

Memorial for Margret Wasserman Levy

1/24/99

My name is David Faraday Levy and I am one of 3 grandsons.

My memories are that life with Margret Wasserman Levy was never easy. She would decree direct, demand, domineer, and yet by some magical twist of fate she also managed to be extremely generous.

She paid for the educations of all of her Grandchildren, a gift beyond estimation. For fifty years she maintained the Maine compound, another gift of ineffable measure. Any as many of you know, in a pinch Louis would ensure that the Bank of Levy was open to lend a helping hand.

But the far greater generosity was that these gifts came without any strings attached. It is this noble trait, to be generous without condition, that is one of the hallmarks of this family.

Margret Wasserman Levy was possessed by that “get out of my way, coming thru” Levy/Wasserman bullheadedness. In the wrong hands this type of determination is not only unappealing, but also downright dangerous.

One of the few rules my mother had was never to drive with Grandmother Levy. We have all heard stores of Margret Wasserman Levy driving the wrong way on a one way street and wondering why everyone ELSE was going the wrong way. Or her driving off from a rest stop on the New Jersey Turnpike, leaving a tardy member of her party behind. Or the classic story, calling Connie Lavender at my father’s downtown office to ask if the pool was filled; never thinking to look out o the window herself.

But yet, many projects started on her watch remain standing in mute testament to that determination. I have one of her pieces in my yard; Harry Cooperman may have had a hand in naming it. It is called the Triumph of Technology Over Art. It just as well have could have been called the triumph of Margret Wasserman Levy of the her world.

As the Art stands and the Artist has fallen, I find myself reflecting upon what I learned from my relationship with Margret Wasserman Levy:

- 1) I learned the importance of being polite.

Margret Wasserman Levy never said please or thank you. When she picked up the phone her greeting was never friendly, and she would hang up when she was done talking, never mind that you were in the middle of a sentence.

2) I learned the importance of being able to trust your bread and butter people.

Margret Wasserman Levy was famous for wildly accusing her closest helpmates and Grandchildren of stealing such things as her watch and wallet. If she had only looked in the trash or her other purse these objects would have been quickly found.

3) I learned that you do not need to blindly follow the rules.

Just as James Kirk beat the Kobayashi Maru test* Marget Wasserman Levy would change the laws of the road, or the Laws of Nature to best suit her; because like Captain Kirk, she didn't like to lose.

4) I learned to consider myself an artist in what I do.

5) I learned to improvise, adapt, and overcome.

6) And most importantly, I learned how to be a survivor.

For these many gifts and lessons learned I will always remember and be grateful to Margret Wasserman Levy

*The Koyayashi Maru test is given to Cadets at the Star Fleet Academy. It is a no-win situation. It tests the Cadets on how they face death. The then Cadet Kirk beat this test by reprogramming the training simulator to permit him to carry out the mission and escape death. He won a Commendation for Original Thinking for his actions.

David F. Levy