



Halina Wanda Kozminski Pearce

May 5, 1924 - January 29, 2017

NEW YORK MILLS - Halina Wanda Kozminski Pearce, our mother, left this life, and us, on Sunday, January 29, 2017. Her passing, though unexpected, was peaceful. She was in the company of those she loved most, her son Dr. George A. Kozminski, his wife Jennifer Asker-Kozminski, and her friend and caregiver, Juliann Dorozynski-Essafi (who we suspect Mother loved the most). She was predeceased by her parents and two sisters, Irena and Regina. Mother's parents, Felicja Demkowska and Wladyslaw Rutkowska, both from Warsaw, met and married in Detroit in May 1915. Her older sisters were born in Detroit prior to her parents returning to their homeland. Halina was born and raised in Warsaw.

Mother's early adulthood, as many others of that era, was turned upside down by World War II. She would describe it later as a world created by Kafka. Mother had a fearless spirit and would not tolerate that which she could change. As a very young woman, she began working for the Polish Resistance movement, dispersing funds sent from England to the families of Polish pilots who had escaped to Great Britain. It was the largest underground resistance in all of Nazi-occupied Europe. She, in 1943, married her first husband, Wladyslaw Cieslak. In 1944, Mother, expecting her first child, was witness to her husband's execution by German soldiers as they attempted to escape the Warsaw uprising. Although now a widow at 21 years old, she was blessed with her first child, a daughter, Ewa from this marriage. After the destruction of Warsaw, she fled with her daughter and parents and was able

to find refuge in Gdansk.

Although the war had ended, Mother found the danger had not. She was alerted late one night by a knock at the door that she must flee Gdansk or face arrest by the Soviets. Mother fled in the night, leaving her parents and daughter who she knew would be safe. She made it through Europe and to the Witley Polish Resettlement Refugee Camp in England via an underground network of post war Anti-Communist Resistance. It was at Witley Camp that she met her second husband, Lt. Jerzy Kozminski, a previous combatant for the British Army in the General Anders Korp. They were married later that year and relocated to London, England where Mother's second child, a son, Jurek (George) was born. Neither of my parents felt they could safely return to Poland. My mother had already escaped the NKVD, the Soviet secret police, and my father had been imprisoned in Siberia in the early part of the War prior to his deployment to North Africa and Monte Cassino. Initially, we were to immigrate to Argentina, but because my father was a combatant in the British Forces, we were sponsored by an American family in New York City and with relief, were welcomed to America. My mother, as proud as she was of her Polish heritage, embraced America and was proud to say that she was an American citizen first. She truly loved this country for its freedoms, its ideals, and for the welcome her family received.

Mother was intense, intelligent, independent, and had a zest for life. She was grateful for her life and thankful for the many friendships she had throughout the years. Mother was compassionate for those less fortunate and never pretentious. She had an innate ability to see people for who they truly were, and not just the face they presented to the world. She was comfortable in her solitude but made friends easily. My best memories are of her sitting curled up in her favorite easy chair reading a good book with her favorite dogs, Georgia and North, laying by her side. Although burdened by the rigors of advanced age, her wit and intelligence were as sharp as ever and her smile irresistible. Halina was a communicant of St. Mary Our Lady of Czestochowa Catholic Church.

My mother leaves to mourn her and miss her, her son Dr. George A. Kozminski and his wife, Jennifer; and her daughter, Ewa Cain of New York City, of whom she was so proud. She leaves two granddaughters and had a special place in her heart for her step-granddaughter, Courtney Asker of Arlington, VA, who visited our mother regularly on her trips home. Mother enjoyed her visits with her friend Madeline Dorozynski and her neighbors at the New York Mills Senior Center. She also leaves her feline companions, Lola and Lucy.

Her family is truly grateful to her caregivers, Juliann, Trisha, Patricia, and Justine, for their compassionate care which allowed Mother to remain at home for the last years of her life, a life made richer by their very presence.

One of the most important messages my mother instilled in us was to be brave and remember that if you ever naively believe that it can't happen here, then quite possibly, it will.

In keeping with Halina's wishes, there will be no public visitation. Her family will honor and commemorate her life at a private time. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend Halina's funeral service and Celebration of Life which will commence on Thursday morning at 11:00 at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes where her Mass of Christian Burial will be offered by Rev. Lukasz Kozlowski. The family will receive visitors at the conclusion of Mass. Those wishing to express an act of kindness in lieu of flowers may make a donation to the Stevens-Swan Humane Society online at <https://stevens-swan.org>; envelopes will be available at the service. Entombment will take place in Resurrection Chapel Mausoleum at Holy Trinity Cemetery at the convenience of the family.

Cemetery Details

Resurrection Chapel Mausoleum

Champlin Ave.
Utica, NY 13501

Tribute Wall

TO

“ *I'm sorry I did not know the decedent, but this is a very lovely obituary.*

Tom - July 01, 2017 at 01:59 PM

RM

“ *Dr. Kozminski and Family,
Our deepest sympathy and our prayers are
with you. God Bless.*



Rose and Karen Moylan - February 10, 2017 at 06:15 PM

DA

“ *What an amazing woman. This is a story, especially at this time,
that should be shared and a life that should be honored.*

Dabro - February 08, 2017 at 09:19 AM

CH

“ *I moved to Schuyler 2001 and met my neighbor Halina. She was a
fountain of information on so many things! I loved her zest for life an
could not help but admire her outspoken nature.
My condolences to her family, she was a much loved woman*

Carolyn Hillman - February 08, 2017 at 07:57 AM

WO

“ *Dr Kozminski & family*

I am so sorry for your loss. There are no words that I can say that will comfort you. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

Wendy Owens

Wendy Owens - February 08, 2017 at 06:48 AM

CL

“ *I want to share that I did not personally know Halina, but we are the family who adopted Lucy and Lola. I want to let you know they are settling in wonderfully and are so loving. I want to think that while we are taking care of her babies here, she is now watching over our beloved kitty we had to put down the same day Halina passed. It was fate in so many ways. May she rest easy.*

Carolyn Lints and family

carolyn lints - February 07, 2017 at 05:57 AM

LF

My dear friend Halina, We shared so many laughs and intense conversations through the years. I will never forget your quick wit and spontaneity. We met as neighbors when you walked Georgia and I am forever grateful to have known you. May you Rest In Peace, your friend, Linda

Linda Finley - February 07, 2017 at 10:51 PM