



## Bernice C. Kovel

December 18, 1934 - October 5, 2021

Bernice Helen Cohen Kovel was born in Annapolis, Md in December 1934. Both her father, Mordechai a storekeeper, butcher and cantor and her mother, Eva, had immigrated to the US from Jerusalem. Bernice had 3 brothers, Sonny (D), Yudy and David and one sister, Judy(D). The Cohen family moved from Annapolis to Biddeford, ME and then to Brooklyn, NY where Bernice went to Erasmus High School and graduated in 1952. She then attended Brooklyn College, where she received a degree in education and became an elementary school teacher. At the beginning of her Freshman year of college, her brother introduced her to a young man from his ROTC program so she could purchase his history books. Bernice found out that Max Kovel liked to bowl so she arranged a bowling party. The rest, as they say, is history. Max and Bernice became inseparable and dated the entire 4 years Max was at The United States Military Academy (USMA), West Point, NY. They married the day after he graduated, June 8, 1957.

Bernice married Max, the love of her life, and they began their lifelong adventure together. After moving so Max could attend training at Ft Belvoir, VA and Ft. Benning, GA, Max was assigned in Germany and the first two Kovel children, Jacob (1958) and Sarah (1960), were born. They moved back to the States where Max attended the University of North Carolina and Ruth (1963), their third child, was born. Then they went back to West Point where he joined the faculty, and their fourth child, Rachel (1964) was born. Upon completing

the tour at USMA, the family moved back to Ft Belvoir and their 5th child, Rebecca (1966) was born. In 1967, Max took his family to Brooklyn so that they could be near family while he went off to Vietnam for a year. When he returned, the clan moved to Ft Leavenworth, KS. From there, it was off to California, where Max began work at UC Davis on his PhD. Throughout all the moves, changes and separations (to include Max's 1972-1973 return to Vietnam for a second tour), Bernice managed the household and all 5 children. She made being an "Army wife" and all that that entails, look easy. In June of 1973, the family moved to northern Virginia where they eventually settled, and Max and Bernice played important roles in the Ft Belvoir Jewish congregation, with Max serving as a Lay Leader, Sunday School teacher and member of the Brotherhood, and Bernice serving both as a Sunday School teacher and Principal, and as the first Jewish Director of Religious Education for the Army.

Bernice and Max sent all five of their children to college - Jacob (USMA '80); Sarah (USNA '82); Ruth (University of Hartford, Hart Art '84); Rachel (George Mason University '86); and Rebecca (Rutgers '89) - and watched them graduate, marry, and prosper. In 1986 Max retired from the Army after 29 years of service and he and Bernice started their next chapter. They spent the next years watching the family grow and thrive, traveling to many family events around the globe. Bernice was a devoted wife, mother, and proud "Bobi" (Yiddish for grandmother) to 10 grandchildren: Daniel, Joshua, Hannah, Jessica, Zack, Margalit, Ilana, Aiden, Elias and Miriam. Max and Bernice also spent lots of time with Max's West Point class attending class functions, parties, trips and reunions. Theirs was a love story for the ages. Sadly, around 2007 Bernice started showing signs of forgetfulness. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and the disease slowly (at first) took her from us. Max was her primary care giver until his death in Dec 2019. Less than 2 years later, October 5, 2021, Bernice left us to be with the love of her life once again. Throughout her life she took care of those around her with love and kindness.

She was, and will always be, the best mom ever.

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

NOV **23**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Arlington National Cemetery  
1 Memorial Drive  
Arlington, VA 22211

# Tribute Wall



“ *Bernice C. Kovel*

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



“ *19 files added to the album Bernice and family*



**Rachel Kovel** - November 04, 2021 at 01:12 PM