



ALVIN MAURICE STILMAN

November 3, 1934 - October 17, 2022

GRAVESIDE FUNERAL SERVICE, SUNDAY 10/23/2022 AT 1:00 PM

Alvin Maurice Stilman, 87, died on Monday, October 17, 2022.

He was born in Detroit, MI on November 3, 1934. He attended Central high school and enjoyed running for their track and cross-country teams. Then, he attended Wayne State University where he majored in Latin. Within six months of college graduation, Alvin married Ann (née Holten), was drafted to the army and was stationed in Germany. While serving there, Ann and Alvin lived off-base and enjoyed interacting with the locals. In Erlangen, Germany, they welcomed the birth of their first son, Jeffrey, in 1959. Following completion of his service, Alvin, Ann and Jeffrey toured Germany before returning to Detroit. In 1961, the family welcomed their second son, Steven.

Alvin worked as a Latin teacher at East Detroit high school for seven years. Then, he opened Alvin's Finer Delicatessen, a staple on Wayne State University's campus. Alvin's was well-known for Sunday brunch where artists, musicians, and poets could come together to enjoy bagels and the New York Times (both rarities in that era) while listening to live jazz and sitting by a crackling fire. Following his divorce, Alvin moved to Mexico City for about two years. There, he met Cort Strandberg, with whom he moved to San Francisco to start his next business venture. In the Mission district, Cort and Alvin

opened Café Babar which felt, to the many regulars, like an extension of one's living room. Guests, who knew Cort and Alvin by name, could listen to live music and enjoy poetry readings there until Alvin sold the business in 1999. During his time in San Francisco, Alvin met Renée Luby, who would go on to be his partner for life. Together, they purchased a second home in southwest France where they spent many summers and enjoyed entertaining their numerous visitors.

Alvin will be remembered for his authenticity and spunk, his affinity for decor with an animal motif, and his famous moustache. He was extremely social and a great conversationalist who could make a lifelong friend out of an acquaintance on public transportation. He made each of his dreams a reality and was undeterred by the possibility of failure. Alvin was an open-minded polyglot, a fantastic cook, and a wonderful friend who loved tennis, jazz, wine, and crosswords.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Lillian Stilman, and his sisters Honey (Mike) Weingarten, Gladys (Teddy) Allen, and Beatrice Stein.

He is survived by his partner, Renée Luby; his children Jeffrey (Erin) Stilman and Steven (Ronald) Stilman; his grandchildren Joshua (Adrienne) Stilman and Leah (Christopher) Jansen; and his great-granddaughter, Cambria Stilman. Alvin will be missed dearly, for he touched the hearts of many, and his stories will live on through them."

INTERMENT:

Hebrew Memorial Park Cemetery

OFFICIATING:

Rabbi J. Kaluzny

SHIVA:

The family will be observing Shiva Sunday after the interment at the home of the niece,

Elaine & Dr. Barry Moss

20232 Forestwood

Southfield MI 48076

Shiva Service at 7:00 PM

CONTRIBUTIONS:

If you would like to further honor the memory of

ALVIN STILMAN

you may do so by making a contribution to:

A Charity of Your Choice

Cemetery Details

Hebrew Memorial Park Cemetery

33230 Gratiot
Clinton Township, MI 48035

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall

MK

“ Although I knew Alvin for only a few years he’ was as an important person in my life. I was about 20 years old living in Detroit and Wayne State University when I heard from a friend that a new deli. “Alvin’s” was going to open soon and in need of part-time staff. Working there was one of the most enjoyable jobs I ever had. I was behind the counter with an assortment of characters who enjoyed kibitzing and being with Alvin as much as dishing out the sandwiches.

Alvin made sure everything was running smoothly, food ordered, in the right place and all other logistics of running his place. But he was at his corner table daily schmoozing with friends old and new.. always a smile on his face. And always using language that I hadn’t heard before. I think of it as “bebop language with lots of slang. A bed was a “rack” in other words I can’t remember now that personified a hipster/beatnik talk.

Alvin was an easy-going “yes “man in the sense that he was open to ideas and ways to make his restaurant even more fun. I asked about if Judie Davis and I could open up on Sundays (when the deli was closed) to offer Judy’s yummy apple Brown Betty ..and we ordered the New York Times for sale.

There were tables of people reading the paper and were more often than not talking to people at other tables. It was truly a community get together and the best way to spend a Sunday morning in Detroit.

I visited San Francisco in Café Babur a few times and it seemed to me that Alvin reproduced “Alvins” in the Castro neighbourhood. The scene and vibe was different than Detroit. But Alvin holding court again with long time friends, admirer’s and whoever stopped in for a drink

Most of all I remember is warmth and glistening eyes... and his ability to connect.

