



Leni Newman Bronstein

January 30, 1951 - March 19, 2025

Funeral service on Sunday, March 23, 2025, at 9AM, at Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland Street, Falls Church, VA 22043. Visitation hours (shiva) with the family will be held Sunday evening 6:30pm-8:30pm in Vienna, Virginia. Specific location will be announced at the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the TRS Refugee Fund (<https://templerodefshalom.shulcloud.com/payment.php>), Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation (<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/pulfibfou/>), Moms Demand Action (<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/mda-web>), or World Central Kitchen ([Leni Bronstein, language scholar, award-winning Spanish teacher of over 40 years, Fulbright recipient, dedicated wife, mother, and grandmother, died on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, in Fairfax VA. She was 74.](https://donate.wck.org/give/499865/?_gl=1*1s7erv7*_gcl_aw*R0NMLjE3NDI0OTQ2MTEuQ2owS0NRanctZTYtQmhEbUFSSXNBT3h4bHhYWWZoNFVCdlh5ai1OaG9HUDM0azl1TXExYTVTc1JNZ1JNRmJ1ZVFPZi1qR29hczEydGlfb2FBZ2I0RUFMd193Y0I.*_gcl_au*NDYwOTU4MzgwLjE3NDI0OTQ2MTE.*_ga*MTk3OTY1MDcuMTc0MjQ5NDYxMQ..*_ga_5WKVY8503C*MTc0MjQ5NDYxMS4xLjAuMTc0MjQ5NDYxMS42MC4wLjA.#!/donation/checkout?c_src=navbar).</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Leni's life began in a post-WWII co-op apartment in a working-class

neighborhood of Jersey City where she attended public school. She also was a student at the Yiddish school, Arbeiter Ring Schule. An only child, Leni was cherished by her parents Sally Schoenbaum (Jersey City, NJ) and Max Newman (Brooklyn, NY). Some of Leni's fondest memories included late afternoons after school at the Miss America Diner waiting for her mom to come home from work as her dad often worked evenings. A special treat was going with her parents into Manhattan on the PATH train to see a Broadway play or with her mom to a New York deli or dairy (i.e. no meat) restaurant.

After graduating from Henry Snyder High School, Leni attended Boston University, majoring in Spanish and Education, pursuits that would cement her love of teaching, learning, and language. During the early 1970s, Boston was a hotbed of student activism where she would participate in anti-Vietnam War protests. An especially momentous decision was going on a date with Harvey Bronstein (Providence, RI) whom she married in 1973. They were introduced by a mutual friend in Boston. On their first date, they went to a free movie at the student union and shared a 35-cent Coke. She graduated with honors as a Phi Beta Kappa awardee, a distinction that helped position her for a graduate degree in linguistics at Georgetown University.

In 1973, Harvey began his career as an economist, and they moved to Washington, DC, renting an apartment in Arlington, VA followed by residences in the East Falls Church and Donaldson Run neighborhoods and a condo near the Vienna Metro station. Working part-time as a Spanish teacher at Langley High School in McLean and then as an English as a Second Language teacher at Washington-Lee H.S. in Arlington, allowed Leni to pursue graduate studies at Georgetown during the 1970s. She then took on a new identity known mostly to her students – Señora Bronstein. She spent most of her career at Williamsburg Middle School in Arlington and encouraged her students to select Spanish names. She became famous for occasionally rewarding her students with Spanish lollipops from a metal canister of Chupa-

Chups. High-performing students would be allowed to ring a special bell on her desk marked Facil! Leni would lead nearly two dozen student trips to Spain, enabling middle-schoolers and some of their parents to gain an appreciation of the Spanish language, culture, and heritage.

Leni had an extraordinary work ethic, spending long hours in the classroom, providing extra help to students who needed additional instruction, and innumerable late nights grading papers and planning lessons. At the time of her retirement, her teaching career would span more than 40 years. Some of her most significant recognitions included Foreign Language Teacher of the Year in 2014 for Virginia, in 2015 for the South region, and in 2016 as a finalist for the national Foreign Language Teacher of the Year from the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages, where she spoke before an audience of 6,000 educators at ACTFL's annual conference. In 2009 she participated in the joint Organization of American States/Fulbright Center Teachers Institute program mentoring English teachers in Costa Rica.

