Gourse, Bernice Markoff
May 11, 2017



GOURSE, BERNICE MARKOFF

98, passed away Thursday, May 11, 2017. She was pre-deceased last October by her husband of 48 years, Samuel M. Gourse. Bernice, known by most as Bunny or Ber, was born in Providence, RI, the daughter of Samuel and Ruth Markoff. Along with her two sisters, Dorothy Markoff Nelson (deceased) and Gloria Markoff Winston, they were often referred to as the Markoff Sisters.

Bunny was known for her keen observations, her strong opinions, and her amused chuckle. She greatly enjoyed gathering with her close and extended family and took special pleasure in interacting with the littlest children. She was drawn to travel until her later years, and always enjoyed reading a good book in the sunshine. She maintained a strong connection to her alma mater, Pembroke College, now Brown University, where she was active in the equestrian club. While in college, she also was the chief costume designer for the Sock & Buskin and Brownbrokers theater companies. She and Sam participated in all their major reunions and maintained many friendships from their Pembroke and Brown years.

After college, Ber married Albert Geffner, and had two children, Susan and Bill. She worked first as the Director of Volunteers at the Miriam Hospital and later worked in the family business, Paramount Greeting Cards, as an editor who enjoyed writing catchy text and was proud of her contribution to the development of new lines of cards. After marrying in 1968, Bunny and Sam travelled far and wide, taking thousands of beautiful pictures with new friends and old. Bunny was also an active volunteer, in Girl Scouts in her younger years, for the Jewish Federation of RI, as President of the Temple Beth El Sisterhood and for the National Council of Jewish Women, which awarded Bunny and her sisters their highest honor.

Bunny is survived by her children Susan Hynes (Thomas) and William Geffner, her sister Gloria Markoff Winston, and her stepchildren Allan Gourse (Elizabeth), Richard Gourse (Wilma Ross), Judith Hoffman, (Edward Oslund). She also leaves her grandchildren Stacy St Pierre, (Dan), Michael Hynes, Rebecca and Alexander Gourse, Marcus and Alicia Hoffman,and great-granddaughter Jacqueline St. Pierre. She was the beloved Aunt Ber to nieces and nephews Sheila Greenbaum (Bob), Debby Nelson (Jim Pratt), the late Bruce Nelson (Susan), Samuel Winston (Hannah), Laura Winston (Rob Bruno), Ted Winston (Denise), and their children and grandchildren. In addition, the family would like to honor and thank the compassionate caregivers of Sarasota Bay Club Care for their support and kindness in recent years.

Funeral services will be held at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 21, 2017 at Temple Beth-El, 70 Orchard Ave, Providence, with burial in Sons of Israel and David Cemetery. Shiva will be held 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. at the home of Gloria Winston, Laurelmead, 355 Blackstone Blvd., Providence, RI. Contributions in Bunny's memory. may be made to the Samuel & Bernice Gourse Endowed Scholarship Fund at Brown University, Box 1877, Providence, RI 02912, or to the charity of your choice. For information and condolences, www.SugarmanSinai.com