



## Rose Reichner Nemerow

April 10, 1922 - October 17, 2016

### Rose Reichner Nemerow

On October 17, 2016 in Manassas, Virginia, Rose Nemerow passed away after months of failing health in hospice care.

Rose began her life on April 10, 1922, in Kushnice, Czechoslovakia in a rural community speaking Yiddish and Czech. Life was hard with no running water in a house her grandfather built, while her father Israel worked as a tailor and her mother, Anna, raised vegetables and livestock. One of Rose's enduring memories is sneaking into the hen-house early in the morning in her bare feet to steal and eat a raw egg. After being sponsored by her mother's sister aunt Goldie and at age seven Rose and her mother began a month's long journey to Ellis Island, which included a voyage on the Steamship Olympic that arrived May 1930. Her father Israel had already immigrated soon after Rose's birth, again working as a tailor and initially was a stranger to Rose. While growing up in Brooklyn and the Bronx life could be difficult for a single attractive strawberry blond girl, Rose had learned English quickly in elementary school while being teased by classmates. She earned straight A's in school to please her extraordinarily demanding 'papa', who tried to remove her from school to work at 15 because money was scarce during the depression. She and her mother worked out a system and would meet with shopping bags holding her textbooks so her father wouldn't see her continue her education, and got evening training from the teachers. In the days where fruit was still delivered by horse drawn carriages and you rarely had the five-cent bus fair, Rose

skipped several grades and managed to graduate with her peers, all the while studying the mandolin.

In 1941, after graduating high school, Rose worked in an office, then as a machinist, and went to City College in N.Y. at night to study accounting and psychology. She received awards, was promoted often and when WWII was in full steam, became a real “Rosie the Riveter” at a defense plant, and was featured in newsreels of the day. She operated drop presses, drill presses, riveting machines, and turret lathes.

Tough times during failing health between back operations, while her husband worked multiple jobs, forced Rose to put her first two young children in an orphanage which was a heartbreaking experience. Rose often recalled another very tough time when four-year-old Stanley stopped breathing after drowning at a family picnic and was saved by Rose’s sixth sense to look for him, pull him out of a nearby creek and revive him with her own spur-of-the-moment actions.

After having 3 children, she was hired by the Department of Defense and worked at Fort Belvoir, the Pentagon, and before retiring from the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) as a staff assistant, and was honored for her work with Federal Women’s Program and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Rose also worked as a substitute teacher while living in Maryland. Rose was extremely supportive of her husband’s career and encouraged him to obtain the college courses he needed to advance after moving from New York to Ohio, and eventually become an aeronautical engineer at NAVAIR.

Music was joy to Rose and it saw her through the rough times. Throughout her life, Rose was regularly featured in local and national periodicals displaying her talents for playing the mandolin and balalaika. She started playing at 6 years old in Czechoslovakia, where she would hide from her parents in the outhouse to practice. Afterward she played on the street corners of NYC. By age 15, she performed in an orchestra at Carnegie Hall. During WWII, after a full work day, she entertained troops playing the

mandolin at bond rallies and served as a USO hostess where she met her husband Jack in 1945, and married in 1946.

Rose was the concert mistress for the Takoma Mandoleers Mandolin Orchestra of Arlington, VA and belonged to the Fretted Instrument Guild of America (FIGA) and the Washington Balalaika Society. Rose was featured in a cover story in FIGA magazine and also was a regular contributor of articles. She inspired her husband Jack to join in and begin playing the bass at age 67. She traveled and played in foreign countries including France and Russia, and played for celebrities, congressmen, ambassadors, foreign dignitaries, and presidents Nixon, Carter and Reagan. She earlier played with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union Mandolin Orchestra and then played on the radio, at the 1938 World's Fair, Madison Square Garden, Kennedy Center, Smithsonian, Wolf Trap, and Ford's Theatre. She appeared with famous entertainers including Edward G. Robinson, Paul Robeson, Bill (Bojangles) Robinson and Eddie Cantor. Later Rose formed her own smaller groups such as the Rose Nemerow and the Music Makers and the Old Village Band at area restaurants, social and family functions. Rose also entertained at various nursing homes, including Potomac Place Assisted Living, where she spent her later years. She played any kind of music including Greek, Spanish, Italian, Russian and German and did so while battling carpal tunnel syndrome, hypertension, and back pain.

Rose was also an accomplished poet, with poems appearing in newspapers, numerous congregation, club and group newsletters, and also several editions of New Voices in Poetry. Rose would also give her children poems as birthday presents.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in Rose's memory to the Congregation Ner Shalom Synagogue (P.O. Box 2085, Woodbridge, VA 22195-2085) she helped found in the 1970s, and where she served on the board and in numerous capacities including Sisterhood President, Cantor and religious school teacher. She was also recognized as one of three "Woman of

Valor” by Ner Shalom for all her lifelong contributions.

Rose was preceded in death by her husband, Jack Nemerow and her son Stanley Nemerow. She is survived by Sister Sylvia Kimmel, sons Laurence Nemerow and David Nemerow, daughters-in-law Lynn Nemerow, and Diane Nemerow, six grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren.

Funeral Service to be held Wednesday, OCT 26, 2016 at Pierce Funeral Home, 9609 Center Street, Manassas, VA 20110. The family will receive friends at 9 AM with service at 10 AM. Burial after the service: Noon at National Memorial Park, King David Memorial Cemetery, 7482 Lee Hwy, Falls Church, VA 22042. Shiva is currently planned to occur at 7 PM at Congregation Ner Shalom, 14010 Spriggs Rd, Dale City, VA 22193.

# Cemetery Details

## National Memorial Park/King David Memorial Cemetery

7482 Lee Highway  
Falls Church, VA 22042

# Previous Events

## Family to receive friends

OCT **26**. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home  
9609 Center St.  
Manassas, VA 20110  
(703) 257-6028  
pfh@piercefh.com  
<https://www.piercefh.com>

## Service

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# Tribute Wall



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Rose Reichner Nemerow.*



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October 22, 2016 at 06:19 AM



“ *To our Nemerow family,  
Sending prayers of peace and strength as you celebrate the life of such an amazing woman. Scott and Sandy*

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**Sandy Crow** - October 22, 2016 at 05:13 AM



“ *Sandy Crow lit a candle in memory of Rose Reichner Nemerow*



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**Sandy Crow** - October 22, 2016 at 05:11 AM



“ *I am so sorry for your loss. Mrs. Nemerow was an amazing woman. I will always remember our time together and learning about Rosie the Riveter.*

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**Stacy Humphrey Rakoczy** - October 20, 2016 at 11:36 AM

DB

“ Larry, Lynn, and Nemerow kids I taught,  
My condolences to you in the loss of your mother/grandmother.  
Knowing you, I feel I knew her. She must have been a great person  
in your lives.

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**Dave Button** - October 20, 2016 at 07:20 AM

DJ

“ Mr. "Nem",

*I'm so sorry to hear of your mother's passing. Her obituary is  
certainly a wonderful tribute to her. She must have been an  
amazing woman.  
I'm keeping you and your family in my thoughts and prayers during  
this very difficult time.*

*Sincerely,*

*Dale (Potts) Jepson*

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**Dale (Potts) Jepson** - October 20, 2016 at 06:28 AM