



Lena J. (Zarobsky) Thomas

May 27, 1954 - February 6, 2009

Mrs. Lena J. (Zarobsky) Thomas, age 54, of Cold Brook, passed away on Friday, February 6, 2009 at Bassett Healthcare in Cooperstown with her loving husband by her side.

Born in Berwyn, Illinois on May 27, 1954, Lena was the daughter of the late Irving and Marie (Viola) Zarobsky. Raised and educated in Brookfield, Il, she attended Gross Elementary Public School and St. Barbara's Catholic Elementary School. She graduated from Nazareth Academy in 1972. She pursued collegiate studies at Aurora College where she studied biochemistry and physics, and met her future husband, Allen. It was on October 15, 1983 in Chicago that she and Allen were married and shared 25 years in a union blessed with mutual love and respect. Lena continued her academic scholarship as she attended Rosary College where she received her undergraduate degree in psychology with a minor in biochemistry. She also studied at Roosevelt University where she earned her Masters degree in psychology and at the same time was enrolled at George William College to obtain her Masters degree in social work. Lena continued her many and various pursuits of higher education when she attended John Marshall School of Law in Chicago, earning her initial law degree and became a member of the Illinois & Chicago Bar Association and subsequently served as chairperson of the Agricultural Committee of the Chicago Bar Association. While attending law school, Lena worked for the Chicago ARC directing various programs. She worked as an attorney on the South Side of Chicago where she offered

her skills and knowledge to her clients, often pro bono.

With her out-going and engaging personality, Lena was able to form meaningful social relationships easily, and even her foes became her friends. She worked as a volunteer at the Danada Equestrian Center in Wheaton Illinois and at the Hooved Animal Humane Society in Woodstock, IL. She was a member of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), donated to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), NAHR, the Heifer Project International, Amnesty International, the Peacemakers-Intervention and Mediation Organization, where she served as a primary mediator while in Chicago and New York. Locally, she volunteered much of her time to fund raising projects at the Stevens-Swan Humane Society, and served as a board member for a short time. Aside from working with lost and weary animals, Lena also devoted time to any human being in need. She used her professional intervention and communication skills and advocated to help many people improve their lives, further their education and increase their contribution to the community.

Lena is survived by her husband, Allen; and her daughter, Hope Elizabeth Ann Thomas of Argyle, NY. Survivors also include her uncle, Frank and Antoinette Viola of Chicago; her aunt, Ann Brown; her nieces and nephews, Tammy Myer, and Jimmy Thomas; several cousins in Michigan and Illinois; and her brother-in-law, Mike Thomas. She also leaves many dear and cherished friends and co-workers, too numerous to mention. She was predeceased by her parents, and several aunts and uncles.

The family is grateful to the doctors, nurses, and staff of the Cancer Center of Bassett Healthcare and also the staff of Bassett Healthcare Hospital. A special thanks is offered to her co-workers at CNYDDSO, Miriam, Catherine, and her friends, Vince and Sue, and Marybeth and Elizabeth and others in the Cold Brook-Ohio community for all their loving care, attention, and support shown to Lena and her family through the course of her illness.

A Memorial Gathering will be held on Saturday, February 14, 2009 from 12:00 noon – 2:00 at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc. 932 South St., corner of

Hammond Ave. By family request, please omit floral offerings. For those wishing to do so, please consider memorial contributions in Lena's honor to the Heifer Project International; envelopes will be available at the funeral home. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend Lena's funeral service and Celebration of Life will commence at 2:00 at the funeral home.

