



Ida Backer

July 21, 1920 - October 25, 2015

Ida Jo (Levine) Backer, beloved wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, and great grandmother, passed away on Sunday, October 25, 2015 at the age of 95. She was born in Houston on July 21, 1920, to Phillip and Eva Levine, raised in Calvert, TX, between Waco and Bryan-College Station, where she graduated Calvert High School. Intending to pursue a career as a nurse, Ida attended Texas Woman's University in Denton. After only one year of studies, she opted for a better offer, falling in love with the young and dashing Harry Backer whom she met at a cousin's wedding in Houston. They married in 1940 and she moved to Houston.

World War II intervened and Harry enlisted in the army in 1942, served in Southeast Asia, and returned to Houston in January of 1946. During the war and for a short time after Harry's return, Ida worked in a downtown Houston jewelry store and then at the Interurban Pharmacy owned by Harry's sister Esther and brother-in-law Bernard Levy. But in November, 1946, she gave birth to her only child, Dennis, and became a housewife until Dennis started school. For much of her later working life, she was a bookkeeper on Produce Row in Houston.

Life was not all work. She and husband Harry enjoyed bowling for many years in leagues. She delighted in cooking, her specialties being her famous stuffed cabbage, matzah ball soup; and pickles homemade from cukes she grew in her own garden.

Ida was involved in the Jewish community, a member of Hadassah, and also of B'nai B'rith Women. As son Dennis entered his teen years, Ida became a "Young Judaea" mom, hosting many club meetings; making room for overnight teenage guests from all over Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana; and hosting parties at the house. She welcomed teens so warmly that most thought of her as an extra mother and many were loyal to her for years to come.

Harry and Ida traveled to Israel in 1973 when Dennis and his first wife, Sharon were living on a kibbutz, to visit Leora, their first granddaughter. They made a trip to Suffern, NY, to visit their second granddaughter, Karly, in 1976. But they most loved to travel to Laredo where it seemed that they knew and were known by everyone "across the border." Ida was a devoted Astros baseball fan, watched the team all the time on TV, and loved to go to home games.

After Harry passed in 1997, Ida lived independently right up to the age of 90. She finally agreed to move to assisted living, where she was a smash hit with the folks, befriending everyone. Her favorite activity was bingo and she loved collecting winning tickets to buy little things at the bazaar. Her constant companion was her cat, Leopold, who allowed no one else to touch him, but who settled down on her lap or by her side for hours on end. Ida celebrated her 95th birthday in July with lots of family and friends around her. She fell ill over the last few months, but still kept up her spirits.

Ida is survived by her son Dennis and his wife Joan; by her former daughter-in-law, Sharon, mother of Ida's granddaughters; by her granddaughter Leora and her husband Dan, parents of her great granddaughters Charlotte and Eva; by her granddaughter Karly and her husband Mike, parents of her great granddaughter Luca and great grandson Elijah; by her nephew Larry Levy and his wife Lorraine; and by her nephew, Ron Backer.

All who knew her would agree that Ida had a healthy appetite for life, a deep love for family and friends, and the rare ability to speak gently. She never had a bad thing to say about anyone or anything.

Contributions in lieu of flowers may be made to Camp Young Judaea or The Medallion at Seven Acres.