



Evelyn G. Muntz

April 19, 1928 - December 3, 2020

The name Evelyn is of Hebrew origin and means "life". If we asked each of you who knew our Mother to describe her essence in a few sentences, it's highly probable that you'd use the word "life" in your descriptions, e.g., full of life, life-giving, lifesaving, and what we heard often, "friend for life. "

She met her husband, Hascall Muntz, who preceded her in death, at our Aunt Maurine's wedding to Robert Muntz, Hascall's younger brother. Mom was part of Aunt Maurine's wedding party and Dad was the Best Man. It was true love and life at first sight – a romance that gave life to 5 children who in turn gave her 10 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. All of it was B'shert, the Hebrew for "meant to be."

Mom was born on April 19, 1928 in Greenwood, Mississippi to Polish immigrants Paul and Mildred Bergson, their 2nd child. Milton was her older brother who has preceded her in death. Paul was a cotton broker whose business was destroyed in the Great Flood of 1927. Unable to care for both of their children, Paul and Mildred made the heart-wrenching decision to give Evelyn to her childless aunt and uncle, Sara and Benjamin Gertz, who lived in Tyler at the time. She was a gift of life to them.

The Gertz family moved to Kilgore on the 2nd day of the oil boom in 1930. She grew up there, attended Kilgore Junior College for a year where she was a proud Rangerette before she moved to Austin to attend the University of Texas.

Her gratitude and appreciation for life and living was inspired by her 2 fathers, Paul and Ben who remained great friends, nature and nurture coming together. A week before her wedding, Mom asked Ben to officially adopt her so that he could walk her down the aisle as her father of record and gave her hand in marriage to Hascall. All parties agreed.

Even as a child, Mom worked at activities aimed at giving to the community. Her track record of service and giving continued at UT-Austin where she participated in sorority life not only focused on social activities and community causes. She graduated with a degree in Social Work – focused on doing good. Not surprisingly, in her senior year, she was elected President of the Pan-Hellenic Society for all of UT. She was great at getting diverse groups of people to work together toward a common purpose. Her diplomacy skills early in life certainly came in handy later with her husband and 5 children.

Though raised in rural Texas, Mom had a broad world view, comfortable in any setting,

comfortable with any person. She had an expansive capacity for empathy and her ready smile could fill anyone's heart with joy. Her empathy, that ability to feel what others are feeling, and sense of gratitude were so strong that even the slightest expression of kindness (or sadness) that she witnessed brought tears to her eyes. We always made sure to have plenty of Kleenex on hand at every social gathering and particularly during the winter holidays when TV commercials would inevitably require one of us kids to run to the kitchen to grab her a tissue.

Treating everyone with equal respect and kindness were qualities that defined our Mother. She wasn't just interesting to people – she was interested in people and her interest was genuine. If you met Evelyn, she remembered you and you probably remembered her. When my wife went to get a passport in Dallas, the person helping her looked at the name Muntz and said, “Do you know an Evelyn Muntz?” and then raved about her acts of kindness. In Henderson, TX when I stepped up to get tickets at the box office at a community theater production starring one of her granddaughters, someone in line grabbed my arm and said, “Are you Evelyn Muntz' son?” I beamed with pride as she shared stories about anonymous acts of kindness that were never shared with her family. That was a common experience for all of us children, something we really enjoyed. We could always count on Mom to do the right thing and, optimistically (with fingers crossed) she expected us to do the same.

She was a champion for social justice as was her husband. Black lives mattered to them both, long before the term was coined. Mom insisted that everyone be treated equally and wouldn't tolerate words or language that was disrespectful or cruel. Her courage allowed her to speak up and speak out. We were proud to have been raised by someone with a strong commitment to social justice.

Perhaps that was born out of her deep and abiding faith in humanity – her belief and attention to the good in people. Unlike her own parents, she was raised in a country where she could practice her Jewish faith. She was involved in many activities at Temple Beth-El in Tyler. Her faith inspired and sustained her.

Her interest in culture of all types - art, music, dance, theater, poetry – led her to seek out positions on committees and boards where she could contribute her time and energy to many organizations that honored and promoted those disciplines. She lectured about Robert Frost, filled her home to overflowing with books, magazines, and playbills.

