



Congregation Beth Elohim

CBE MOURNS

Joan Eshkenazi, 86, passed away on January 23, 2026. She was born on December 21, 1939, in Flushing, New York, to Martha and Jack Goldmeer. She was the youngest of three sisters, all of whom shared a passion for the arts.

Joan began drawing at the age of four. After graduating from Flushing High School, she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Queens College and later received a Master of Arts from Hunter College.

Her adventurous spirit and lifelong love of travel led her to the Accademia d'Arte in Perugia, Italy. It was there that she met a Bulgarian-Israeli medical student, Azariah Eshkenazi, their apartments separated by 197 stairs on the Via Appia. Overcoming language, cultural, and geographic barriers, Joan and Azariah married in Israel on August 10, 1965. They lived in Italy for several years while Azariah completed his medical studies, and their son, Adiel, was born in Vicenza in 1967. The family moved to the United States in 1969, and after the birth of their daughter, Lara, in 1971, they settled in Forest Hills, New York.

Joan taught English and Art in the New York City public school system while continuing to develop her own artistic practice in painting and ceramics. Inspired by the Impressionists and by Georgia O'Keeffe, she used nature as a way to express life's mysteries and emotions. Her work often drew from the landscapes she loved to surround herself with and was exhibited in Italy, New York, and Massachusetts, as well as in more recent group shows at the Von Liebig Art Center in Naples, Florida. Her artwork remains displayed in her homes in Forest Hills, Naples, and Plymouth, as well as in the homes and offices of her children.

In addition to her visual art, Joan had a deep and enduring love for modern dance. She studied for many years at the Mary Anthony Dance Studio in New York City under Mary Anthony. Dance was an important and consistent form of creative expression for her,

offering the same discipline, freedom, and emotional depth that shaped her work as a painter and ceramicist. Its influence could be felt in the rhythm, balance, and sense of movement that ran through her art and her life.

Beginning in 1973, Joan and her family spent summers in Plymouth, Massachusetts, a tradition that continued until 2025, when family and close friends gathered at the Daniel Webster Inn in Sandwich to celebrate Joan and Azariah's 60th wedding anniversary. On Cape Cod, Joan developed a love of kayaking, swimming, and waterskiing, continuing to get up on one ski well into her seventies. She built a ceramics studio there where she created many of her works and taught each of her three grandchildren the art of ceramics.

In the early 1990s, Joan discovered Naples, Florida, where she began spending increasing amounts of time each winter. She and Azariah became full-time residents in 2020. Throughout those years, Joan continued to paint, producing numerous oil and watercolor works.

In October 2024, Joan was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. During her illness and difficult final year, she continued to find comfort and meaning in the arts. Classical music filled the house, and she spoke often about ideas for future paintings.

Joan is survived by her sister Elaine; her beloved husband of 60 years, Azariah; her son Adiel and his wife Stephanie; her daughter Lara and her husband Howie; and her three cherished grandchildren, Ezra, Maya, and Gaia.

Funeral services will take place on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at the CBE Chapel, 274 Garfield Place, Brooklyn, New York.

Shiva will be held:

Thursday, January 29, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the family home, 25 Middlemay Circle, Forest Hills, NY

Saturday, January 31, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., and Sunday, February 1, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Lara and Howie's home, 377 1st Street, Apt. 1, Brooklyn, NY.

Many people have asked about making donations in Joan's honor. As a lifelong lover of the arts and a woman who was deeply proud of her Jewish identity, the family invites those who wish to give to consider the following organizations, each of which reflects an important part of her life.

Buglisi Theater is a modern dance company that Joan loved deeply and that her daughter-in-law, Stephanie, danced for. Dance was essential to Joan's life and creative expression, and Buglisi Theater's commitment to movement, artistry, and discipline reflects values she held close.

<https://www.buglisidance.org/donate>

Chabad of Naples held a special place in Joan's life. She had a meaningful connection with Rabbi Fishel Zaklos, whose warmth, joy, and open-hearted approach helped bring Jewish tradition to life for the Naples community. Rabbi Zaklos also visited Joan during her final days, a gesture the family will always remember with gratitude.

https://www.chabadnaples.com/templates/donate_cdo/aid/4970020/jewish/Donate.htm