



Mrs. Nancy Bowles Ellin

May 22, 1936 - December 21, 2009

Nancy Bowles Ellin, feminist, Democrat, generous supporter of Planned Parenthood, civil libertarian, civil rights activist, and long-time member of Temple B'Nai Israel (Reform), died Monday at age 73 of respiratory failure. Nancy was active in innumerable political campaigns over nearly 50 years and served as secretary of the County Democratic Party for several decades. She represented Kalamazoo at two national Conventions: 1976 (Jimmy Carter) and 1984 (Walter Mondale). In addition to her long service on the Democratic Executive Committee, she is a former board member of Planned Parenthood and the ACLU.

Nancy and her husband, Joseph Ellin, spent 9 weeks in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in 1964 ("Freedom Summer") as civil rights workers; Nancy established and ran a library in the local neighborhood. Their letters are represented in a volume, "Letters from Mississippi." Material she collected is housed in archives named for them at the University of Southern Mississippi archives. Nancy was co-author of a study of sexism in elementary school textbooks, and the author of a widely-used textbook, "Notable Black Women," sponsored by the Mich. Dept. of Education. She toured the state with a team studying vocational education programs in the schools; from this study came a book, "Women in Non-Traditional Work." She has a letter in a collection, "Women's Letters" (placed between letters by Joan Baez and Lady Bird Johnson). Nancy graduated from Swarthmore College (1958), studying

political science and economics, and did graduate work at Yale. But her true love was 19th century English literature, especially Jane Austen, Trollope, and lesser writers. With her biting wit, prodigious memory, unsparing honesty, vast knowledge of English literature to the present day, unerring good taste, and surprising and often unconventional opinions, Nancy was a memorable conversationalist. She is survived by her husband of almost 48 years, Joseph Ellin (Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Western Michigan University); two children, David (Seattle) and Jane (Brookline, MA); their spouses Christine Ellin and Rory dela Paz; four grandchildren, Jeremiah, Jesse, Lucas, and Rose; a sister, Carol, and other relatives. Nancy has been cremated. A Jewish memorial service, followed by interment at Mountian Home Cemetery, will be held at Temple B'Nai Israel, Saturday March 20, 2010, at 10 am. For the last six months of her life, Nancy was given loving care by the nurses and staff of Hospice of SW Michigan, and at their Rose Arbor facility; please make memorial contributions to Hospice, or to Temple B'Nai Israel.

Previous Events

Service

MAR **20**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Temple B'Nai Israel
4409 Grand Prairie
Kalamazoo, MI

Tribute Wall



“ *Mrs. Nancy Bowles Ellin*

October 23, 2023 at 06:06 AM



“ *Mrs. Nancy Bowles Ellin*

October 06, 2023 at 10:42 AM