Always learning and teaching, Mom was a voracious reader, something she learned from her mother Sara. She encouraged her friends to read, hosting book clubs in our home and attending them in her friends' homes. Naturally, she loved the Carnegie Library in Tyler. Later in life she returned to college and earned a Master of Library Sciences.

When we were children, Mom got very involved with our schools. She was a room mother. She got involved in PTA as a member and leader. She attended school board meetings. Her most obvious contributions to education were her good works on behalf of the

University of Tyler where she worked tirelessly to make UT-Tyler an international success. More about that later.

Underneath that beautiful exterior was incredible strength, grace, and wisdom. She wasn't just our father's biggest fan and supporter – she was his partner, a source of strength for him and for us.

Married at 21, she first became a mother at age 22 to David. Over the next 9 years, Jimmy, Julie, and Ellen followed. And much to everyone's surprise including hers, 19 years after the first child, Will made an appearance. Mom was 40 at the time. When she was being rolled into the delivery room, her obstetrician called her Sarah – a joking reference to the biblical Abraham's wife who became a first-time mother at age 90. She laughed about that for years. Will was a great addition to all our lives.

Mom's friends will attest to the fact that she was a spectacularly good friend – a friend for life who would do whatever was necessary to help, encourage, coach, mentor, educate, entertain, console, and amuse – whatever was appropriate for the occasion. She had a great sense of humor and she often burst forth with laughter. She was a great audience. Her laughter made all of those in her presence smile and laugh along with her. She was a bright spirit.

Though she was a great friend, the role she enjoyed the most and the one for which her children are most grateful is that of Mother. We hit the jackpot with Hascall and Evelyn. The only person whose gratitude exceeded ours was hers. Throughout our lives, there was never any doubt that she loved us, loved being our Mother – even when we weren't as deserving as we should be. She made a lot of trips to the traffic court. We blamed that on her aggressive driving.

We all enjoyed the fact that Mom's love for us increased over time. And as our families expanded by love and marriage, her enjoyment of life soared. She was life and she loved life. Love generated more love. The older we all got, the greater her joy when we gathered together. And, of course, at those family events, there was always a speech or toast, something she learned from her Mother, usually followed with tears from us all.

Sadly, Mom was widowed when Will was just 12 years old. Her response was typical Evelyn. Rather than stretch out the grieving process, Mom stepped into the dual role of Mother and Father to Will. She was determined to give Will “not a good but a great life” – his words. Without hesitation, she decided for financial reasons to enter the work force at age 52. She was fortunate to connect with Dr. Hamm at UT-Tyler. He hired her into the development department.

Her keen understanding of the human capacity for giving and her track record at giving made her an ideal fundraiser. Her enthusiasm for the University was infectious in the right way. She conveyed that enthusiasm to the donors, and they loved her for allowing them the opportunity to make their good fortune work for the community at large. Her track record in fundraising would be hard to beat. She brought both money and international

talent to UT-Tyler. Our home was filled with pictures of celebrities she helped convince to lecture or perform in UT-Tyler's Cowan Center, just one of the buildings she helped fund. There are several tributes to her efforts on that campus.

Mom excelled in the role of a single, widowed mother working at her first and final job while raising a child who was to become a fine young man – life wasn't always easy, but the results were spectacular.

We know the world is a little less bright today from her death but remember how much light she added to the world during her life through all of us she touched. Evelyn's life and light continues in each one of us who has been touched by her goodness. When we think about that, we have to smile and say thank you to God for bringing her life and light into our world. Long live Evelyn Gertz Muntz.

A private family service for Evelyn Muntz, 92, of Tyler, will be held on Sunday, December 6. Due to COVID concerns, friends are invited to attend via livestream by registering at OurKaddish.com.

If desired, memorials may be made to Temple Beth-El, 1010 Charleston Dr., Tyler, Texas 75703 or the charity of your choice. She was a supporter of many charitable causes.

