



Judith A. Wideman

May 17, 1943 - June 24, 2023

To view the family's tribute, click here (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MZc9YJoq0vWAjTY-pF6dg69v9TTw9VFP/view?pli=1>)

For those looking for another way to celebrate her life, in lieu of flowers, we ask you to consider making a donation in her honor to the Equal Justice Initiative (<https://support.eji.org/give/153413/#!/donation/checkout>)

Tribute Wall

SA

“ Thinking of Judy and remembering all of the kindnesses, legal advice, and love she so generously shared with me and my son.

Love to Danny, Jamila, Jake - their spouses and especially her grandchildren who she adored.

Sylvett A Wideman



Sylvett Anthony-Wideman - November 23, 2024 at 09:23 AM

JM

“ I came very late to this news, and by chance, because my son sent me the podcast about Jake. I knew Judy a very long time ago when I was a camper at Camp Takajo and she was at Camp Mataponi in the early 1950's. I recall, or think I do, that her nickname was "Skippy." Of course, I knew her parents, Morty and Elise, and I kept in touch with Elise until her death. The impact on my life of those years--and of Morty and Elise--is incalculable. Eventually, our son went to Takajo. Visiting Day was otherworldly for me.

Long after my camp years, my wife and I had dinner with Judy, John, Morty and Elise at camp. Jake may have been present; I don't know. What is true, however, is that Jake's tragedy and the grief it brought to his family has never been far from my thoughts, and a series of coincidences seems to have conspired to keep all of it close. Running into John in Paris; a parent in the school I led in Idaho knowing Elise; others who went to camp in Maine or New Hampshire...All of it remains raw for me--the indelible memories of Takajo; the shock and sadness when I learned of Jake's crime; what I know it did to his family.

Listening to the podcast has brought those emotions to the surface. Following a link and learning of Judy's death feels like some sort of dark magic. We were briefly in touch several years ago during a period when she and Elise were working hard against capital punishment. Our correspondence flickered out. I wish it hadn't. Thus, this belated tribute to a strong woman whom I never knew well, but to whom I always felt linked.

Jon Maksik

Jon Maksik - February 21, 2024 at 01:51 PM

BG

“ To say that that Judy Wideman left a deep impression on me would be the understatement of the century. Judy and my mom, Betsy, were both foreigners, East coast transplants, to the Laramie Valley. What they brought with them was an insatiable curiosity about the world and an even more ferocious commitment to justice. I owe my own insatiable curiosity about the world to my mom and Judy. I've lived in far off places I never even dreamed of when I was a kid, but that seed was planted on Harney and then on Granito. Judy and my mom were like Thelma and Louise but better, smarter, and braver. They were my idols, along with Jens' mom, Kathy. What a gift I received before I even knew what to do with it. Thank you, Danny, Jake, and Jamila for letting my family be part of yours and for sharing your mom with me. I can just see my mom waiting for Judy, upstairs, in a Volvo station wagon. Beth Goudey-Alden

Beth Goudey - January 21, 2024 at 10:51 PM

CP

“ I'm posting here late, it has taken me awhile to settle on what I want to say here about my Judy. She was so much to me: fierce; loyal; courageous. Although she was coincidentally a colleague, I met her in a different and more intimate manner -- through her children. I feel that I came to know her independently, in our own love lane. We shared so much over the years – work, books, art, struggles. Fear. And all, warmed in the fullness of your welcome of me -- a little ahead, not a little bit forged. Judy's home at Big Rocks was a place where I experienced a *fellowship* that I'd not known before. It was the authentic version of pleasure, one which has not dismissed the trouble of the world. Her patience with my array of fears was essential to the blossom of an important inner recess of me. Words will not capture my gratitude for what I learned about myself in the wake of Judy's courage. My mother; my sister; my friend: rest in peace. Thank you for your testimony, and for everything.



Cathleen Price - July 27, 2023 at 06:46 PM

LS

“ Judy was an endless inspiration. Selfishly, for me, whenever I needed to follow my heart I'd think of her and ask myself - What would Judy do? I still do. I always will.

Larissa Schwartz - July 03, 2023 at 03:21 PM

RG

“ I have fond memories of Judy growing up in Great Neck. She was my big sister and when she wasn't bossing me around, we had fun! From a very early age I saw in her a ferocious intensity when she would express herself as we would follow Dad's lead discussing the "issues of the day" at the dinner table. At an early age Judy also demonstrated her generosity to me. She used to pay me to clean up her room! I remember her involvement in high school with SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) but did not yet understand what it meant to be an activist. I remember visiting her at Penn in Philadelphia when I was a junior in high school, and how she showed me off to her girl friends. She was proud of me and I could feel it.

I was very grateful to have had the opportunity to visit her, Danny, Jamila, Kim and Qasima at the Hospice in Cary on the Monday before her death.

