



Michelle Broido

OCT 5, 2023



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Michelle Broido

OCT 5, 2023

On Thursday, October 5, 2023. Survived by best friend of 50 years and husband, Richard Oberndorf. Also survived by stepdaughter Alyson Austin (Charles Werner), stepson Ryan Oberndorf (Megan), sister Lynne Price (Gary), niece Leanne Price, step-grandchildren Cayden and Ava, and grandnephew Jacob. A PhD chemist, Dr. Broido devoted most of her 40 year career to helping others be successful with their scientific endeavors. She spent the last 21 years of her working life at the University of Pittsburgh, serving as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Biomedical Research, Health Sciences from March 2003 – August 2020. Donations may be made to the BroidOberndorf Fund for a Jewish Future, Centennial Fund, Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, 2000 Technology Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15219 or to UPMC Family Hospice, 700 Bower Hill Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15243. No flowers, please. Funeral and burial at Gan Hazikaron Cemetery, Skylawn Memorial Park, San Mateo, CA. Funeral will be both in-person and virtual. (Please see "Upcoming Events" box below for link to Livestream Invite)

Hesped (eulogy)

By Rabbi Dean Kertesz

It is a strange thing to give the eulogy for an old friend at her funeral. It's not something I expected to do when I first met Michelle at Adams Junior High School. But Michelle reached out to me four years ago, right after Yom Kippur, by text and asked me if I would call. I was happy to hear from her. We hadn't been in contact in maybe 30 years, but I had fond memories of Michelle from high school, as wicked smart, passionate, and possessing such high integrity, so I called her and she asked if I would officiate at her funeral. Here we are, and I am not here, someone else is officiating and reading these words. I am sorry for the bad timing Michelle, but I hope I do you justice with these words. They are my last gift to you and the confirmation that my first impressions of you, so many years ago, held true throughout your remarkable life.



Obituary

Michelle Broido

Michelle was born on August 24, 1954 in San Francisco to Miriam and Abraham Broido. Her father was a chemist and worked for the Forest Service in Berkeley. Her mom was a homemaker, who stopped working after her daughters were born.

Michelle went to the Richmond Public Schools, Mira Vista Elementary School, Adams Junior High and Kennedy High School. You all know how wickedly smart she was, growing up she said, "I was a really good student. My parents expected me to do well, but what they really wanted was for me to try my best. They would get really upset if I didn't try. If I tried and didn't succeed, that was OK. And, I did very well in school."

They were a close family and would have dinner together every night. After dinner her sister Lynne or Michelle would do the dishes. She remembered that there was always a basket of mixed nuts in their shells in the house. Her dad would crack the nuts because the girls couldn't and then he would do magic tricks with them to entertain them.

Michelle loved cooking with her mom and learned a lot from her. Perhaps the biggest lesson was to not be afraid of it. Until her health problems got really bad she cooked a lot and really enjoyed having company. Later, as an adult, at Pesach she would make coconut macaroons and give them to people. By the way, Michelle hated coconut. She started making them for Rick and their popularity grew; everyone loved them but she never tasted them. For a while her signature dish was carrot souffle. She was a vegetarian for a long time and loved cooking vegetables.

She had special time with each of her parents. Her father used to bowl in a league. On Sunday mornings they would go bowling together at Golden Gate Lanes. That was her father/daughter time. Her mom drove her to piano lessons in Berkeley for eight years and for six years to oboe lessons and for six years to Kaiser Richmond for allergy shots. That was her mom time. Later, when she would come home from college, Michelle and her mother would sit talking until one or two in the morning, after dad went to bed. That was their private ritual.

She really wanted to take piano lessons, which she started when she was six and is how she met her dear friend Terry. She was a talented pianist, Michelle wasn't. From 7th through 9th grade Terry would come home with Michelle once or twice a week. They had sleepovers. One Saturday a month, for years, her mother would take Terry and Michelle to Edie's for ice cream Sundays. They grew apart, but about six years ago they reconnected and their friendship was really strong at the end.



Her parents also passed on a profound lesson in values that stuck with Michelle her entire life and influenced how she treated people. As she put it, “I’m sure everyone has prejudices, but my parents taught me that people are people. Remember how things were 50 years ago. But my parents had friends who were Indian, Chinese, Gay, and Straight. We had a house cleaner who was black and viewed as a member of the family. If I didn’t show her the respect she deserved, I was in trouble. My kindergarten teacher was a black woman. She may have been the best teacher I ever had. I used to come home from college to visit her. Her color didn’t matter to me. My friend Terry pointed out the group of real friends I have here: an 88 year old black woman, a 60 year old Jewish couple, a gay couple and a trans man and his black partner in their 40’s.”

