



Dagmar "Marty" Bischoff Garfinkel

May 23, 1944 - August 28, 2023

Dagmar "Marty" Bischoff Garfinkel passed away at the side of her devoted husband on Monday, August 28, in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, after a brief and sudden illness. To know her was to be enchanted by her. She was adored by so many and will be terribly missed by all who were privileged to know her. She is survived by her husband, Steven Garfinkel, sisters Ines "Iney" Byfield of Charlottesville, VA and Renate Meinecke of Berlin, nephew and niece Lou and Laura Byfield, niece Anna Byfield, great-niece and nephew Ava and Ian Byfield, and numerous other nephews, nieces, and grand nephews and nieces.

Marty overcame many challenges in life to become the self-possessed lover of animals and fighter for their rights, outspoken (to say the least) advocate for social justice, avid-bordering-on-obsessed knitter, and award-winning sailor who conquered the hardest of hearts with her irresistible smile and laughter. Born in the later days of World War II, infant Marty contracted both tuberculosis and scarlet fever. After the war, Marty and Iney played in the bombed-out shells of buildings in post-war East Berlin.

When she was 13 years old, shortly before the Berlin Wall went up Marty and her family escaped to West Berlin with nothing but the many layers of clothes they wore on their backs. For the next three years her family lived in a refugee camp - a large open space with only hanging cloth dividers to separate one

family from another.

As an adult she moved to the U. S. and eventually settled in Houston, where she opened her own accounting firm, Marty Bischoff, CPA. During the next 15 years, while running her business she also nurtured her passion for sailing. This culminated in her selling her accounting firm and home in Houston to sail and live for three years on a 46-foot sailboat with her then-husband, cruising the Caribbean and the U. S. Coast up to Chesapeake Bay. Following her sailing days, Marty lived in a remote village in Guatemala on Lake Atitlan where she built and operated a hotel and bakery for four years. The hotel still stands in San Pedro La Laguna and still bears the name "Hotel Marty." Through all of the above she continued her life-long love for animals, which led to her helping conceive and create the still-operating Houston organization, Citizens for Animal Protection.

While teaching sailing and speaking with one of her Jewish students about the religion, Marty realized that the ideas and tenets of Judaism matched her own innate beliefs and she began taking classes in Judaism, leading to her conversion in 1987. Never one for half-measures, she became a Bat Mitzvah a few years later.

Upon returning to the U. S. in 2002, she re-opened her CPA firm, and shortly after that, met Steve Garfinkel online. They wrote to one another several times a day for two months before meeting in person, but once they did meet they were inseparable for the next 20 years. She led a life fuller than many, and will be sorely missed by all who knew her.

Previous Events

Graveside Service

SEP 3. 11:00 AM (CT)

Beth Yeshurun Allen Parkway
3502 Allen Parkway
Houston, TX 77401

Shiva Minyan

SEP 3. 6:30 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Congregation Beth Yeshurun
4525 Beechnut St.
Houston, TX 77096

The family will be saying the Mourner's Kaddish for Marty at the Sunday afternoon/evening service at Congregation Beth Yeshurun, 4525 Beechnut Street, Houston, Texas 77096 at 6:30 pm.

Reception

SEP 3. 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Congregation Beth Yeshurun
4525 Beechnut St.
Houston, TX 77096

A reception will immediately follow shiva minyan in Beth Yeshurun's Skylight Lobby.

Tribute Wall

VM

“ I offer my most heartfelt condolences to Marty's family. I am so sorry to hear of her passing. Although I knew her in the mid-1980's when she dated my father, her loss is still palpable. Her joy, passion, intelligence, wit and fire made a lasting impression on me. May she rest in peace.

Vanessa McCallson - September 30, 2023 at 11:48 AM

EM

“ I was fortunate to meet Marty shortly after I moved to San Miguel, where we became friends and neighbors. She immediately impressed me with her smarts, her love of animals, and her interest in social justice issues. As I got to know her, I discovered that her path in life had been unconventional in many ways, and I came to greatly admire her strength, courage and sense of adventure. If I had to describe her in one word, I'd say my friend Marty was a spitfire (as someone recently said, 'she was no wallflower!'). I found her candor refreshing. Her stories were usually filled with interesting anecdotes, and side notes that kept us all giggling. But, it was the way she frequently spoke so earnestly and lovingly about Steve, 'the love of her life,' that really caught my attention. Marty expressed deep contentment in her partner and the life they created together. Her happiness was palpable. My sense is that Marty didn't take much of anything for granted. From where I stand, gratitude seemed to be Marty's M.O. She is, and will be, sorely missed.