Events

DEC **Graveside Service**01:00PM

6

Rose Hill Cemetery

Tyler, TX, US

Comments



“ My brothers and I grew up next door to the Muntz family in the 50's and 60's sharing a set of World Book encyclopedias. Their house was always so busy and interesting and they were so very patient and kind to the packs of adolescent boys that roamed their street, driveway and yard year round. In the later years after my brothers and I had left home and Dr. Muntz had passed away, Ms. Muntz took great care to watch after our parents as they grew older. She was always right there for whatever they might have needed and whenever she would come in the front door they would immediately perk up and the mood would become happy once again. The woman just seemed to bring sunshine and happiness to anywhere she went. It is said that angels walk among us mortals on a daily basis. And this one has gone home...

Alan Payne
Denver, Colorado

alan payne - February 20 at 01:41 PM



“ Evelyn was our dear neighbor on Montrose, Tyler, Texas. We live in the Payne house next door and we have really missed her since she left. I worked in the UT Advancement office after she had already resigned, but she definitely left a legacy there!
What a special lady, a true giver of life and love. Our deepest sympathy and thoughts are with you. Melinda and Allen Morris



Melinda Morris - December 14, 2020 at 01:27 PM



“ Julie, I was so sad to read this today in the paper. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your sweet family. May your mom's memory be eternal, and may her life be lived through all of you. Much love to you from all us Zavitsanos'. We miss you,

Joni Z (John, Anastasia, Socratis, Diamantis, and Irene)

Joni Zavitsanos - December 13, 2020 at 05:50 PM



“ Julie, I am so sorry to hear about Evelyn passing away. Through all the years I would see her around town and she was just so polite and graceful. My sincere condolences to your entire family.

Robert Hahn
Dallas

Robert Hahn - December 10, 2020 at 02:44 PM



“ Such a sweet, precious friend your mom was! I always enjoyed our visits so very much. She always put a smile on my face and another one in my heart! She will be greatly missed.

Betty McMurrey

Betty McMurrey - December 13, 2020 at 11:53 AM



“ I knew Evelyn when I worked at UT Tyler, and my husband and I were fellow travelers on a UT Tyler Art History Travel Study trip to Italy one year. The last time I saw Evelyn was at a performance at the Cowan Center several years ago, and we talked about how fortunate we were to have had that travel experience. It was especially memorable because Evelyn was such a pleasure to be with on that trip. I am saddened by her passing.

Mary Elizabeth Dorsey

Mary Elizabeth Dorsey - December 08, 2020 at 08:49 PM



“ My most sincere condolences to David, Jimmy, Julie and the entire Muntz family. Since I grew up with Julie since second grade, I was fortunate to be in her presence often. Beautiful lady, inside and out. And I managed to not kill her son Jimmy in Scouts when he was so brave to eat my meal prepared for my cooking merit badge! Rest in Peace Mrs Muntz.

Steve Weathersby - December 08, 2020 at 04:06 PM



“ To the Muntz Family-Evelyn Muntz was one of the sweetest and kindest ladies I have ever known. Recently, I drove by the Montrose house and wondered about her. She would call from time to time to check on my family and would share all about her family. Working for Dr. Muntz for many years, I have fond memories of all of you but especially Will. Will would come out and play with Greg and Scott or Dr. Muntz would bring him to gather eggs when my Mom had chickens. Dr. Muntz would bring his camera and take lots of pictures. David, Julie, Jimmy, Ellen and Will-you were blessed with wonderful parents. So sorry about your loss but Mrs. Muntz was a true jewel. Her smile always brightened every room she ever entered and she loved you all dearly!
Sincere Condolences,
JoAnn McKeethan
Bullard, Texas

Joann Mckeethan - December 07, 2020 at 11:59 PM



“ Ellen, I am so sorry to hear of you sweet Mother's passing. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family family.
Cheryl Sepmoree

Cheryl Sepmoree - December 06, 2020 at 11:46 PM



“ Ellen I am so sorry for your loss. Whenever I remember your mother from our school days I think of her smile! Prayers of comfy and peace for you and your family.