Michelle loved baseball, for a long time anyway. She went to a Giants day-game when she was 7 or 8. Watching a one game playoff in 1961 between the Giants and Dodgers on TV in class got her hooked. After the A’s moved to Oakland Michelle and I went to A’s games together. She was a knowledgeable fan. This is Michelle’s memory of that time, not mine. “There was a row of old men behind us and they would ask each other questions and often get the answers wrong, and we would turn around and correct them. After a while they just tapped us on the shoulder and asked us.”

Michelle spent her senior year basically attending Cal Berkeley. She attended UCSD planning to be a math major, but switched to chemistry her sophomore year. She had a great professor and fell in love with it. Her dad was happy she followed in his academic footsteps. She earned her Ph.D. at UCSD in 1980. That followed with a post-doc at the Weizmann Institute in Israel from 1980 to 1983 and then another post-doc at UCSF.

Professional success soon followed. She got a faculty position in New York. Her lab and undergraduate teaching was at Hunter College. While her graduate teaching was at the Graduate Center of CUNY. But Michelle hated living in New York.

She liked teaching. As Michelle put it, she got a high from teaching chemistry and aerobics. She received tenure. But didn’t think her research was particularly valuable. So she went to the National Institutes of Health. Her job was to hand out money to people who had totally bombed and walk them through the science about how they bombed. She liked mentoring other scientists. Then she worked at the Department of Energy. It was fun for her to see how esoteric science had real world applications. She quickly became a division director, responsible for a \$180 million annual budget. She testified before Congress and felt that she was doing meaningful science.



Michelle met her husband Rick as freshman at UCSD. He loved her but she wanted to be friends. I won't tell you the whole story here, but it's very romantic and could be a great movie, with an airport scene where Michelle finally came to her senses after 25 years and married Rick in 1999. Michelle appreciated his kindness, his selflessness, and his ability to design, build or fix anything. And reading between the lines, his ability to do whatever he puts his mind to. Rick appreciated Michelle's memory about and care for people. She would pay attention because she cared and collected friends along the way. And, they shared a twisted sense of humor and love of dogs.

They moved to Pittsburgh because Rick's kids were there. Michelle fell into the job at Pitt. Here as before, her greatest satisfaction was not from her own science but from helping others. This was true throughout her career, where she supported and mentored others. She did it with rigor and integrity. She was honest and demanding, but always caring and fair. Her coworkers and those she supervised recognized and appreciated this strength. After she retired, one of the men who worked for her sent an email, "I don't want too much time to pass before I write a note to express my appreciation. You were firm, kind, personal, and helped me grow. You knew the difference between being nice and being good."

Family was very important to Michelle. She had no children of her own, but she was especially close to her niece Leanne who she thought of as a daughter. And also to her grandnephew Jacob, who she thought of as a grandchild. She was also stepmother to Rick's children Alyson and Ryan who she loved dearly and treated as her own. She referred to their children as "our grandchildren".

Michelle's Jewish identity ran deep. She and Rick were committed to Jewish life because of history and legacy (can't forget the Holocaust) are why we are committed to Jewish life. Her parents were anti-religious but they instilled a strong Jewish identity. It had to do with tragedy, the oppression and brutality in Tsarist Russia that drove her grandfather to come to America. But Michelle also felt her own commitment to belong. She was agnostic, but thought that if one was going to be religious, Judaism was the way to go. She also had a strong connection to Israel. Michelle lived there with her family for a year when she was ten. She remembered being chosen to carry flowers into the big stadium in Jerusalem for Independence Day. In 1979 she went to Israel for a conference and did her post-doc at Weizmann. She went there for three weeks when she needed to get away after her mother died.



Obituary

Michelle Broido

Endings are always hard. In 1998 she started to develop G-I problems and systemic neural problems that she coped with heroically for the last 25 years of her life. I am so glad that she and Rick found each other and could share these years together. Thanks Michelle for giving me the honor to write about your life. It was remarkable. If I may share a few words of Torah in your honor, נֵר יְהוָה נִשְׁמַת אָדָם (Ner adonai nishmat adam) "The human soul is God's lamp." (Proverbs 20:27) Michelle, you burned brightly while you were alive. You inspired everyone you touched with your light. You died too young and you will be deeply missed.

