

## MILDRED GUTKIN

Early in the evening of Sunday, April 11, 2021, Mildred Gutkin (née Shanas) passed away quietly at the age of 99 at Royal Gardens Retirement Residence in Peterborough, Ontario, in the presence of her children, Didi and Ralph.

She was predeceased by her husband Harry, her daughter Risa Kahanovitch, and her brother Leib Shanas. She is deeply mourned by her daughter and son-in-law Didi and Zailig Pollock; her son Ralph Gutkin; her son-in-law David Kahanovitch; and her grandchildren, Josh and Kate Pollock, Daniel Pollock, Gabe Pollock, Deborah Kahanovitch and Chris Barnes, Jonathan and Chaya Kahanovitch, Adam Gutkin and Reesa Barrs, Laura and Matt Chaplin, and Jessica and Dov Blank. In her later years, she was delighted to see her family grow with the arrival of her 14 great-grandchildren: Claire and Adam Pollock; Rosalie Barnes; Moshe, Shmuel, Sarah, Reuven and Tamara Kahanovitch; Noah, Ruby and Jude Gutkin; Liam Chaplin; and Betty and Frankie Blank.

Mildred was born on November 14, 1921, in Winnipeg, and grew up in the heart of the North End. She began her education at the I.L. Peretz Folk School, with classes in both English and Yiddish. Switching to the public school system in grade six, she continued her Yiddish education through night classes. Her high school years were spent at St. John's. Her love of learning and language led her to a B.A. (Hons.) from the University of Manitoba and an M.A. from the University of Toronto in English. Returning to Winnipeg, she edited a community newspaper for a couple of years, before joining the faculty of the U. of M. to teach veterans re-entering civilian life at the end of the Second World War.

However, Mildred's academic career was soon to be interrupted. While working as an editor, she had chanced to meet Harry Gutkin, a fellow North Ender, both of them visiting a print shop on business. They married a year or so later. Theirs was a true partnership, founded in mutual love and respect and built on a shared devotion to family and community. Later they would work together on many projects in support of the Winnipeg Jewish community, including a number of books. *Journey into Our Heritage* (1980) was the first, followed by *The Worst of Times, The Best of Times: Growing Up in Winnipeg's North End* (1987), a snapshot of the unique culture in which they had both grown up; and *Profiles in Dissent* (1997), exploring the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike through a series of biographical sketches of its leaders. To these projects, as to everything else in her life, Mildred brought humanity and intellectual rigour.

Mildred stopped teaching after the birth of her first child, but once all three children were well established at school, she rejoined the faculty of the university, just in time for the wave of baby boomers swelling the student population. Mildred would often say of her success in academia that she was merely "lucky" to be in the right place at the right time, but those around her knew better. She had a sharp and vibrant mind, thoughtful and analytical. She would continue teaching even after retirement, leading adult education classes in English at Creative Retirement Manitoba.

As their children grew up and got married and had their own children, Mildred and Harry made their home the focal point for an ever-expanding family. The grandchildren still look back with fondness at the bounty that was provided at weekly Friday night dinners. Mildred always made sure there was another seat available at the table as the family grew and shifted. Through challenging times, she was a bedrock of stability for the family, an abiding source of care, counsel, and support.

After Harry's passing, Mildred moved to Peterborough and into Royal Gardens. The center of the

family moved with her, as she took on Facebook and email to stay in touch, and as loved ones now located everywhere from Seattle to Israel made the trip to see her. She was beloved by the home's staff and fellow residents, not least for the endless parade of visiting grandchildren and great-grandchildren she brought with her.

There will be a private family service at the Shaarey Zedek Cemetery in Winnipeg on Friday, April 16 at 11:00 a.m. Central Daylight Time, which will be livestreamed via [szwinnipeg.ca](http://szwinnipeg.ca) on Facebook and YouTube. The video will later be available on the same website.