Tribute Wall



“ Eannace Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Lena J. (Zarobsky) Thomas



Eannace Funeral Home, Inc. - February 06, 2009 at 12:00 AM



“ Our deepest sympathies to Alan & the family in the loss of this precious soul. Just now we are discovering her departure & feel the separation belatedly. She was a most unique & caring person, noted well in her sensitivity with retiring horses as well as helpless creatures left to the forces of nature once aged. The Program Participants of HARC also have extended their sense of loss having known this multitalented lady. May God's goodness & support be with you even at this late date.##imported-begin##Dave Schlaegel##imported-end##

April 16, 2009 at 07:36 AM



“ I kniew lena from Lynn Univeristy she was always the one who had so much energy, she also watched my dog for several months when i had togo the Boca campus, i know she was relly into animans and such, she will be missed##imported-begin##Joshua Borin##imported-end##

February 15, 2009 at 10:47 PM



“If our friendship depends on things like space and time, then when we finally overcome space and time, we've destroyed our own brotherhood! But overcome space, and all we have left is Here. Overcome time, and all we have left is Now. And in the middle of Here and Now, don't you think that we might see each other once or twice?”

Jonathan Livingston Seagull, Richard Bach, Part II

Lena was not the average sea gull, and I still sense she is taking care of us.##imported-begin##Miriam Doud##imported-end##

February 15, 2009 at 07:20 PM



“ *Lena's service yesterday was beautiful. I was on vacation in Hawaii when I learned of Lena's death. It was upsetting to think I'd miss her service so I was grateful that I was able to attend and came to the service straight from the airport. I knew that Lena wouldn't care how I looked anyway since she always dressed causally too. And as was mentioned in her service, I think Valentine's Day was an excellent day to honor Lena. She truly had a heart of gold.*

I thought of Lena during my entire trip. The day after her death I took a drive around the island of Oahu and went to a Japanese temple called Byodo-In located in Kanehoe. I think it was something Lena would have loved. It was serene and quite spiritual. I lit some incense for her and said a prayer as an offering. While on the Big Island I took a drive and happened upon a small Catholic church called St. Benedict's, though it's better known as "The Painted Church." Lena and I often talked about Catholicism since we were both raised Catholic. I thought about how Lena would probably have found that to be a neat place of worship too and said a prayer for her there too.

It's sad to think that I'll never have another conversation with Lena, but feel she will always be with me and the rest of the many people whose lives she touched in so many ways. God Bless You, Lena...##imported-begin##Katharine Hyde##imported-end##

February 15, 2009 at 05:03 PM



“ *What can I say about my dear friend Lena. She was such a beautiful, wise, honest and loving woman. Lena was a bright light in a dark world. Her light brought love, warmth, compassion and understanding wherever she went. Her love of life and unwavering optimism was contagious. Even in the hospital, I witnessed Lena’s special gift. In the middle of the night, only days before she died, a nurse from another floor came to visit her. She wept by her bedside, mourning the loss of such a special woman that had befriended and touched her in such a powerful way. She had only known her for 2 weeks. Even though I had only had the pleasure of knowing Lena for 3 years, she touched my life, made it richer, more fun, and more complete. For all the wonderful memories I have, I am very grateful and will cherish them all my life. It is apropos, that we are celebrating Lena’s life on Valentines Day...a day all about love. For it is our love we feel for our dear sweet friend Lena that is the reason we are here today to say collectively, publicly with her friends and family ...we love you Lena, we shall never forget the light you brought into our world...may it shine forever in our hearts.*

Blessed be, our dear beautiful Lena, Blessed be.

I wrote the following poem the day after Lena died.

River of Tears

*I cried a river of tears for you
Yet it won’t bring you back
I’m left but only the memories
Of our precious times together*

*Your gentle smile
Quirky sense of humor
Your beautiful blue eyes
Shone with only love and compassion
For those who were blessed enough to know you.*

*Your words of wisdom and compassion live on in
The deep unconscious of my mind
To surface when I need them...your voice will be there.
You fought what was unjust, never giving up,
always looking for that silver lining
giving hope to those that were lost.*

*Rest now my dear friend
My beautiful Lena
Rest now, your fight is over, you ran a great race
With dignity you finished, living a full life
even though short in years*

*Be at peace now,
Rest knowing you were loved and respected by so many
You will be dearly missed.*

You were a bright light in a dark world.