Elizabeth MacLean - September 18, 2023 at 03:39 PM

DT

“ I was blessed to care for Marty as her neurologist of many years. Her tenacity and candor made our visits so much fun. I always enjoyed every visit and learned so much from her. I will miss her immensely!

Desiree Thomas - September 08, 2023 at 01:57 PM

LB

“ So many wonderful memories of Aunt Marty. Grateful to have been part of her adventurous and authentic life, and that she brought sweet Steve into our family.



Laura Byfield - September 03, 2023 at 11:52 PM

SB

“ She liked my cranberry salad at Passover💕 and was a gracious hostess

sharon brier - September 03, 2023 at 11:21 AM

RB

“ Sincere condolences to the family. I am so very sorry for your loss. May God provide the necessary peace and comfort to your family and friends during this difficult time. Please remember these words of encouragement from the Bible: “ Jesus plainly told her: “I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life.” —John 11:20-25.

Ruby Bell - September 02, 2023 at 11:47 AM

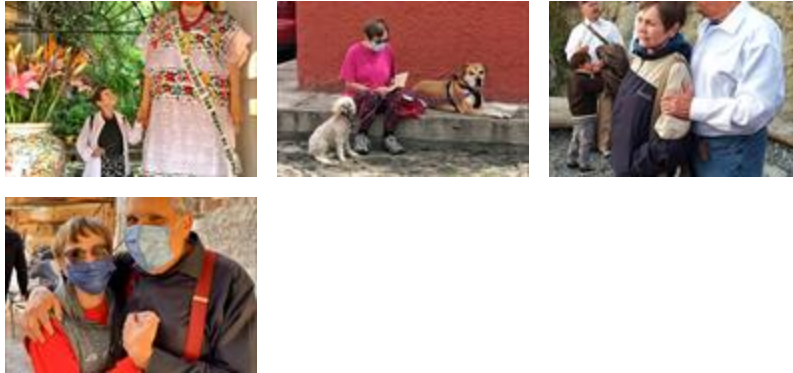
EO

“ Our family was lucky to be able to share many holidays with Steve and Marty - enormous Passover celebrations where family and friends filled their home to such a degree that fur babies (and there were many) were sequestered and furniture was relocated. Marty often wore her knitted creations which looked more elegant than store bought. Breaking-the fast was a tradition at our house and I loved sitting next to Marty to learn about pets that were rescued or knitting projects in progress. We shared being in the audience for Steve’s many performances. But most of all we loved that fact that she and Steve were so compatible, so much in love. Their move to San Miguel was a grand adventure for them both but we missed them. Our hearts are broken. Ellie and Paul Orseck

Ellen Orseck - September 02, 2023 at 09:45 AM

SG

“ 4 files added to the album M



Steve Garfinkel - September 02, 2023 at 09:30 AM

MG

“ Just a few months ago, I visited Marty and Steve for a week at their home in San Miguel de Allende. It was a great visit, and I certainly understood why they had fallen in love with that wonderful place! Marty will be greatly missed by so many. Marilyn Gambill

Marilyn Gambill - September 01, 2023 at 11:24 PM

SG

My sister-in-law Marilyn and I visited Marty and Steve in Houston some time ago, and I loved hanging out with them and all their animals. I could see what an animal lover she was, being one too, and was impressed with her sheer "aliveness", her vitality, energy, love of life. We all had some wonderful conversations about animals and art, current events and all sorts of things. And her hands were always moving her knitting needles as we talked. I got to see some of the lovely things she'd knitted. Before we left for home, she presented me with the most beautiful pair of magenta-purple socks, which I wear today in honor of her beautiful, vibrantly colorful spirit.
Stephen Gambill

Stephen Gambill - September 02, 2023 at 05:17 PM

SP

“Marty and I met in exercise class at the Cossaboom Y, and we became good friends. We told our life stories to each other, and we shared our views on life, love, families, and yes, politics. I was not happy when she moved so far away, but her emails (and visits when she came to Houston) kept us close. One of my favorite memories was when she and her beloved husband invited me and my husband to a Passover Seder at their house in Houston. We felt loved by their many friends and relatives. As I got to know Steve, I rejoiced at her finding such a good man. He especially endeared himself to me and my theatre-loving granddaughter by giving us tickets to the plays at the Jewish Community Center. The Garfinkels blessed me. Thank you, Marty, for taking me under your wing!

Suzette Pruitt - September 01, 2023 at 07:53 PM