She was sleeping deeply. I held her hand for quite some time while I quietly whispered to her and tenderly stroked her face and head. While she didn't respond, I believe what I was feeling toward her and the words I spoke did register with her spirit. I spoke honestly and from my heart, telling her all the ways I loved and respected her, all the reasons I was grateful for her time on this earth and for the example she set for me and so many others to deal with life head on, to give meaning to one's beliefs through action, and to love ferociously and completely. Judy was, indeed, a warrior. And, she was my big sister.

I wanted to share some pictures, but was not sure how to post them so they would appear with these comments. I believe they have posted right before this personal tribute. I hope you get to see them.

Roger Goldman

Roger Goldman - June 29, 2023 at 05:00 PM

NG

Hi Roger:

When I read your comments about Judy, I kept tearing up. Your Big Sister was a very special and wonderful person. I am deeply sorry for your loss and that of your entire family. Judy will certainly be missed.

It has been too many years since we last had contact with each other. It would certainly be nice to be in contact with you in the near future. Be well.

Nat Greenfield

NAT GREENFIELD - July 11, 2023 at 04:37 PM

RG

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Roger Goldman - June 29, 2023 at 03:54 PM

RG

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Roger Goldman - June 29, 2023 at 03:46 PM

“ Mom,

Sitting on the patio of my apartment (the floor newly installed by Jamila with virtually no help from her double left-handed brother) on a warm summer's eve...A table too small for the three of us, but we managed, leg against leg against leg...good food, good drink, calm and happy to be together after a butting of heads a little bit earlier, a minor tempest that passed as they always did, when love reasserted itself as it always did...I remember looking at you as you were saying something to Jamila, your lovely, noble countenance lit by the day's fading light, and being suddenly overwhelmed with gratitude for you, for the constancy of your love, for your unshakeable belief in me - most of all when I didn't believe in myself, for how hard you fought, relentlessly, so we could enjoy moments like this, free...for always, always being my greatest champion...for a thousand reasons only a few of which my heart articulated right then and I didn't say right then because we had so much time, and maybe I was still stinging a bit from earlier, but we had so much time, so many opportunities and tomorrows coming our way, how could we not?...When I said so many times after that night "I love you, Mom" and expressed my gratitude and admiration for all of who you are using many different heartfelt words and turns of phrase, I know you felt it all as true. Yet it's never enough, you know? There is never enough time or opportunity to express all the depth and dimensions of my love and gratitude and appreciation for you and for all that we shared on this plane and continue to share now that you've moved beyond. That's just the nature of this...That evening was the last time we saw each other while I was free, free so largely due to your love and passionate dedication and long, long hours of grinding, exhausting work and ceaseless affirmation of me until I was ready to stand and even then, and...all of it over years, decades...We never imagined as you and I and Jamila sat and reveled in our physical togetherness and the gentle, lavender retreat of the day's light that it would be a last time. How could we have? Vistas upon vistas, just ahead...I can never say it enough to express the fullness of my feelings, Mom, but opportunities don't disappear just because you have moved to a new home: I love you, I love you, thank you, thank you, endlessly...

Jake Wideman - June 29, 2023 at 10:14 AM

JG

“ I never really knew Judy when I was growing up, she was nine years older than I, another generation. When she left home for college I was in the 3rd grade. What I did know was that she was cool and she was smart. She had a friend who was a jazz bassist, how much hipper can you get? She carved a path of her own and was an example for me to do the same. When I was a teenager and in the years that followed I would call Judy up on the phone when there was some idea or world view that needed to be fleshed out. Somehow I felt that my insides and her insides were made of the same material. Some of my favorite songs are ones that Judy turned me on to.

When Judy graduated Law School at the age of 50 I cried, tears born of deep respect. Visiting Judy and her family in Philadelphia, then Wyoming, and then Amherst was always a privilege, food for thought and body. None of us escapes this life without challenges, and Judy met hers with great determination. Her love of her children was that of a mother bear, and she delighted in her nephews and nieces. It is a blessing to know that she leaves this world to be in comfort and peace.

John Goldman - June 28, 2023 at 09:31 PM

PI

“ Danny, Jake and Jamila—

Your tribute to Judy is beautiful!

Over the years Judy and I shared lifelong pursuits (education/civil rights/ political activism) but we initially bonded over jazz music.

I first met Judy in Iowa City in 1967 at a Writers Workshop party with my poet husband, Ron. When I told Judy we'd gone to Chicago to hear/see the Miles Davis "second great" Quintet at the Plugged Nickel for our honeymoon in July 1966 she thought that was cool!

Of course, when our son was born on July 18, 1971, Judy thought it was extra-very cool that we named him John Coltrane Ikan!!!

An especially fun time with Judy was when we dueted with lyrics she'd written for Thelonius Monk's "Straight, No Chaser".

