

IRENE BERNADETTE ELIZABETH SULGER HILDEBRANDT

06/14/1920-10/06/2016

Goodnight Irene, goodnight, I'll see you in my dreams.

My mom, Irene, grew up on Silleck Street in Clifton, New Jersey. Her father, August Sulger, was a Swiss immigrant and her mother Lillian ne Miller, a native New Yorker. They were Bohemians, jacks of all trades; boot legging, court room interpreting, bartending and driver instructing. They ran a service station and had the first car on the block. They instilled in Irene a "Rise to the Occasion" spunk and spirited Joie de Vivre. She was always the life of the party, with her favorite toast "Here's to those who wish us well, and those who don't, can go to hell".

Among those who wished her well was her beloved childhood friend, Kay Landa. At 6, they became inseparable and remained close friends for the next 90 years.

August died when Irene was 8, Lillian, when she was 16. It was the height of the Depression, and times were hard. Irene moved in with the Polands, close family friends, and got her own phone number.

The next ten years are sketchy, I called them "The lost years". She pleaded the 5th, although her favorite WW1 quote may have come from this period "It's a great world if you don't weaken or waken."

At 25, she and my Dad, Charles Hildebrandt, married. They had Diane, Charlie, Gary (who died at birth), and then me, her namesake.

We lived in Hoboken and then Jersey City, New Jersey. We spent summers at our beloved cabin in Windham, upstate New York where Irene was in her element. A gang of friends and their kids. Mountains of her silver dollar pancakes, Scotch and sodas, bar-b-cueing! I don't even know where everyone slept. She taught me everything I know about being the hostess with the mostest.

Irene loved her job with AT&T in Manhattan, starting as an operator back in the 50's, then advancing to supervising the Installation and Repair Department (which was part of the communication systems for the 1969 moonwalk) on Broad Street, right across from the World Trade Center. In September 2000, she and I met in New Jersey to attend Craig's lavish NJ wedding. We took the tubes from Hoboken to the WTC basement, went up the monumental escalator to Broad Street and visited her old neighborhood. We were glad we did...

When my dad died in 1971, she and Auntie Kay, whose husband, John, had also died, hatched a plan and fearlessly moved with all us kids to Margate, Florida. I gave my mom the nickname, Mon Ami, which got shortened to Mona. For the next 15 years, she worked for Southern Bell and ran the non-profit Hildebrandt Hacienda, with friends and family always visiting for FLAR-I-DA vacations. In 1987, after retiring, she moved the Hacienda to Panama City Beach on the Gulf, and had the time of her life with a brand new gang of family and friends. James and her Jessica (honorable #3 child, who had moved down from Jersey City to buy the house next to hers on Michele Ct.); Neti, Tito, and their son Peter; and all her mall walking buddies.

Always ready to hop in the car, boat or plane, Irene visited Mexico, she cruised the Caribbean and Alaska, and flew to Europe. But the crowning glory, bucket list experience was our 2008 month long trip to Switzerland to see August's old stomping ground in Basil land and the Alsace. He had told her so many stories about growing up in Switzerland, and had always wanted to bring her and Lillian back to visit his home land.

Irene meditated with me at ashrams in California, tried guavas in my tree house on Maui, and loved San Francisco. She came to Eugene every year to attend grand kid's school



I'll Be Seeing You

I'll be seeing you
in all the old familiar places,
that this heart of mine embraces
all day through.

In that small cafe,
the park across the way,
the children's carousel,
the chestnut trees, the wishing well.

I'll be seeing you
in every lovely summer day
In every thing that's light and gay,
I'll always think of you that way.

I'll find you in the morning sun
and when the night is new.
I'll be looking at the moon,
but I'll be seeing you

Billie Holiday 1944



functions, and spent her birthday with us. She couldn't understand why Eugene was so damn cold in June.

Vacations in Florida were Disney, Cape Canaveral (born later she would have been an astronaut), the Miracle Strip, PCB 5ks, Uncle Ernie's lunches, and Pineapple Wiley's fabulous french fries, root beers and dollar Coronas on the beach.

In 2003, Irene had a car accident and gave up one of her greatest joys, driving. She decided to move to Eugene to be closer to us.

Oh no...Eugene was not Flar-i-da, not even close...

After awhile Irene settled in. She lived at the Washington Abby and then moved in with us on the other side of Gimpl Hill.

Thank heavens for the "Women of Vision"; Al, Anne, Betsy, Bonnie, Linda, and Pam. You welcomed her into your hearts and gave her something to look forward to on Wednesday nights.

Thank heavens for our Lawrence St. kitchen table sessions with "Take me to the Station, Mojo". She always admired your style.

Thank heavens for Friday Night Jazz with Jason and Olem. She reigned Supreme as Jazz Queen, regaling all with stories of her 40's Jazz club experiences in NYC. Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, Louis Armstrong and more. She had seen it all and was a "By proxy celebrity."

Thank heavens for Sarver and Sweet Cheeks. You know.... she owned the place. Thank you, Ian and Jean Anne, Mallory and Laura for putting up with us.

We were thrilled with the Mon Ami cafe in Florence. Thank you for naming your restaurant after her! Mona and I, being East Coasters, thoroughly enjoyed your egg salad sandwiches on many occasions while visiting the coast.

In 2015, Auntie Kay, her beloved childhood friend from Silleck St. died at 96 in Coeur-d'Alene, Idaho. Remarkably, we had all wound up here in the great NW.

We joined Ancestry this year and discovered August's Great Aunt Eda's descendants, April and her family. They had lived in Gardiner and gone to the UO, and had even been into the restaurant before we met. Wow!

Irene died at 96, October 6, 2016, in her bed and at home at "The Oaks", a place she grew to love because it reminded her so much of Windham. Ahleah and I held her hands and told her how much we loved her as she took her final breaths. She was very much at peace.

Irene loved and appreciated you Will. You were figuratively and literally supportive, holding her up for so many years. Ahjah, Ahleah, and Isaiah, you made Nanny so proud and were always there for her in your own way and at just the right time.

Thank you Hospice team Lorol, Beth, Connie, Margeret, Jill and Gary. Your knowledge, songs and compassion helped us through. You are truly angels.

It wasn't easy for my mom to give up her mortal body. She loved life dearly and had no regrets. Hopefully, she's now with family and old friends (they were the same for Irene) rising to the occasion, telling some fantastic story, and being the life of the party, 4EVER.

Thank you so much Mom, you were such a force of nature, a mentor and mon ami. You are truly missed.

Your loving family: 3 Children; Irene Boise (Will), Charles Hildebrandt (Maureen), Diane (Hildebrandt) Girone. 9 Grandchildren; Ahjah, Ahleah, Isaiah (Amanda) Boise, Steven Girone, Douglas (Nichole), Scott (Marisa), Ryan (Liz), Lauri and Nicole Hildebrandt. 7 Great Grandchildren; Steven Girone, Emma Grace and Jax Noah Hildebrandt, Sam Alex and Eric Hildebrandt, Reese and Gabe Hildebrandt ♥

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