



Mr. Joseph Shalom Ellin

Joseph Shalom Ellin, philosopher, teacher, activist, civil libertarian, and long-time member of Temple B'Nai Israel (Reform), died Friday at age 74 of septic shock, brought on by leukemia and pneumonia. Joe lost consciousness Tuesday evening, and, in accordance with his wishes, the family removed life support Friday (after sunset). He passed quickly and with no discomfort, with his children at his side. Joe was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. He graduated from Columbia and Yale universities. He taught in the Philosophy Department at Western Michigan University from 1962, and continued teaching after retirement (in 2004) as Professor Emeritus. He taught a range of subjects including Philosophy of Law, Ethics, Medical Ethics, Political Philosophy, Hume, and Philosophy of Religion. He served as department chair and took on numerous other leadership roles in the University. Joe was a prodigious reader, commentator, and writer. He contributed countless papers to conferences, journals, and books, and authored the book "Morality and the Meaning of Life: An Introduction to Ethical Theory" (1994). Joe was a supported of the ACLU, a defender of Israel, and a rational thinker on subjects often highly politicized. Joe and his wife, Nancy Ellin, spent nine weeks in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in 1964 ("Freedom Summer") as civil rights workers. Their letters are represented in a volume, "Letters from Mississippi," and the University of Southern Mississippi houses an archive named in their honor of materials from the time. Joe had an unending enthusiasm for life and demonstrated incredible courage in his illness. During his 10-year battle with

cancer, he continued to enjoy opera, symphonies, and concerts. He traveled frequently to be with family, for conferences, and on excursions abroad including to Israel in 2008. He was a generous contributor to education, the arts, various causes, and his temple. He willed his life's collection of philosophy books to WMU, where a library will be established in his honor. Joe was an unrelenting clear thinker, rational to the point of confrontation, funny, generous, loving, and caring. He was a constant source of inspiration and stimulation for all who knew him. Joe is preceded in death by Nancy, his wife of 47 years (who died in December, 2009). He is survived by two children, David (Seattle) and Jane (Brookline, MA); their spouses Christine Ellin and Rory Dela Paz; four grandchildren, Jeremiah, Jesse, Lucas, and Rose; and several other relatives. Joe will be cremated, and a Jewish memorial service followed by interment at Mountain Home Cemetery will be arranged in about a month's time.

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Joseph Shalom Ellin*

October 23, 2023 at 06:06 AM



“ *Mr. Joseph Shalom Ellin*

October 06, 2023 at 10:42 AM