



Elena Oliver

March 3, 1949 - April 25, 2020

Albany-Elena Oliver passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by loved ones, on April 25, 2020 after a nine - month battle with cancer. She was barely 71. She was wonderful – smart, honest, loving, independent, funny, beautiful, and a great friend to so many. She was, as her brother Frank put it, our rock.

Elena was diagnosed with end-stage cancer last July. The diagnosis seemingly came out of the blue and left all that knew and loved her shocked and devastated. But Meme, as she was known to her beloved grandsons, refused to give in and fought with a determination and lack of self-pity that most of us couldn't muster. She was aware of the long odds at the beginning of the difficult journey, but insisted that life be kept as normal as possible until the end. So that's what we did.

There were so many medical appointments, yet she persevered and held out hope even as she weakened. She looked forward to spending time outdoors as the weather, and hopefully her condition, improved. In the end, she passed on a Saturday afternoon on what was likely the most beautiful day in a month. Her son Peter kissed her forehead; she took a deep breath, exhaled, and was finally able to rest.

Elena was born to Ida and Frank Ferrandino and raised in Albany, NY. She married her Albany High School sweetheart, Richard Oliver, at the tender age of 20 and within several years gave birth to two sons: John and Peter. She raised her boys and, when they were old enough, returned to school and obtained her degree from Hudson Valley Community College. She worked for many years as an X-ray technician and, as her sons reached college age, she returned to school and earned her bachelor's from Siena College. In fact, she and John attended Siena at the same time, and her son will always fondly remember their on-campus encounters.

Elena changed careers and worked for many years as the admissions coordinator for Eddy Heritage House in Troy. She spoke fondly of her co-workers over the years and made long lasting friendships at the Eddy. She and Richard ended their marriage after 35 years, yet remained close friends until the end.

She was a thoughtful, quiet, peaceful person. She loved her time alone reading books, caring for her incredibly pampered cats and tending to her yard. During her single years, Elena developed a large group of friends and enjoyed dinner parties, movie nights at the Spectrum and travelling within the U.S. and abroad. She was also a great listener and was sought out by family and friends as a provider of excellent advice on all things life-related.

Elena loved spending time with her grandsons; she was a regular at their baseball and basketball games, wrestling meets, musical performances and theatrical productions. She referred to her grandsons in her last days as her “precious boys”.

The many she leaves behind are left to cope with the unfairness of what happened to her so early in her retirement years after living such a good and decent life. We are also left to cope with the pain of seeing such a special and vibrant person rapidly worn down by her illness. But we are relieved to know that the suffering has come to an end. Most importantly, we are left with the fondest memories of a great mom, wife, grandmother, daughter, sister, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and friend. She was and will always be truly loved.

Elena is survived by her mother Ida Geraci (Albany), her brothers Frank and Michael (Albany), her ex-husband Richard and his wife Debra (Malden Bridge), her son John and his wife Gretchen (Guilderland), her son Peter and his wife Kristina (Albany), her four grandsons: Alex, Jacob, Sam and Nate, and by her many loving nieces, nephews and in-laws.

Elena’s family wishes to thank the doctors who cared – genuinely cared – for her, as well as the aides and hospice nurses who made her last few weeks as comfortable for her as possible. We will always be struck by the level of kindness they showed to her and to us.

And thank you to the family and friends who cared for her and were always there for her until the end.

The pandemic has forced us to limit our memorial service to only immediate family, and we look forward to celebrating Elena's life with extended family and friends in what we hope is only several months.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to one of Elena's favorite charities: Mohawk Hudson Humane Society in Menands (mohawkhumane.org), or Whiskers Animal Benevolent League in Albany (ewhiskers.com).

Online condolences may be offered at mcveighfuneralhome.com.

Comments



“ Elena and I learned new mother coping skills after the birth of our daughter (Elena), and their son John. I remember a lot of laughter and growth opportunities. Our deepest sympathy to her family and friends.

Dave and Olga Tompkins - May 03, 2020 at 12:30 PM



“ I was fortunate to have shared time with Elens. Such a wonderful person. Although quiet and reserved, Elena was great in a conversation. Incredibly well read, observant and subtly humorous she was fun to be around. We enjoyed movies, plays, music and other small adventures, often ending with orange smoothies or a bowl of Thai food, a few smiles and a little chatter. I had known Elen for only e a little over four years. In that time she became what I coined my "new old friend". I will miss her caring ways, subtle smile, love of being with friends, love for learning and ability to be flexible and enjoy new experiences. Like the crazy St Patrick's Day concert we went to last year. Thinking of her brings a smile to my face. Elena showed incredible strength during her battle with cancer and that memory will stay with me always. She will be missed dearly. May Elena find peace and happiness and a road to new adventures.