I'll begin my own tribute to Judy by playing Miles and Trane and Monk and

Love, Pat Ikan in Solon, Iowa

Patricia Ann Ikan - June 28, 2023 at 06:06 PM

PK

“ I was so saddened to hear of Judy’s passing. It’s a long time since we have spent much time at all with each other, but several years ago when my son and his family moved to the Coast of Maine, we found each other for several visits on Long Lake and re-opened our relationship.

I have nothing but fond memories of her and her family that date back to junior high and high school. She was exceedingly bright and feisty in a way that was very meaningful to me. At school we shared a relationship with our American history teacher. After he left our high school to move to New Jersey, I remember how exciting it was to drive Judy out for a visit with him. I also remember how easily I could walk up to her house and hang out. Her father became very special to me. When he volunteered to watch me pitch at a high school baseball game, it made me feel very special. So, when I think of Judy, I also think of her family, and ways they made me feel part of it.

I should also say something about Equal Justice Initiative. We talked about how important Bryan Stevenson and Equal Justice became for her and came to represent her mission in life. I will always admire her for that level of commitment and caring for fairness and justice.

My best to her family and friends.

Peter Kleinman

Peter Kleinman - June 28, 2023 at 01:35 PM

MD

“ To my most trusted confidant in matters of the heart... I am going to miss our talks, irreverent comments about the system and stories we shared about your son, my husband. You taught me to be patient and full of hope. This is only a see you later Judy. With all my love. Marta



Marta DeSoto - June 28, 2023 at 01:01 PM

SS

“ My deepest condolences to the family of Judy. I want to send my love to each one of her children and grand children. It has been a true honor caring for her. She was so easy going. She will truly be missed. I pray for the families strength during this time and hope that you all cherish the great memories of her. She was absolutely amazing.



Shakeya

Shakeya Satterwhite - June 28, 2023 at 12:10 PM

DH

“ My deepest sympathy to each of you. I met Judy when she was still a law student, and of course after her graduation, she had to become associated with our firm in Springfield. Her passion for justice and her tireless advocacy was an inspiration. She talked me into taking on a capital post-conviction case in Georgia. I have many fond memories of traveling in Georgia with her but the one I treasure most is her asking a waitress at the Waffle House who was right out of central casting whether they had bagels. The waitress yelled back to the kitchen, "y'all got any of them there bagels back there?"

Our client Dan Greene ultimately got a commutation. He is free and alive today in no small part due to Judy's tireless work on his behalf.

David Hoose

David Hoose - June 28, 2023 at 09:52 AM

JP

“ Sending love to Danny, Jake and Jamilia. We spent a beautiful day in 2011 with Judy in Maine -- sharing stories of family, laughing and the sad parts too. Judy was full of life and love. I felt that - I know you all did too. Your Mom was a very special person. We loved her and miss her. Jeff Plaut and the Plaut family

Jeff Plaut - June 27, 2023 at 10:38 PM

DB

“ Dear Danny, Jake, and Jamila,

Thank you for taking the time to let Lew and me know about the passing of your beloved mother. I know your grief is overwhelming, but ~ like her ~ you are thinking of others.

Judy was beautiful, indeed. In every way. Her powerful life force and dedication to good were inspirations to all. We were lifted up by her presence in our lives. We shared her love of our children and met her in that deep place in our hearts. We were honored to have known her as we lived our life on the high plains.

A couple of weeks ago I was talking with a Laramie acquaintance who mentioned that she once taught at the Open School. I told her of my friend, your mom, who was one of the founders. She had such a lovely, forward-looking vision for the school, which continues to thrive.

You three continue to light up the world with your mother's vitality and humanity. Please know you and yours always have a place to stay if you find yourselves back in the Laramie Valley. We still live in the little log cabin.

We are sending you comfort and peace ~ and so much love.

*With deep affection,
Donna*

Donna Bagby - June 27, 2023 at 06:03 PM

JF

“ *I first met Judy on a family trip to Baldhead Island. We became fast friends. We got up early in the morning and had coffee together. She called us the "morning girls". We often emailed after we went home. Judy was kind and interested in the lives of the people she cared about, as well as the world around her. I will miss her smiling face and quick wit.*

Janice Foster - June 27, 2023 at 03:22 PM

KM

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Keisha Moon - June 27, 2023 at 03:00 PM

KM

“ Every single time that I got a chance to spend time with her she was always full of love 💕 & light ! There was never a dull moment with her in our twist and turns of catching up. She was always so warm and supportive no matter the circumstances. You will be missed 😔



Keisha Moon - June 27, 2023 at 02:58 PM

KW

“ Judy was a wonderful gift-giver. Over the years, I admired so much how thoughtful and well-received her gifts were. This past Christmas, it was my privilege to help her choose gifts. We had a lot of fun!



Kim Wideman - June 26, 2023 at 05:48 PM

DW

“ 3 files added to the album Judy Wideman



Daniel Wideman - June 26, 2023 at 04:53 PM