Rabbi Dean Kertesz



Burial Service

📅 **Wednesday**, October 11, 2023

🕒 12:00 PM PT

📍 **Skylawn Memorial Park**
Hwy 92 at Skyline Blvd., San Mateo CA 94402

🔗 Livestream Invite Please click the following link to join: <https://www.econdolence.com/oran2hld>
Viewneral ID: 970 2139 4053 Password: 020673





Tribute Wall

Michelle Broido



Don Gosney shared a photo to the **Old Friends** album.



October 20 at 5:16 PM



Don Gosney shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.



Here's a little story for you. Michelle and I were 'special' friends while in high school. We both spent most of our senior year attending classes at UC Berkeley so when it came time to take the PSAT, we were occupied elsewhere. Later we were both required to take the test but we were told that it was just a practice SAT. Since both of us had already taken and scored highly (Michelle MUCH higher than me) on our SATs, we saw no value in dedicating our efforts to this 'practice' SAT. Keep in mind that we were sweet on each other so, instead of wasting our time on a worthless test, we dedicated our time to each other. What they didn't tell us--and we didn't learn until much later--was that the PSAT was largely what determined who was awarded the National Merit Scholarship. Now, while my chances of being awarded this prestigious award was minimal, Michelle should have been awarded this honorarium. As we see repeatedly here--Michelle was wicked smart. Once again, yet another example of high school counselors failing to keep students properly informed. Nonetheless, I still value those two hours spent with Michelle while we zipped through the test just so the counselors could say that we met that requirement.

October 9 at 9:41 AM



Don Gosney posted:

I just learned to day of Michelle's passing. This disturbed me greatly. It's been a half century since I had seen Michelle but my memories of her are deep and thoughtful. I liked Michelle quite a bit and when she departed from me to pursue her new life, I was a loss that I've felt and lived with since. I will miss the thought that somewhere we might reconnect.

October 20 at 6:12 AM



George Klinzing posted:

Dear Rick: I am sorry that I did not know that Michelle passed until today. She was a great friend and colleague who's clear thinking often guided my actions. I know how much she enjoyed your dogs and had such pride in their awards. She will be sadly missed at the University and long remembered. My sincerest condolences. George Klinzing

March 4 at 2:33 AM



T. K. Moore posted:

Hello, I am Terry Moore, also known as Terry Kane Chinn. It is with deep regret I am not able to be here today with all of you to memorialize Michelle's life... and really appreciate Rick offering to have these reflections read during this service. Michelle Sara Broido and I met when we were about five or six years old, when we both began studying piano under the tutelage of Charles Adams of Berkeley. Later, we started attending the same middle school, and became inseparable friends from seventh through ninth grade. I'm going to do what we film, - sound and picture, editors - call-- "cutting to the chase." So, cutting to the chase... I am devastated and haunted by the passing of Michelle. I wake in the middle of nights filled with sadness she is gone. Mick and I had been communicating up until last Wednesday,... some weeks daily, for five years, maybe six...-- across the miles, the years, the decades, across the deep chasm between our separate life journeys and accomplishments. .. Communications ranging from the humorous, to the profound, to the frivolous ... to the deeply felt. We were childhood family, and this many years later, could reference events and people and feelings and bad jokes from those years without needing to explain. My memories of Michelle are filled with images of moments as clear today as they were when they had just occurred: hanging out together while Mick hand-cut reeds to make mouthpieces for her oboe; accompanying Mick's oboe teacher Donna Roselius as a pianist; Mick and I playing piano duets while the Broidos' dachshund Camille ran underfoot; My introduction to Seder at the Broido home, and to yummy matzo balls! Mick being introduced to steamed fish made by my father. Mrs. Broido keeping root beer and vanilla ice cream (my favorite float) stocked in case, I, a latchkey kid, would be spending the afternoon. Dog shows at the Cow Palace with Mr. Broido. When we reconnected across the decades about six years ago, we discovered things we never knew about the other: Michelle had experienced bullying and prejudice as a Jew; I, Chinese-American, was brought up in the Mormon Church!, and was certified as a Sharpshooter by the N.R.A. at a young age. We never knew these things about the other. Through all of life differences, the common ground with which we armed ourselves against a challenging world, was what WE believed to be our great wit and humor. Of course WE thought we originated udderly amusing cow humor. We looped endless rounds of wit: What's life? A magazine. How much does it cost? Ten cents. Don't have ten cents. That's Life! What's life? A magazine... don't have ten cents...etc etc-----We made up riddles: What is a paradox? Ben Casey and Dr. Kildare.-----Here's a loop I shared with Michelle not so long ago... she seemed to appreciate... the operating word being... "seemed". How many elephants can you fit in a VW Bug? Four. Two in the front, two in the back. How can you tell if an elephant is in your refrigerator? There's a footprint in the mayo. How can you tell if two elephants are in your refrigerator? There's two footprints in the mayo. How can you tell if three elephants are in your refrigerator? The door won't shut. How can you tell if four elephants are in your refrigerator? There's a VW Bug in your driveway.-----Rest in Peace, Mishka. I am so grateful we rediscovered each other and that I could be in your life... at a time when it really mattered. See you on the Other Side. With much love... Terry

