

Denhoff, Sylvia Brooklyn

1/2/2018

Sylvia Brooklyn Denhoff(1918 - 2018)



DENHOFF, SYLVIA BROOKLYN

was born in Passaic, New Jersey on May 6th 1918. She died January 2nd 2018 at her home in Providence. She was 99.8 years old, and proud to reach her centennial year. Her parents, Alice Zacharevitz Brooklyn and Alexander Brooklyn were Russian Jewish immigrants. They had four children; Mil, Syl, Lil and Ed. Millie, the eldest sister, set the standard that they should all, regardless of gender, become educated. Sylvia went to Syracuse University, and graduated from the College of Home Economics in 1940.

A professor recommended her for a job with the Providence Gas Company as the "Girl in White." She hadn't a clue where Providence was, but packed her bags and got on the train from New York to Providence to begin her new life, living in a boarding house on Olney Street for \$3 a week. Her job was to teach new brides how to cook on their new gas stoves. She also instructed a Food and Nutrition course for the Red Cross.

In 1941 she met her late husband, Dr. Eric Denhoff on a blind date. Expecting a visit from her sister, she almost cancelled, but later changed her mind – it was Beshert. After seeing one another three times, Eric left for the South Pacific to serve as a medic in the war. While away, the two corresponded by letter and she mailed him fruitcakes– "because fruitcakes don't go stale."

During WWII she worked as a food columnist for the liberal-leaning daily newspaper, PM Magazine, providing recipes for nutritious meals on a tight budget, and explaining how to efficiently use leftovers. Eric and Sylvia married in New York City on July 8th 1945. The bride picked a blue dress from her wardrobe; wearing a new dress was considered unfashionable during wartime.

Over their thirty-six years together, they traveled the globe. They had three children; the late Donald "Beagle" Denhoff, Joseph Ira Denhoff and Barbara (Bidi) Denhoff.

Sylvia pioneered a cooking course at Governor Center School. She felt strongly that boys should have confidence in the kitchen. She was a longtime board member at Meeting Street School which was co-founded by her husband Eric. There she taught sewing classes and read to children in the library until recently. She was a member of the Miriam Hospital Women's Association, Temple Emanu-El and The National Council of Jewish Women. She swam three times a week at the JCC–well into her nineties. She was revered for her signature cookies, kugels and cakes (recipe below).

She is survived by brother Edwin Brooklyn and sister-in-law Carol, son Joseph Denhoff and daughter-in-law Amy, daughter Bidi Dworkin and son-in-law Jeremy, and her grandchildren Erica, Leah, Eli, Chase, Scott, and Dakota. She cherished her extended family and friends, including those at Wingate on the East Side.

When asked how she'd managed to age so gracefully she said "I roll with the punches." She celebrated the arrival of 2018, her centennial year, at a New Years Eve Party.

Recipe from the kitchen of Sylvia.

Almond Cookies

½ cup butter or margarine

1 cup sugar

1 egg

1 tsp. almond extract

2 cups flour

2 tsp. baking powder

Salt to taste

Cream butter and sugar. Add egg and almond extract, sift together dry ingredients and add. Mix well.

Form into 2 or 3 rolls. Wrap in waxed paper or plastic wrap, chill in refrigerator overnight, or 2 or 3 days. Slice, and place on a greased cookie sheet, top each cookie with ½ almond, skin removed. Bake about 15 minutes or until lightly browned at 350°. Enjoy!

Funeral services will be held Sunday, January 7th at 10AM at Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave, Providence with burial in Mt. Nebo Cemetery, Taunton, MA. In lieu of flowers, contributions in her memory may be made to The Sylvia Denhoff Library Fund at Meeting Street, 1000 Eddy St., Providence, RI 02905 or www.meetingstreet.org. Further inquiries, SugarmanSinai.com