Pam Everett - December 06, 2020 at 10:39 PM



“ There was always that something special about Mrs. Muntz.... was it her persistent happiness or her ever present beautiful smile or her perky personality or her generous spirit?!?... all a small part of this very special lady.... I will always remember you, as do/will many of my friends, from the neighborhood and your beautiful children. Rest peacefully sweet Lady. You will be missed by many. 😊

Bobbie Rudd Tijerina - December 06, 2020 at 10:09 PM



“ Always loved when she called needing something done at the house...she's the kind of person you drop everything for.... So gracious and kind. Would make your day just to be in her presence....Sweet Evelyn

Chris Woodard - December 06, 2020 at 03:35 PM



“ A plethora of incredibly good memories abound!!! I was even scrolling on my phone the other day and found a fantastic photo of her there. However, Im eternally thankful she nudged my dithering mom to marry my dad back in 1953. Her love, joy, radiance, immense intelligence and zest for life impacts infinity. Love and comfort to all who mourn her.

Mary Zorn - December 06, 2020 at 03:01 PM



“ Walking in the neighborhood in the early morning hours, I still expect to see her approaching at her usual brisk pace; always a smile and heartfelt "Good morning!" What a class act she was. - Larry Terry

Larry Terry - December 06, 2020 at 02:35 PM



“ Evelyn Muntz was a continual blessing to all she knew. Every time I saw her she acted as if I was exactly who she wanted to meet with! What a treasure. That gorgeous smile, her wit, intelligence and definitely her charm was outrageous! Evelyn's contributions to Tyler and certainly East Texas are tremendous. Blessings and peace to her family.
Tom Gregory

Tom Gregory - December 06, 2020 at 12:46 PM



“ My sincere condolences to my friend David and the entire Muntz family on your loss. Reading your mother's obituary I came to understand what a wonderful, giving, and strong woman Evelyn was for all of you and her community. May she rest in peace and may you all find reasons to smile in the coming days as you hold her in your dearest memories.

Sue Schade - December 06, 2020 at 11:14 AM



“ I truly enjoyed going to Will's house. Will had an amazing fort at the end of his driveway and the neighborhood boys had a blast fighting all the "enemies" (i.e., invading Russians, attacking Indians etc). Mrs. Muntz was always smiling and had a genuine love for the neighborhood boys. You will be missed Mrs. Muntz. May God comfort your family. From your prior lawn boy and neighborhood friend to Will. Ryan Gardner

Ryan Gardner - December 06, 2020 at 08:03 AM



“ Condolences to the Muntz family.
John & Sherry Ellis

John Ellis - December 05, 2020 at 09:49 PM



“ My profound sympathy Dr. Muntz.



Nicholas George Malavis - December 05, 2020 at 08:01 PM



“ Fabulous picture, but then Evelyn always was a classy dresser. Friendly & interested in ones family. We have missed her a lot in Tyler & with the Symphony. Carolyn Halbrooks Bain

Carolyn Bain - December 05, 2020 at 04:56 PM



“ David:
Sorry to read about the passing of your mother.

Stanley Waghalter - December 05, 2020 at 04:48 PM



“ I met Evelyn in November, 1966, while performing with a group from TJC at the Women's Building in Tyler. She was the President of the organization for whom we were performing and was so sweet and encouraging to us. Even sending me back to the dorm with extra cookies!

A while later, I began dating Tracy Lisner, who was a member of Evelyn's congregation. It was a couple of years before I saw Evelyn again but she remembered our first meeting and welcomed me into her life like another daughter. We often laughed about that first meeting and my now husband Tracy (for 52 years) laughs and says he's surprised she didn't try to set me up with her son David!

Evelyn was the dearest, kindest most loving and caring person I have ever known. She never called me "Pam", it was always "Pam Honey" and to think of a life without her laughter seems inconceivable to me.

She loved our family and we all adored her. I will always be so grateful that I was blessed with her love and friendship...
Pam Lisner

Pamela M Lisner - December 05, 2020 at 02:18 PM



“ Your Mother was one of the nicest Ladies I ever had the thrill of knowing. I can almost hear her voice as she would welcome me into your home. Then I have more great memories of her coming in my business numerous times with that still great hello David. She was loved by me and the people of Tyler.

Love to you at this time of great loss.
David Lawrence

David Lawrence - December 05, 2020 at 12:52 PM



“ Ryan Gardner purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Evelyn G. Muntz.



Ryan Gardner - December 05, 2020 at 12:03 PM