October 9 at 9:41 AM



Tribute Wall

Michelle Broido



Don Gosney October 20 at 8:29 AM

Terry, I just learned last night (10.19.24) of Michelle's passing and it has disturbed me deeply. Michelle and I shared a special--albeit brief--bond that has stayed with me for more than a half century. After she went her own way I knew I would never see her again but deep down I still held out hope. It will haunt me forever knowing that hope has been dashed. I share your loss, Terry.



Marc Barr posted:

I met Michelle almost 16 years ago. She was always a light to my darkness. Her quick wit and sarcasm always kept me on my toes. Michelle was so thoughtful (I was truly the lucky one) by being a recipient of some wonderful macaroons. There was always something positive to be taken from each and every single conversation I had with her. Her love and adoration for Rick, her family and dearest friends along with her loving puppies. Michelle, you will be missed and remembered with love. M. Barr

October 12 at 5:50 AM



Tribute Wall

Michelle Broido

TJ

Thomas L. James posted:

My friendship with Michelle developed when she was doing postdoctoral work at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel, and I was taking a sabbatical leave there. While initial conversations with Michelle were scientific based on our common interests, the atmosphere at the Weizmann was such that friendships and nonscientific interactions easily evolved. As I readily recognized that she was very bright and hard-working, I invited her to join my lab for further postdoctoral training at the University of California, San Francisco. Scientifically, her stay was very productive, resulting in four publications. On the basis of her fine work to that point in her young career, she was readily hired as a tenure-track assistant professor at Hunter College. Our friendship continued even after she departed for the East Coast. From her time in San Francisco, I was introduced and befriended by the Broido family, joining them sometimes for dinner at the home of Abe and Mimi in Richmond or going to a play in San Francisco. A discussion with Abe involved was always fun! With her infrequent trips to the west coast after going east, our in-person visits devolved to a wonderful tradition of Thanksgiving dinner – first in Richmond and then later at the home of Michelle's sister Lynne and her husband Gary Price. It was great to see their daughters Leanne and Becca grow up too. At one point in those many years, I became married, so my wife Olga was also included in the festivities – and discussions of weaving with dog hair; Lynne is a very intelligent woman with some interesting hobbies. After a long time, Olga decided we should have a Thanksgiving dinner of our own with family (and consequently omitting the very long drive from Nicasio to Castro Valley). Of course, I was able to visit Michelle at Hunter, in Pittsburgh, and also in Bethesda, as I traveled to give lectures in those places or served on study sections for NIH. One time while she was at NIH, as the department chair, I called her to inquire about the details about why one of my faculty members had been unable to get his grant renewed even though he had received a very good score from the Study Section reviewing his grant proposal. Michelle gently told me that it was "none of my business", but I could ask my faculty colleague to call her, and she would discuss the matter with him. Oh! OK. It has been very good to have Michelle as a friend for the past 43 years. As often happens, there are times when a friend is needed for support and encouragement. In our case, this was certainly mutual. Tom James – 11 October

October 9 at 9:41 AM

JW

Jan Weissberger posted:

I lived next door to Michelle's father for almost 30 years and grew very close to the entire Broido family. Many times they would invite me and my husband over for dinner or cocktails. Michelle made great martinis. I especially remember one Thanksgiving when Michelle was preparing dinner at Abe's house, and she invited me over to help prepare some of the dishes. She showed me her secret how to make good matzo ball soup (floaters, not sinkers). Sorry Michelle, I still make sinkers. I loved her sense of humor. It was dry, just like her dad's was. I will truly miss you. "Cow"abunga! Jan Weissberger

October 9 at 9:41 AM



Don Gosney shared a photo to the **Old Friends** album.

October 20 at 5:16 PM



Michelle Broido

My old friend from her HS yearbook



Don Gosney shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

October 20 at 8:21 AM



Michelle Broido

My old friend from her HS yearbook



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Michelle by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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