*Written with love by Elizabeth Mangle
2/7/09##imported-begin##Elizabeth Mangle##imported-end##*

February 13, 2009 at 11:29 PM



“ Lena certainly left her loving spirit with us at Mount Carmel Choir. She will be fondly remembered for her great smile, her gentle spirit, and her sincere kindness. I remember how touched we were one year when she gave Karen and me a beautiful artistic calendar that we used daily. Once the year was finished, we could not part with the calendar. Even though the days have passed, the calendar and its lovely poetic sayings are art work are still in our possession. People like Lena are a gift to everyone around them. She shared herself so lovingly, and brought us and everyone into her heart. Like the calendar, her days with us have passed, but the memories will always remain. We treasure her friendship, her presence in our lives, and we pray that her family will know deep consolation and peace. Lena was such a blessing to so many of us, she must have been a very deep treasure to her family. May God bless you still with enriched lives, where your emptiness is filled by relationships that continue to grow with Lena's touch and smile. - Peter Elacqua###imported-begin##Peter Elacqua###imported-end##

February 13, 2009 at 08:22 PM



“ *Rainbow Bridge*

Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge.

When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge.

There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together.

There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable.

All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by.

The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them, who had to be left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; His eager body quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster.

You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together....

Author unknown...

When we heard Lena had left us, we knew there was a big crowd gathering at The Rainbow Bridge. Her husband, Al, asked us to post this poem, famous among our horse friends. Picture the scene and sounds. "Squawk! Whinny! Bleat! Neigh! Whiffle! Woof! Meow! " Leaping dogs and rearing horses! Flying hens and preening cats! Lena's home!

Sue and Sarah Brander###imported-begin##Sue Brander###imported-end##

February 12, 2009 at 10:44 PM



“ *I saw this the other day and immediately thought of Lena... she would have smiled and agreed with every word, I believe.*

" Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, champagne in one hand - strawberries in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "Woo Hoo-what a ride!"

We all know you enjoyed the ride, my friend... peace!###imported-begin##Kelly Lewha###imported-end##

February 11, 2009 at 09:30 AM



“ *Al and Hope - I had the honor of working with Lena on behalf of our mutual client. Her passion, devotion, integrity and yes - sense of humor, resulted in powerful advocacy. She was gift to me and so many others. The world was made better by her presence.###imported-begin##Mary DeAngelo, LCSW-R###imported-end##*

February 11, 2009 at 06:49 AM



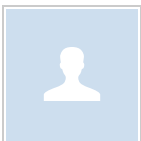
“ One of Lena's favorite friends from Danada Equestrian Center was a former Cavalry Colonel named John. John was a real cavalry man - the horse cavalry, one of the last. (He was also a tank commander in WWII. He fought some of the worst battles in the worst conditions.) He had a horse at Danada. Finders Keepers. And Finders came with us when we moved to New York. Under Lena's care Finders lived many good years. John told Lena about the cavalry, about how to care for your horse, about how to live life true and with purpose. One thing he told Lena is that the Cavalry meets at Fiddler's Glen after death. Fiddler's Glen is only halfway to hell. They rest, they feast, they tell stories and they watch the Infantry march the rest of the way into hell. Lena believed it, talked about it and she's there now with John.##imported-begin##Al Thomas##imported-end##

February 10, 2009 at 09:33 PM



“ All of those she served have lost a valuable advocate. All of us she worked with have lost a good friend and co- worker. God has a special place in heaven just for Lena. She will be greatly missed by all. RICH&DIE##imported-begin##Richard /Dienne Shankland##imported-end##

February 10, 2009 at 07:26 PM



“ I am Lena's cousin from Illinois. Even though we were 12 years apart, I remember her as a baby, that came late in life to her parents. She was always an independent person who loved life and helping others. We share the same name, which was our grandmother's, and I will remember her always in my heart & prayers.##imported-begin##Lena Tuzak##imported-end##

February 10, 2009 at 10:16 AM



“ I just realized I have only known Lena for four years. It has always seemed longer than that. She often used the phrase mishpachah, Kindred Spirit. She is the only other person I know besides myself who chewed the feet off a Barbie Doll. She could find the humor in any situation. She had decided to live to be 100. She may not have made it technically, but I am giving her extra credit, because I believe she packed in enough experience for three average people who lived to be 100. It is very hard not to be sad when I think of you my friend, but I am doing what you would tell us all to do. Everytime I feel the sadness well up, I think of one of the many memories that made me smile. Your impression of David Patterson running the boiler maker is still one of my favorites. I am sure as God looks up Lena Thomas in his Rolodex of Judgement he will find her to be an exceptionally good egg, though slightly cracked.##imported-begin##Miriam Doud##imported-end##

