



Jeanne Deutser Mandell

December 6, 1937 - September 4, 2025

Jeanne Deutser Mandell passed away peacefully on September 4, 2025, at the age of 87, surrounded by her three daughters. Her selflessness, sense of humor, and unrelenting optimism (for which she earned the nickname “Pollyanna”) sustained her and her family through every stage of life.

Jeanne was born on December 6, 1937, in Houston to the late I.S. and Riva (Field) Deutser. She and her older sister Renée grew up among a large and vibrant circle of friends and extended family who gathered for coffee and pastries nearly every afternoon at 2619 N. Calumet St., the legendary Deutser home known to many simply as “Calumet.” She graduated from San Jacinto High School, where she excelled in speech and debate. She attended the University of Texas, where she joined the sorority Sigma Delta Tau and cemented her lifelong love of burnt orange. Most importantly, UT is where Jeanne met the love of her life, Milton “Moose” Mandell. Jeanne and Moose married on August 10, 1958, at Calumet, and remarkably, they spent their first year of marriage in Petersburg, VA while Moose served in the U.S. Army at Fort Lee. Aside from an extended stay in Los Angeles during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jeanne spent the rest of her life in her beloved Houston.

One of Jeanne’s greatest gifts was her way with words. She prolifically penned letters, cards, songs, and poems, and in good times and bad, people looked to her to know just what to say. A proud, third-generation member of

Congregation Beth Yeshurun, Jeanne contributed her trademark wit to the congregation's Sisterhood for many years; highlights include naming Beth Yeshurun's first-ever cookbook, *Let My People... Eat!*, and a parody of the hit country song "Harper Valley P.T.A." that lovingly lampooned the synagogue's leadership. Jeanne even left her mark on her favorite restaurant, Ninfa's, by proclaiming herself a "Ninfa-maniac" – a coinage loved by Mama Ninfa herself and later incorporated into the restaurant's merchandise. Jeanne helped write countless bar and bat mitzvah speeches for both the kids and for the parents, and she herself was a sought-after speaker at her loved ones' weddings, birthdays, and other special occasions. Of everything she wrote throughout her life, perhaps Jeanne's most treasured piece of writing, which she recited regularly, was her submission to the "Ideal Dad" contest in *The Houston Post* when she was only 11 years old. For her winning essay about her father, the Deutser family received an exclusive Father's Day dinner at the Shamrock Hotel, the very place they happened to be when they got the news of her win.

Jeanne emanated kindness, positivity, and gratitude her entire life. She greeted each morning with a smile and sang her original ditty, "good morning, what a happy day!" She believed everyone deserved to feel special, and she naturally went the extra mile, whether she was typing books in Braille for the Lighthouse of Houston, making a joke to brighten someone's day, or complimenting a stranger in an elevator. Jeanne never let any cause for celebration go by without a call or a heartfelt message, and given her uncanny ability to remember birthdays, half-birthdays, and anniversaries, this kept her quite busy. Her home was as open as her heart; her pantry remained stocked with a smorgasbord of snacks, and anyone who ever came over to see Jeanne, Moose, or her girls knew that for as long as they were there, they were at home too.

For all of her levity, Jeanne took loving seriously. Through 54 years of marriage and 12 more after he passed, Jeanne remained just as infatuated

with Moose as she was when she first laid eyes on him. She provided strength, humor, and emotional support for her three daughters, and she was also a beloved “Aunt Jeanne” to many of their friends. She was her daughters’ biggest cheerleader, and she often reminded them in jest, “I’m the only one who loved you enough to be present at your birth.” Jeanne cherished her five precious grandchildren, and as their “Gammy,” she traveled far and wide to see them in action at games, performances, and school events. She had a unique connection to each grandchild, and no matter how old they got, she always replenished her famous candy drawer and had their favorite Blue Bell ice cream cups at the ready whenever they came to visit. In the last few years of her life, Jeanne also loved and adored her trusted caregivers – Nicholina Mensah, Chiedza “C.C.” Chovhunoita, Constance Mandara, Karen Buckle, and, during her time in Los Angeles, Aaliyah Wiley – all of whom in their deep devotion to Jeanne became part of the family, adding special joy to her daily life.

Jeanne was preceded in death by her parents I.S. and Riva Deutser, sister Renée, and husband Milton “Moose.” She is survived by her daughters Susan Alexander, Karen Jameson, and Lynn “Brown” Kogen; sons-in-law Scott Alexander and Jay Kogen; grandchildren Ryan Scott Alexander, Julia Riva Jameson, Dylan Field Alexander, Blake Samuel Jameson, and Charles Sinatra Kogen; and extended family and friends.

A private burial was held on Friday, September 5, 2025, at Beth Yeshurun Post Oak Cemetery, 7445 Awy School Lane, Houston, Texas 77055. A memorial service in Jeanne’s honor will be held in the coming weeks.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Jeanne’s memory to Houston Jewish Family Foundation for the Deutser, Hecht, Mandell Fund, 4031 S. Braeswood Blvd., Houston, TX 77025 or online www.alexanderjfs.org/donate.

Also consider treating yourself to a can of Coke with a straw, the way Jeanne always liked it.

Cemetery Details

Beth Yeshurun Post Oak Cemetery

7445 Awty School Ln.
Houston, TX 77055