My most sincere condolences go out to the entire family. Elena spoke so highly of you, especially during the last year. Lucky is the family such as yours, that can call themselves friends as well as relatives. May that special friendship endure forever, as you keep Elena's love alive through memories and stories. You are in my thoughts and prayers at this most difficult time.

Sincerely,
Sue Schmader



susan schmader - May 01, 2020 at 05:10 PM



“ Oliver Family: my heart goes out to you during this difficult time. While I did not have the pleasure of knowing Elena, she raised a wonderful family and your tribute to her is beautiful. My family and I wish you peace and send our deepest condolences.
Ashley Hart & family

Ashley Hart - May 01, 2020 at 02:09 PM



“ To all of Elena's family, my deepest sympathy for your loss. I met Elena 20 plus years ago at the Eddy Heritage House while trying to find a place for a very ill elderly relative. She was amazing! She not only helped me to get him admitted, she helped me on many more occasions when folks would turn to me to help them find a place for a loved one. I always recommended Heritage House and Elena, and she never let me down. Even when Heritage would have no room, she would help folks find another residence. I called her many times for advice and she was always willing to help. I felt like I had known her for many years after our first meeting because she made me so comfortable. She was a remarkable woman and she made the world a better place. Thank you for sharing her with the world --- and me!
Sincerely,
Ellen McNulty-Ryan
Green Island, NY

Ellen McNulty - May 01, 2020 at 01:12 PM



“ I'm so very sorry to hear of Elena's passing. She was a quiet person but very sweet. She was one of my swim friends from the JCC and I have missed her. My deepest condolences to her family and friends.

Marianne Daniels Bross

Marianne Daniels Bross - May 01, 2020 at 11:08 AM



“ Linda, Tina, Carole, and Elena's family, please accept our sincere sympathy for your loss.
Janice Reohr Monaghan

Janice Monaghan - April 30, 2020 at 07:17 PM



“ I will always treasure my long friendship with Elena, a truly beautiful soul. You could always count on her to tell it like it is. I respected her honesty and wry sense of humor.

We enjoyed trips together to Ireland, Morocco and Iceland, shows at Capital Rep and long drives to Cooperstown for the Glimmerglass opera and meals at the Otesaga Hotel. I was privileged to spend New Year's eve 2019 with her at her home, a memory I will always treasure.

I offer sincere condolences to her family. Our loss is Heaven's gain.

Phyllis Teal

PHYLLIS TEAL - April 30, 2020 at 09:43 AM



“ I knew Elena from Eddy Heritage House. She was always kind, thoughtful and ready to step in when needed. Her calm manner was a true asset. She will be missed. My sincere condolences to her family and friend.

pat gray - April 30, 2020 at 08:33 AM



“ I extend my sincere sympathy to Elena's family and friends. I was her housekeeper for a year through the Umbrella organization. I sensed that she was an intelligent, private person from the first moment I met her. She was always very kind and respectful. We would have discussions about books we enjoyed, and she gave me some of hers. Cats, dogs, the environment and gardening were other areas of mutual interest.

Although I only knew you, her family, from pictures on the wall and occasional snippets of information, I was very aware of her pride in and love for you all.

I am saddened by her passing, but know that earth's loss is heaven's gain.

Sincerely,

Pam Jones

Pamela Jones - April 30, 2020 at 06:56 AM



“ Those of us who worked for the Eddy will remember her. Rest in peace, Elena.

Eileen Reiss

Eileen P Reiss - April 29, 2020 at 09:22 PM



“ Our deepest sympathies to Elena’s family and friends. She was a fond and dear neighbor for many years. We always said hello to her beloved felines as they basked in the front window and we enjoyed her company during our neighborhood gatherings. She could never ever understand my love of the book ‘Snow Falling On Cedars’, but she introduced me to many new authors. She will be greatly missed. Godspeed.

Lynn & Lou Hmieleski

lynn hmieleski - April 29, 2020 at 08:55 PM



“ Elena was so appreciative of my kale dishes! Practically the only person I knew who wholeheartedly liked the vegetable. She also enjoyed several 5@5:30 dinners with us AGOFers. A true “foodie” who graced many a table. Bess Arden

Bess Arden - April 29, 2020 at 08:32 PM



“ Rich, John & Pete, my deepest sympathy on your loss. Elena was one of the nicest & most thoughtful people I have ever known. My thoughts and prayers are with you all. Pat Crotty (Ryan)

Pat Crotty - April 29, 2020 at 08:18 PM



“ Our sincerest condolences to her family. She always spoke with such pride of her sons especially during these last several months when she was fully aware of their love and support. The bond between a mother and child is forever. We have grandchildren the same ages and would share stories as they grew. We worked in the same field so often shared our "misery" and triumphs!! Elena had a great sense of humor....and called things as they were!!! She was a gracious hostess for our many gatherings and especially the infamous New Years Eve parties. Our thoughts are with you at this most difficult time. Karen Brown and Dean Elsworth