In addition to being a deeply dedicated teacher, Leni was an extraordinary and caring mother to her three sons: Adam, Max, and Daniel. She was always present and a constant voice of encouragement at Overlee and Yorktown High School swim meets, football games, Arlington soccer, baseball, and basketball games, Hebrew school, and birthday parties. Even though she spent long hours in the classroom and sometimes felt like a single parent when Harvey was working overseas, Leni would somehow find time to help her sons with their homework and science projects, and take them to their endless activities. Her love of foreign languages, international travel, and appreciation of different cultures would be passed on to her sons and eventually, to her grandchildren. As a grandmother, Leni adored spending time with her bilingual grandchildren Adriana and Lucia (Mamaroneck, NY). They valued every minute with Abuela Leni whether it involved assembling a 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle, playing an epic game of mahjong, or shuffling stones on a mancala

board.

Retirement enabled Leni to travel with Harvey and friends to Peru, Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador (the Galapagos), Spain, and Chile, and even to non-Spanish speaking countries such as France and Switzerland (where Harvey performed the language duties), and to Israel. She studied Hebrew and especially Yiddish via an online group with an instructor in Buenos Aires. Becoming an adult bat mitzvah deepened her understanding of Judaism.

A huge Bruce Springsteen fan, she went to many of his concerts, most recently in September 2024 at Nationals Stadium. She enjoyed singing along to Beatles songs, and tolerated Harvey's playing in jazz bands. She also became a Washington Nationals fan and enjoyed going to games. Leni loved theater and volunteered at Signature Theater in Arlington. Finally, having time to pursue genealogy, Leni discovered she's a second or third cousin to the president of Mexico, Claudia Sheinbaum.

She was engaged in a variety of social causes including advocacy to stop gun violence, support of Democratic candidates for public office, and helping recent immigrants and refugees. In 2023, Leni was a co-presenter at the annual American Thoracic Society conference, where she educated medical professionals about the daily challenges of living with pulmonary fibrosis and the need to improve clinical trials.

Leni's life and impact were felt by many. Her memory endures as a blessing to those who knew and loved her. She will be remembered for her activism, teaching, love of family and friends, compassion for others, and being an integral part of her community.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAR 23. 9:00 AM (ET)

Temple Rodef Shalom
2100 Westmoreland St.
Falls Church, VA 22043

shiva

MAR 23. 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM (ET)

shiva
Specific location to be announced at funeral service.
Vienna, VA

Tribute Wall



“ Jefferson Funeral Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Leni Newman Bronstein



Jefferson Funeral Chapel - March 21, 2025 at 08:52 AM



“ Jefferson Funeral Chapel created a Funeral service on Sunday, March 23, 2025, at 9AM, at Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland Street, Falls Church, VA 22043. Service will be live streamed via the Temple Rodef Shalom website. Visitation hours (Shiva) with the family will be held Sunday ev in memory of Leni Newman Bronstein



Jefferson Funeral Chapel - March 20, 2025 at 02:36 PM

SA

Funeral service on Sunday, March 23, 2025, at 9AM, at Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland Street, Falls Church, VA 22043. Service will be live streamed via the Temple Rodef Shalom website. Visitation hours (Shiva) with the family will be held Sunday evening 6pm-8pm. Location will be announced at the service.

Sodguie Aracely Aguilart - March 21, 2025 at 08:47 AM

CF

I knew Leni from W-L high school. She was a dedicated teacher and a wonderful human being. So sad to hear of her passing. May her memory forever be a blessing.

Candy Frankel - March 22, 2025 at 11:02 PM

JB

I taught with Leni at Washington Liberty in the ESOL/HILT Department. She was wonderful teacher & colleague

Jeanine Brundage - March 23, 2025 at 01:44 PM

TF

I'm really shocked after hearing about Leni passing away. She was so young and full of life!! I just heard about it today.