Mike Kerman - October 27, 2022 at 05:16 AM

LJ

Thank you so much for sharing this is beautiful

leah jansen - October 27, 2022 at 02:00 PM

NW

Mike Kerman, you summarized the the environment that Alvin created and why it flourished and was a home to the most incredible extended family of creative minds. People breaking bread together, sharing thoughts and laughter. Alvin achieved immortality and I am very happy to have been his friend, too.

Norman Weingarden - November 01, 2022 at 09:09 AM

JK

“*Al loved making connections. Upon the last communications we had, I received a note in my mailbox. It read, “Poetry/café Babar the Barbarians of San Francisco—The poets from Hell. Vol. 1 Trafford publishing Canada New American Underground Poetry.”*

My first trip to the Café Babar was the summer of 1991. When Al was in Detroit last fall, the family and friends got together at Steven’s place. We had a good time probing some of the Babar history. A few months later I got this note across my desk from Alvin. It was a book reference, the New American Underground Poetry, Vol. 1 by Editor Julia Vinograd. It centers around the Babar and the poets who gathered on Thursday nights for a featured poet and the ensuing open mike.

In the August of ’91, my brother Frank and I paid homage to this legendary watering hole on 22nd and Guerrero. Sitting two stools belly-up at the Babar, Al was sizing us up on a quiet afternoon with only the golden San Franciscan light to bother. He brushed the beer foam from his mustache and said, “Oh, you guys would really like Vampyre Mike the poet, yeah he’s got some really wild stuff.”

In Loving Memory, John Karabetsos

John Karabetsos - October 23, 2022 at 06:03 PM

JK

“ *Al, you were a true bohemian. Take the jazz with you when you go. Love, the Karabetsos Brothers.*



John Karabetsos - October 23, 2022 at 03:05 PM

BA

I have to go further back in time to Wayne State as a law student from 1976-79. There was no better place to get a deli sandwich for lunch and a nice cool place to try and forget the daily grind of school. How lucky was I to find this place and to later find Steve to make a great team.

Barry Adler - October 23, 2022 at 09:02 PM

ML

“ *Christmas in Mexico*



Mindy Luby - October 23, 2022 at 02:28 PM

RL

People in this photo: Renee's Son, Davis Luby, daughter in law, Mindy Luby, grandchildren Julia and AJ, Grandmother Bobbie Curley, and Amma Nee (Renee) and Ampa Alvin (Stilman)

Renee Luby - October 30, 2022 at 10:18 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *France*



Nan Ellen - October 23, 2022 at 01:55 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Liz Tone - October 21, 2022 at 08:55 PM



Alvin and Cort doing the crossword last Thanksgiving.

Liz Tone - October 21, 2022 at 08:58 PM



Al was one of a kind. Loved that guy

Paul Tisdale - October 22, 2022 at 03:23 AM



“ 1 file added to the album *France*



Colin Usher - October 21, 2022 at 11:52 AM

GK

“ I first went to Alvin's when I was still in high school. A friend of mine was dating his employee, Gene Barnes, who was already at WSU. We'd go down on Sunday morning for hot bagels and the NY Times. Two years later, I was at WSU living at 44 W. Palmer. I practically lived at Alvin's. I'd study in there all morning with a ten-cent, bottomless cup of coffee. I'd clear at for a couple of hours at lunch time so he could make some money, but he'd welcome me with more coffee when I returned after the lunch rush.

It was in the afternoons that Alvin would pull out his jazz 78s. I was blown away by the Nat Cole Trio, as I had never heard him playing instrumentally. Then one afternoon he turned me on to Django Reinhardt. As a young guitarist, I was totally blown away. I loved the live jazz on Sunday afternoons. I came from a rock and folk background and this was my first exposure.

Some time after Alvin sold the business, I moved to the San Francisco Bay Area. I was delighted to re-connect at the Cafe Babar. There were so many Detroiters hanging out in there that it felt like home.

Thanks, Alvin, for so many great experiences.

George Kerby - October 20, 2022 at 08:55 PM

CU

Alvin was the coolest cat in the corridor.

Charlie Usher - October 22, 2022 at 08:29 AM

TO

I vividly recall Sunday afternoons in the early 70s eating great bagels with cream cheese piled on listening to Schooby Doo on bass. Great memories

Tom - February 11, 2024 at 12:19 PM

JB

“ 1 file added to the album *France*



John Bruno - October 19, 2022 at 11:39 AM