Karen Brown - April 29, 2020 at 05:50 PM



“ We will never forget Elena's annual hospitality as she opened her home on New Years Eve. She displayed her favorites: Russell Crowe book and Mr. Bubbles. Her smile, humor, friendship, courage and so much more will surely be missed by so many. My thoughts and remembrances go out to her family at this most difficult time. Kathy Walsh

Kathy Walsh - April 29, 2020 at 05:13 PM



“ Please see my remembrance of Elena under Sue Mattices post under comments thank you

carolrychcik - April 29, 2020 at 04:33 PM



“ Please accept our sympathy. Throughout the life of Whiskers, Ms Oliver has been one of our kindest and most steadfast supporters. Whiskers Animal Benevolent League



Carol Hall - April 29, 2020 at 03:20 PM



“ Elena's calm strength was a stabilizing force within our social group. She was the glue that kept us together sponsoring large gatherings at her home, publishing and mailing our newsletter and helping to send out messages to the members. She was a great listener to all. I will miss her, our conversations and her sense of humor.

Diana - April 29, 2020 at 03:07 PM



“ I have fond memories of our weeks in Cape Cod, Elena's sense of humor and , of course, Russell Crowe at New Years. You will be missed, Elena.
Rebecca Harrison

Rebecca Harrison - April 29, 2020 at 02:47 PM



“ Elena was such a great person to travel with. We went to Morocco and Alaska together and had a fantastic time. She insisted upon having her own room even though it cost her a lot more because she was more comfortable that way. She desperately loved her cats and loved to talk about them. She was always very positive and cheerful. She was so generous in opening her house to host many AGOF New Year's Eve parties; Italian Fests; meetings and other types of parties. She was a fantastic newsletter editor for many years and almost singlehandedly kept us informed about the group's happenings and events. We will greatly miss her guiding hand and endless patience with all our foibles. We will absolutely miss our great friend, Elena.

Margo Heck

Margo Heck - April 29, 2020 at 02:29 PM



“ Dear Ida, I am so sorry to read of your daughter Elena passing. I recall meeting her, with you, several years ago. She was a wonderful daughter to you, loving and caring for your wellbeing. My sincerest sympathy to you, Frank, Michael and Elena's family.
Affectionately, Sylvia Quinn

Sylvia Quinn - April 29, 2020 at 01:46 PM



“ Elena was a very giving person and a friend to so many people. During her illness, I never ceased to be amazed at how graciously she continued to show gratitude for having been healthy for seventy years (which her friends all wish had been longer!), and for the simplest gestures and kindnesses of others. I doubt I would have been able to muster even one ounce of her lack of self-pity in this situation! She leaves a big hole in the large group of us with whom she socialized, and I know it is an even bigger loss for her beloved family. My sympathies to them, and I will look forward to attending a gathering to honor Elena once it becomes possible. My husband Ruud Addink shares these sentiments.
Susan Mattice, Colonie, NY

Susan Mattice - April 29, 2020 at 01:00 PM



“ I write this with an extreme amount of sadness. Elena was a great friend and such a lovely person. Every time I talked with her I told her how much I loved her and what a great person she was. It will be extremely hard to get over her death. I have done a great deal of thinking about her and especially now when I won't be able to say goodbye to her. My condolences to her family. I know how hard it will be for you. My blessings and love.
Carol Rychcik

carol rychcik - April 29, 2020 at 02:08 PM



“ Rich, Peter and John, So sad to hear of Elena's passing. Sad in every regard. She was an elegant lady and a joy to be with. Thinking of you Andrew Wood

Andrew Wood - April 29, 2020 at 11:45 AM



“ It is with profound sadness that my wife Colleen and I learned of our neighbor Elena's passing. We have been reminiscing about our interactions. Brief and ever pleasant. We once expressed concern that our dogs, who melodically howl at sirens, were a bother. Elena smiled and gently laughed. "I love hearing them. It's singing that you can hear throughout the neighborhood." Always friendly with a wave. We live across the street, and have always admired her meticulous grounds. Elena's passing is a loss for the neighborhood. Yet we hope that Elena's family and loved ones can find some solace that she is now at rest.
– Barry and Colleen Koblenz

Barry and Colleen Koblenz - April 29, 2020 at 10:22 AM



“ I am greatly saddened to hear of Elena's passing. She was a great asset to Heritage House. Her kindness will always be remembered. My prayers for her family and friends.

Jim Carras

Jim Carras - April 29, 2020 at 07:57 AM