

Minnie Brown

When I first attended a service at Beth Israel in 1964, Minnie Brown was probably in her early fifties. I can remember seeing her at High Holiday services over the years, perfectly made up, with every hair in place and always wearing the most fashionable outfits. Minnie was a very striking woman then, and my in-laws always said that she was a very lovely young woman. She and my Aunt Ada were good friends, even though they were very different personalities, Ada being very prim and proper and Minnie having a much more worldly outlook. Minnie always had a little twinkle in her eye, and she told people exactly what she thought in very frank terms.

As a young Mom, I was actively involved in the Sister-hood at Beth Israel and while the Sisterhood was part of the Congregation's support system, I can remember Minnie helping at the rummage and bake sales, the breakfasts and the parties. She didn't like being the center of attention, and didn't enjoy leadership roles, but she loved watching the children at Simchat Torah, Chanukah, and Purim. Ada always had Passover and Thanksgiving for the family at her home, and Minnie would often join us for those holidays because her family was not close by.

Jan and Arthur Levitt lived on the other side of Pearl St. from Minnie, and I can still picture them escorting Minnie to all the Synagogue events to make sure that she attended them. I know that they often included her in other social events as well.

During her last years, it was hard to watch the spirited Minnie become weaker and less verbal. I would go to visit her with Ada, who always brought lots of home cooked goodies. The home health care women who took care of her around the clock for her last years absolutely adored her. They treated her like loving children would treat an ailing parent, and many of them attended her funeral.

I think that Minnie would have been so happy to know that we were having a party with great music, food and drinks in her honor. If she were here, she'd be standing on the sidelines taking everything in with a big, happy smile on her face.

Marina Singer