



Rhoda Elaine Berson

January 13, 1941 - May 19, 2026

Rhoda Elaine Berson passed away peacefully on May 19, 2026, after a life filled with love, laughter, friendship, music, tradition, and an unwavering devotion to family and community. She leaves behind a legacy measured not in accomplishments alone, but in the countless people who felt welcomed, cared for, and truly at home in her presence.

Born in Brooklyn and raised in the Sea Gate neighborhood of Coney Island, Rhoda carried the warmth, resilience, humor, and unmistakable spirit of New York with her wherever she went. At just 16 years old, she attended a party she almost didn't go to — and met a 17-year-old young man named Jack who almost hadn't gone either. For Jack, it was love at first sight. Rhoda took a little more convincing. Jack famously knew by the third date that she would be his future wife; Rhoda needed about another year to reach the same conclusion. Thankfully for everyone, she eventually did.

Four years later, in January 1961, they married during one of the largest snowstorms New York had ever seen — an appropriately dramatic beginning to a remarkable 65-year love story. More than husband and wife, Rhoda and Jack were truly best friends, partners in every sense of the word, with a bond unlike any other.

Together, Rhoda and Jack built a remarkable life centered on family,

friendship, Jewish values, and community. After moving to the Washington, D.C. area in 1965 and eventually settling in Alexandria, Virginia, they quickly became active members of the Agudas Achim Congregation community. There, they found lifelong friends and helped shape the synagogue into the warm, welcoming, vibrant congregation it remains today. Rhoda served as Sisterhood president, synagogue vice president, and was deeply involved in Hadassah and numerous Jewish organizations throughout the years.

If one word could define Rhoda, it would be “home.” Her home was not simply a place — it was the center of family life, celebrations, comfort, tradition, and togetherness. Holidays at Rhoda’s house were legendary. Passover seders, Rosh Hashanah dinners, Break Fast gatherings, bar mitzvah celebrations, bridge nights and family simchas always meant a house overflowing with relatives, friends, food, laughter, and love. No one ever left hungry, and certainly no one left without trying her legendary chicken soup or chopped liver, both of which achieved near-mythical status among family and friends.

Rhoda was also incredibly detail-oriented — though “organized” hardly begins to cover it. She kept notebooks for everything: carefully documented holiday menus with notes about which recipes worked best, guest lists from previous years, renovation plans, and meticulously organized bar mitzvah timelines so future celebrations could run “even more smoothly.” Once technology entered the picture, those notebooks evolved into carefully maintained computer databases tracking birthdays, anniversaries, addresses, gift ideas, and every important family detail imaginable. She never missed a birthday or a Chanukah gift — ever.

Music and musical theater brought her enormous joy throughout her life. She sang with the Alexandria Singers and could often be heard softly humming melodies in synagogue. Her voice, much like her personality, was gentle, warm, and comforting. She also shared a deep love of theater with a

cherished circle of friends and maintained a membership to Signature Theatre for more than 25 years.

Above all else, Rhoda adored her family. She is survived by her devoted husband, Jack of 65 years; her children, Marc (Jodie), Erica, and Ian (Jennifer); and her beloved grandchildren, Mycah, Alyza, Jonah, Matthew, Aaron, and Rachel, each of whom brought her immense pride and joy. She is also survived by her sister, Ellie, along with many dear friends and extended family members whose lives were enriched by her kindness, generosity, humor, and steady presence.

Rhoda loved life fully. She treasured friendships deeply, celebrated traditions wholeheartedly, and created a home and family that will continue to reflect her spirit for generations to come. She will be profoundly missed, lovingly remembered, and forever woven into the hearts of all who knew her.

The funeral will take place on Thursday, May 21, at 11:30 a.m. at Agudas Achim Congregation, followed by burial at the Agudas Achim Cemetery on South Payne Street in Alexandria.

Agudas Achim Congregation is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Rhoda Berson's Funeral

Time: May 21, 2026 11:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82919424343?pwd=0xGfVtej691YGmSIImcyyblMPNX9X3m.1>

Meeting chat link

<https://us06web.zoom.us/launch/jc/82919424343>

Meeting ID: 829 1942 4343 Passcode: 386604

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,82919424343#,,,,*386604# US (New York)

+13017158592,,82919424343#,,,,*386604# US (Washington DC)

Join by SIP

• 82919424343@zoomcrc.com

After the cemetery service, family and friends are invited to join the mourners at the home of:

Marshall and Debbie Matz

913 Lawton Street

McLean, VA 22101

Shiva will follow at the above home, from 3:00-5:00 pm, with minyan at 3:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the following organizations:

<https://foundationforwomenscancer.org/gynecologic-cancers/gynecologic-cancer-types/uterine-endometrial-cancer-gtd/>

<https://support.kidney.org/give/459746/#!/donation/checkout>

<https://www.heart.org/en/get-involved/ways-to-give>

Upcoming Events

Funeral Service

MAY 21. 11:30 AM (ET)

Agudas Achim Congregation
2908 Valley Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302
<https://agudasachim-va.org/>

shiva

MAY 21. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Marshall and Debbie Matz
913 Lawton Street
McLean, VA 22101

After the cemetery service, family and friends are invited to join the mourners at the home Marshall and Debbie Matz Minyan at 3PM

Tribute Wall

DJ

“ *My condolences to Erica and her family!!!
My thoughts and prayers are with you all!!!
Fond memories of me and others hanging out at the Berson home.
Rhoda will be truly missed.
Love, DeStephanie 🙏🕊️📖📖*

DeStephanie Johnson - 1 hour ago

EM

“ *We were so sorry to hear of Rhoda's passing. I have such fond memories of spending time with her at holiday dinners or at your home Erica. She has left a beautiful legacy of family and friends who will remember the joy she brought to this world. Marla & Tim*

EM - 6 hours ago

EK

“ *I am so sad to hear of Rhonda's passing. When I first moved to the area, in 1984, Rhonda was so welcoming and kind. Always with a smile on her face and a pleasant word she made this newcomer feel at home and among good friends. May her memory be a blessing to all who knew her.*

Ellen Katzer - 6 hours ago

SS

“ *My heartfelt sympathy to you all. Rhoda was a wonderful person and friend.
💕💕 Suzanne Sonberg*

Suzanne Sonberg - 8 hours ago