February 10, 2009 at 07:21 AM



“ When Lena was in Elementary School, the parish priest came to visit the class one day. He ask each of the children what they wanted to do when they grew up. Some children wanted to be teachers or nurses or firemen. Lena said, "I want to drink, smoke, drive an MG and work for Motorola!" (OK, those of you who think she got into trouble, please raise your hand.) There were Elementary school punishments and visits home and her parents were called into the school. Her Jewish dad was condemned to hell, (again). But Lena was inspired by her favorite Aunt who smoked and drank and drove an MG and worked for Motorola. Something else Lena always wanted was a pony. The night I drove out from NY to Illinois, she came back from the hospital. She had been thrown by a "green broke hunter" at the riding stables. She continued to ride off and on until she met Ed Holman at Danada Equestrian Park. Lena was a volunteer there - cleaning out the barns and caring for the horses. One day there was some special event at the stables. Ed and Lena had taken a wagon full of people some place and were driving back to the barn empty. Ed said, "here, take these" and handed Lena the reins. And Lena was driving two Belgian Draft Horses. Ed gave her hints and ideas, but from then on she was a teamster she wasn't a rider. We moved up to the farm in 1995, but it wasn't until a few years ago that we got our first pony. Bel was in very sad shape, her hooves were overgrown and diseased and in danger of actually falling off. Lena nursed her back to health. Then we got two more - Scooter and Libby. Then they had a baby, Libby-Lou. Lena had her ponies. She was planning to train them to drive this summer.##imported-begin##Al Thomas##imported-end##

February 09, 2009 at 09:19 PM



“ Over the past several years I have gotten to know Lena as a very caring, and devoted co-worker. She was always happy and could find the best out of any situation ! I was so glad that I got to visit Lena one week ago at Cooperstown. Once again she had very good spirits and additude about life. We had a great conversation, one that I will never forget. One of the hardest parts of this situation was breaking the news to my 12 year old twins. That Lena will now be providing eggs to people in heven or somewhere. I will be out of town for her celebration of life on 2-14-09, but will be there in my mind.##imported-begin##Renee Lee##imported-end##

February 09, 2009 at 07:22 PM



“ Hello lena's family and friends, i'm shawna Renee Lee's daughter from lena's work. One day my mom brought me home some eggs that she had gotten from Lena. I am a person that will eat any kind of eggs that you put in front of me. It was about 2 years ago when my mom brought home the frist dozen of lena's eggs. This is when i started making eggs every Saturday. I loved them so much. We all learned about eggs and chickens that we had never knew. As she always gave us a quick lesson about chickens and eggs, with each perchase. She will be greatly missed by me and my family.##imported-begin##Shawna Lee##imported-end##

February 09, 2009 at 07:07 PM



“ *Lena was an intelligent and unique person, with a heart of gold, the soul of Ghandi, the intelligence of Albert Einstein, and a friendly smile that was a staple around our office. I was honored and blessed to have known Lena as a coworker and friend, and I will think of her every time I have to buy range free brown eggs... Lena I know you will now be supplying heaven, or where ever you are, with all the range free brown eggs they can eat! Your quiet spirit will be missed around the cubicles, and I know that the consumers that you have touched over the years will forever be better for having known you. God bless you, my friend...##imported-begin##Kelly Lewha##imported-end##*

February 09, 2009 at 11:02 AM



“ *AI & Hope*
Lena was so very proud of both of you continuing your educations. Her kindness and support to others never ending. She will always hold a very special place in Kate's and my memory. God Bless##imported-begin##Shereen ##imported-end##

