



Shapiro / Patti Shapiro



Patti Shapiro

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Patti Shapiro Obituary

Obituary published on Legacy.com by Louis Memorial Chapel - Kansas City on May 19, 2022.

Patti Shapiro died on May 18, 2022. She passed at the exact moment when all four of her children had gathered into the room.

Patti made friends wherever she went—at the grocery store, doctor's office, hair salon. She knew everything about these people—their families, their health issues, their vacation plans. And she shared about her own life as well. She cared passionately about people, and they could feel her genuine warmth. But Patti wasn't all sweetness and light. She was funny, sassy, and real. She said exactly what she thought and didn't sugarcoat things. Her friends—from her beloved high school girlfriends to her Jewish community peers to her Mission Farms crew—loved her for it.

Patti was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1939 to Sidney and Jessie Swaden. The oldest of four children, Patti was always very social. She belonged to a Jewish sorority in high school and loved to get dressed up for parties and dances.

Every summer she and her sorority sisters went to the lake for a week and stayed in a cottage. They'd bring food, and Patti always ended up doing the cooking. "We had these great big packages of meat wrapped up in butcher paper, and nobody knew what to do with them. But I always found a way." Patti learned to cook from her mom, but Jessie never allowed her to help. So she just watched intently and picked it up instinctively. "I never used a lot of recipes," she said. "I experimented."

For Patti, cooking wasn't just about creating wonderful meals. It was a way to bring people together and express her love.

While her high school years were carefree and fun, Patti longed for more

encouragement from her parents. "There weren't any expectations," she said. ×
"My parents didn't care if I went to college or worked."

Her family seemed more concerned with marrying her off. On a trip with her mother to Kansas City, 19-year-old Patti met 29-year-old Alvin Shapiro at the home of her cousins Renee and Mort Rosenberg on May 2, 1959. Patti was dating someone at the time and had no warning that she was being fixed up. "I was a little annoyed." She thought Alvin was attractive but didn't have any interest. "We chatted at dinner," she said. "I was calling him Allen the whole time."

At the end of the meal, Al said: "OK, let's go." Patti was confused. "Where were we supposed to go?" They drove to Loose Park and happened upon a band playing near the rose garden. Al remembered how Patti went into the woods to relieve herself. "That's my kind of woman," he said.

Al proposed a short time later during a stroll along Mississippi River Blvd. in St. Paul. "He told me he wanted to marry me the very first weekend after we met," she said. "I was shocked." But Patti appreciated how confident and sure Al was. "I felt like he was an adult—a mature man who knew what he wanted." Moving to Kansas City after getting married on November 8, 1959, wasn't easy for Patti. She knew no one besides her cousin Renee. But as Al rose in the ranks of his law firm, they moved to a duplex near President Gardens, where she began making friends.

Patti's life in Kansas City blossomed. She raised four children, helped found the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy, was active in the Beth Shalom synagogue sisterhood, and volunteered for local Jewish organizations.

Besides cooking epic Shabbat dinners for family and friends, Patti parlayed her expertise into various jobs: doing cooking demonstrations at Macy's, catering for bar mitzvahs, and developing recipes for Bagel and Bagel. Patti co-wrote and edited the Hebrew Academy cookbook, a staple of Jewish cooking in Kansas City and beyond.

One of the highlights of her cooking career was an appearance in Bon Appetit magazine. A large crew flew to Kansas City to do an elaborate photo shoot and story on Patti and her family for the magazine's Passover issue. For Patti, this

was worldwide recognition of her culinary abilities.

Patti Shapiro didn't get the direction she wanted as a young woman and married a strong-willed older man, but that didn't stop her from charting her own path and becoming a strong, capable, sophisticated woman. But most of all, it was her enormous heart that left an indelible impact on all who knew her.

Patti is survived by her children, Peter Shapiro (Amy), Julia Shapiro (Tom Linafelt), Molly Shapiro, and Tony Shapiro (Kelly); nine grandchildren; and brothers Martin Swaden (Liz) and Mitchell Swaden (Debra).


Funeral services will take place at Louis Chapel, 6830 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri, on Friday, May 20, at 2:00 pm. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to Jewish Family Services.

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