Todo mi cariño a Harvey y a toda la familia. Tengo muy buenos recuerdos de sus viajes a España y nuestros encuentros con los alumnos durante varios años. Recuerdo también con alegría la visita de Leni y Harvey a mi casa de Valladolid. Siempre quedará en mi recuerdo esos momentos tan bonitos que pasamos juntos. No te olvidaré fácilmente. Un gran abrazo allá donde estés.

Teresa Fuente - March 24, 2025 at 04:19 PM

SB

As a Spanish teacher at Washington Liberty High School I could ALWAYS tell if a student had arrived in my class after having had La Señora Bronstein for Spanish 2 at Williamsburg. Talk about doing an outstanding job! Her students were always so overprepared, with a very solid base in Spanish, very confident speakers and most importantly they all had instilled in them a genuine love for the language and culture. Anyone who had ever met Leni could attest for her passion for her job.

Leni, I have been missing receiving your students since you retired. I will also miss bumping into you and catching up. Such a kind, warm, loving, funny human being. You will be missed. Que en paz descanses. Con todo corazón y cariño, Sandra Baird

Sandra Baird - March 25, 2025 at 02:42 PM

GR

“ I was diagnosed with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF) four years ago. For over two years, I relied on prescription medications and therapies, but unfortunately, the symptoms continued to worsen. My breathing became more labored, and I experienced increasing fatigue and shortness of breath with even minimal activity. Last year, out of desperation and hope, I decided to try an herbal treatment program from NaturePath Herbal Clinic. Honestly, I was skeptical at first, but within a few months of starting the treatment, I began to notice real changes. My breathing became easier, the tightness in my chest eased, and I felt more energetic and capable in my daily life. Incredibly, I also regained much of my stamina and confidence. It's been a life-changing experience I feel more like myself again, better than I've felt in years. If you or a loved one is struggling with IPF, I truly recommend looking into their natural approach. You can visit their website at www.naturepathherbalclinic.com

Greta - November 18, 2025 at 12:31 PM

SM

“ One year I taught at Williamsburg MS, and my class was next to hers. She offered me all kind of help and advices on many occasions. She was a very supportive, cooperative and kind person. May her soul rest in peace.

sumer majid - March 25, 2025 at 11:51 AM

KD

“ I met Leni her first year in Arlington - I was in my second! We were not at the same school for long and that was too bad! But we made up for it when we got together. Leni was wonderful to be with and learn from - that I could tell from her students. She was an outstanding friend! I shall miss her - do already!

Karen Darner - March 24, 2025 at 11:42 AM

LJ

“ I’m Leni’s cousin Lois from Tucson,Az. Leni was the 4th female cousin named after our Grandma Lena.
Leni’s Dad was our mother’s brother. Didn’t get to see each other much. She did visit us in Tucson years ago. We did have a zoom once a month with most of the cousins. She was everything said about her in the service.
RIP Leni ☐☐☐

Lois Jacowsky - March 23, 2025 at 02:03 PM

CD

“ Leni - I didn't know her well, but we shared common values, including the love of our country and our democracy. She will be dearly missed.

Chris DeRosa - March 23, 2025 at 12:56 PM

LB

“ I love everything written about my sister-in-law and dear friend of 44 years. My best memory was when I went with her on one of the Middle School trips to Spain, as a chaperone. Best trip ever. I got to see her in action with her students and in a country she loved to visit. We had an incredible guide who enjoyed working with Leni .Leni lived a very accomplished life with so much to be proud of. She had the fore thought to let the people she loved know how important they were to her. For that I will be forever grateful. She was a wonderful Aunt as well. I will keep her always in my heart and miss her forever.
Linda

Linda Liss Bronstein - March 21, 2025 at 04:34 PM

JE

“ *My thoughts are with you and your family at this difficult time. -
Jessica Kelly*

Jessica - March 21, 2025 at 02:45 PM

PF

“ *The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation is truly sorry for your family's
loss. Please contact Jake Meding if we can provide any information
or support during this difficult time. He can be reached at [jmeding@
pulmonaryfibrosis.org](mailto:jmeding@pulmonaryfibrosis.org) or 312-854-2627. Thank you.*

Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation - March 21, 2025 at 10:20 AM