to teach poetry in half-way homes for abused women, in senior centers, in classes for disabled children and in each of the schools her grandchildren attended. This was not only a highlight in her life but in her grandchildren's lives.

During the Los Angeles earthquake in 1994, Barbara hunkered down under the dining

room table with an atlas and a flashlight. She drew the flashlight across a map of the United States and spotted a no-quake zone - North Carolina. Two years later, she and Jerry moved to Raleigh. She was joined by her daughter, Julia and her family. She lived in Raleigh for 17 years where she continued to teach poetry and became an active participant in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Barbara loved movies, and dark chocolate. Her taste in music ran from Aretha Franklin, to Mahler, Odetta to John Dowland. Stopping by a bookstore was always a must, book groups, a necessity. She saw the world in CinemaScope, living fully, with joy and boatloads of humor. She adored her life-long friends, and relished Thanksgivings and 4th of Julys with her family, because nothing meant more to her than being together. While she rests, her family will remember.

Barbara is survived by her devoted husband, Gerald Leve, daughters Caren (Charlie) Gale, Julia Freifeld, (Mark z"l) grandchildren Jeremy Freifeld, (Jennifer) Emily Kotecki, (James) David Freifeld, Rebecca and Jonathan Gale and her great-grandchildren Noah and Elise Freifeld and Max and Maya Kotecki.

The family wishes to thank the following for their compassionate and expert care; Dr. Debbie Gazzuolo of Signature Healthcare, Dr. Charles Edwards of The Memory and Movement Center and the staff at The Stewart Center.

Please share your thoughts, stories and photographs of Barbara on <https://www.heritagecares.com/obituaries/Barbara-Leve/>

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial gifts be made in memory of Barbara Leve to the following: <https://zabsplace.org/barbara/>

Zabs Place is a thrift boutique founded by Caren and Charlie Gale and Bentzion and Rochel Groner which provides employment training and opportunities for young adults with disabilities.

# Cemetery

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## **Forest Lawn East Cemetery**

3700 Forest Lawn Drive

Matthews, NC, 28104