February 09, 2009 at 10:09 AM



“ I have very few memories from childhood. The one memory that stays with me clear as yesterday is the day i met Lena. We were at the lawyers office. She told me that she was not my mother and would not allow me to call her mom until I was sure she was the only mother I wanted. Lena has always been my Lena. She was more than a mother she was my best friend. We had started looking into adult adoption when I moved back to NY two years ago. Because adoption was so long over due. Without Lena and her interventions in my life I probably would not have made it through my childhood. Without Lena I would be no where near the adult I am. Lena was truly the best Mom anyone could have asked for.###imported-begin###Hope Thomas###imported-end##

February 08, 2009 at 11:12 PM



“ Lena will be greatly missed. She was the best neighbor I ever had. A true friend, always there for you when you were in need, waved when passing our home or walking by her home. Her love for animals will never be surpassed. My memories of Lena will be of her out walking her "best friend" Big Bill, talking and singing to her chickens, and feeding apples to her horses. She was so pleased with and adored her little baby miniature horse. John and I miss you Lena!!!###imported-begin###Pat Miller###imported-end##

February 08, 2009 at 07:21 PM



“ Before we were married, Lena worked for a foster care agency in Chicago. The agency was small and Lena worked out of a church basement. One day, she got a phone call: an investigation had started into the activities of an administrator; all the money had disappeared; someone was coming over to impound everything as evidence. Lena found the church janitor and they threw all the file cabinets in the back seat of her car. She ran her program out of the backseat of her car until it was taken over by CARC.

In Chicago, Lena spent her time working on the south side. She went into some pretty rough places. The CPD would escort her to a certain block and Lena would drive a couple more blocks and then get a gang escort to her client. ("You don't touch her, she helps the little kids.") One time someone heard that we were having a really hard time with my ex-wife in the custody battle for my daughter. Lena sometimes brought Hope to work, so everyone knew who she was. One day a gang member approached Lena and told her that if she would give him the B..... address someone would "solve the problem" for her. Lena declined.

One of Lena's clients always wanted to be a cop. He even went so far as to score a district 1 shield for his own. On a certain weekend he dressed up and attended Mayor Sawyer's fund raiser on the south side. Everything seemed to be going well until bad habits intervened. The client would gently take your hand in his. He would cradle your hand with one of his and trace a pattern on the back of your hand. "What are these??? Veins!" The client had an extended vacation in the "Zone Center". He also found out that you don't cross Lena and she had an amazing vocabulary.##imported-begin##Al Thomas##imported-end##

February 08, 2009 at 12:13 PM



“ *Lena and I met at college. Although we had only one class together, (sociology), We got to know each other and wrote letters to each other after she moved on to a different college. We led separate lives until I started writing to her again when I became separated from my first wife.*

I don't know when we decided to spend our lives together. I know it was a long time before we got married. Our first wedding was in the basement of city hall in Chicago. (A judge performed wedding services every Saturday morning.) Our second wedding was in the Catholic church. We couldn't have the wedding at the altar, (because I wasn't Catholic); so we had the wedding in the baptistry. The room had tiled walls and looked like a bathroom. We told many people that we met in a bathroom, (I worked maintenance at college) and we got married in a bathroom.

At our wedding service my daughter was the ring bearer; Lena's high school friend Cathy was the maid of honor; and Lena's friend Mary was the best man. Mike, the priest told Mary, "You're the best looking best man I've EVER seen." He left the priesthood after that, (but not related to that).

*We were together from that day on.##imported-begin##Al
Thomas##imported-end##*

February 08, 2009 at 08:26 AM



“ I knew Lena for over 9 years from our days together at Lynn University in Old Forge. She and I hit it off instantly and shared many memories of our time there, including our month long trip to Boca Raton, which we both dreaded but enjoyed because we had each other to spend time with. We also worked together at CNYDSO for several years and Lena was the one who helped me get in there. She was such a special woman and I cared for her dearly. Lena loved her farm full of handicapped animals and that was one of many things that made her such a unique and beautiful human being. Lena lived life on her terms and marched to her own unique drummer that made Lena who she was and who I will always remember her as. I will miss her very much.##imported-begin##Katharine Hyde##imported-end##

February 07, 2009 at 08:59 PM