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Elaine Berman, 80, Former Darien Resident, School Counselor

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Elaine Ruth Berman passed away peacefully at her home in Santa Monica on Dec. 8, 2017 after a long struggle with cancer.

To the end of her days she lived her life with grace and dignity, with care for others, and with love for — and of — her family.

She was born Elaine Ruth Kreiner on Dec. 18, 1936, the daughter of Anthony James Kreiner and Adeline Helen Kreiner (nee Helwig), in Cleveland. She was raised in Cleveland and Wickliffe Ohio, Darien, and Los Angeles, along with her younger sister Judy and brother David, both now deceased.

Elaine's extraordinary life included her 40-year marriage to Arthur M. "Art" Berman, who passed away in 1996; three children, seven grandchildren, and beloved sons- and daughters-in-law.

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She was a school counselor for 28 years, helping hundreds of students achieve their dreams of preparing for a college education. She loved the arts, particularly music, theater, and literature, and was an avid concert-goer, theatre subscriber, and reader to her last days.

After graduating from University High School in Los Angeles, she attended Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, where she met and married the love of her life, Art Berman, in 1956.

In 1957 her first son Michael was born. Shortly after daughter Tonia joined them in 1959, the family moved to Southern California. By 1961 they were settled in the Mar Vista neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Art began a journalism career that spanned 35 years at the Los Angeles Times, and Elaine focused on raising her first two children while taking classes to complete her undergraduate degree.

In 1967, son Daniel was born, and in 1968 the family moved to 26th Street in Santa Monica, Ca. Elaine enrolled at Mount St. Mary's College, where she completed her degree in 1973. She would go on to earn a master's degree in counseling in 1984. Elaine often expressed her appreciation for the opportunity given her by The Mount.

In the 70s the family moved to Pacific Palisades, and Elaine began a career as a teacher, which would ultimately lead to her career in counseling. She spent six years as a counselor at the Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies (LACES), a 6-12 grade magnet school in inner-city Los Angeles, where she was named counselor of the year by the Los Angeles Unified School District.

In 1991 Elaine was chosen to participate in the Fulbright Exchange program. She spent a year working at the College of Westminster in London, developing a deep love for England. She would return many times to visit the many friends she made there and to enjoy theatre in the West End.

Returning to Los Angeles in 1992, she became the college counselor for LACES. Giving every student the opportunity to prepare for and find a college where they could be successful became an urgent passion for her. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of students can testify to the endless hours she spent helping students find a path to their dreams.

She retired from LACES in 2000 but soon returned to college counseling; in 2002, she became director of college counseling at Wildwood School in West Los Angeles. At Wildwood, she was devoted to a new population of students through 2007, when she left the workforce.

Elaine had an intense interest in world travel, and visited Europe, China, and Russia in the 1980's and early 90s with her husband, Art. She also found the Transylvanian village near Brasov, Romania, from where her grandmother Sarah Maurer had emigrated in 1905, and was able to visit and meet many cousins.

She loved music and was dedicated to helping as many children as possible experience and learn to become musicians. She was active in the Committee of Professional Women of the Los Angeles Philharmonic

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Orchestra, including serving as an officer several times.

At age 79 she personally coordinated a gift drive for underserved students, arranging for several hundred presents to be purchased, wrapped, and distributed.

Elaine was an accomplished writer and poet; although rarely published, she leaves dozens of well-written short stories and poems. She enjoyed working with students to improve their writing and worked on several projects that celebrated student writing. She joined several writing and reading groups and liked nothing more than learning about and discussing literature.

Elaine spent her last 20 years living at Sea Colony II in Santa Monica, where she had a large circle of friends and served as a board member for the housing association. She loved living near the ocean and sharing the beach with friends and family who visited from near and far.

Elaine leaves her son (Arthur) Michael Berman and wife Ann Walker of Los Angeles; their son, Adam Jacob, and daughter, Alice Bates; her daughter, Tonia Jean Berman, and husband, Michael Bernstein of San Diego, their daughters: Lauren Elizabeth (and husband Jake) and Meghan Nicole; and her son, Daniel Adlai Berman, and his wife, Melinda, of Pacific Palisades and their sons: Timothy Jordan, Christopher Taylor, and Thomas Arthur.

[The Elaine Berman Scholarship Fund](#) has been endowed at Mount St. Mary's University and accepts donations. On the designation drop down, select "other" and type in Elaine Berman Scholarship Fund. Alternatively, anyone may call the Institutional Advancement office at 213-477-2769 to donate or to obtain additional information.

A Celebration of Life will be scheduled at a later date.