ב״ה

Hesped for my dearest mother, Sheila Gaisin ע״ה

Levaya, Monday, November 2, 2026

Dear family and friends,

I am heartbroken to be here today for the levaya of my wonderful beyond words, dearest mother, the sweetest of the sweet, Soroh Slovoh Shayndel bat Leibl Eitan, Sheila Gaisin. I really wish this weren't the reality, but unfortunately it is. I'm at a loss for words, and anyone that knows me knows that's usually not the case. It took me a long time to gather my thoughts last night, because I just felt speechless, and I was up into the wee hours, even until the last moments, trying to put this together. I can't encompass my mother and her wonderful essence in a few minutes, so I'll share a few little tidbits, along with some of the beautiful messages that have been flooding in.

When I was young, my mother would often give me a ride in to school if I was late, and if I forgot a lunch or something I needed, she would lovingly leave it with Betty Goldberger at the school office, with adorable notes, like "Dear Jeremy, please remember." Maybe I got a little mocked for them, but it was really cute.

My sister Merry's friend Rivka, who is actually the Rabbi's sister, reminded us that with a houseful of kids, "she was determined to never raise her voice. So when I was visiting Merrie I would hear her SINGING one of the boy's names to get his attention. (Sometimes it was 'Je-re-my.')" And my parents would wake us up in the morning singing, "It's time to get up, it's time to get up, it's time to get up in the morning." It was a house with a lot of song and laughter. Ari Bandler wrote: "I remember the openness of your house and the joy you mom had in having the friends of her kids over."

My mother and my father, of blessed memory, were the sweetest couple, like a yin and yang. My father was quieter, and my mother was more social, and my father loved that she could be social enough for both of them. They fit each other so well.

My mother was so elegant and dignified, and had such a way with language. Someone in the family — I think it was Arthur — joked she was like ChatGPT before there was ChatGPT. She was really brilliant. Not long ago, on a walk, when she was already in a wheelchair, our neighbor Rachel Harris told her how intellectual and educated she remembered her being, back when they would sit out on the porch together with Rachel's son David, of blessed memory. And my mother, so humble, just kind of deflected it. She didn't seem like she needed the praise. Her friend Sarah Maslow wrote: "She didn't just listen she heard."

My mother had a beautiful custom of sending us elegant, celebratory e-mails for every birthday and special occasion, and I was looking back at some of them. In a birthday e-mail some years back, my mother wrote: "From the moment he was born, Jeremy has added a wonderful, unique touch to our family! And since he was born on Erev Shabbos, it made that first Shabbos right after his birth extra exciting!" I love that she always had beautiful, celebratory ways to describe things. She made life and language more vibrant and fun.

People loved my mother everywhere she went. At the grocery they would ask, "Where's Mama? Haven't seen her for a while." People would send her regards from the meat counter, the prepared foods, even the guy stocking the shelves, and they would really ask how she was doing.

The ID checker at Costco asked how I was doing, and when I told him not well, because my mother is very sick, he patted me on the shoulder. I told him, "You've probably seen me with her before," and he said, "A number of times." He expressed real concern for my mother and asked me to keep him updated. One time, between appointments, we had a little time to spare, and anyone who knows me knows I don't always

lean toward being early. We were wondering what to do with that half hour, and one of my siblings said, "You could just be a half hour early." I wasn't sure, so we stopped in front of the house. I think it was too hard for my mother to go in, because she knew she had to go back to rehab, so she just maybe waved from the car, and I ran in and did something real quick. Then we stopped at Shalom's. She stayed in the car with the caregiver, and I clued in some of the workers that my mother was outside. They swarmed over like she was a celebrity about to give an autograph, just to give her their well wishes, and one of them, a sweet lady in a hijab, told her she loves her.

A neighbor, Bracha, said: "I don't remember ever hearing her complain - she exuded gratitude for being alive and for each person she interacted with." And my dear friend since childhood, Nathan Franco, wrote: "your mother was the most positive person I've ever met, and that's not hyperbole. As far back as I can remember she's always been that way, something that always struck me even as an immature little kid, and honestly, always amazed me."

Her friend Gloria wrote that years ago my mother gave her a piece of wisdom she has never forgotten: "Gloria, never say bad things about your children to other people. Only say good things, no matter how annoying they seem to you." That's who she was: she really understood people, and she practiced looking for the good in them.

Esther wrote that on Fridays at Shalom's, my mother always volunteered to take her home, even though it was late. And Wendy Weigert wrote that my mother would regularly visit her grandmother at home: "Her genuine care and concern for others and her acts of chesed are things I will always remember."

My old friend Nossi Creeger wrote: "I vividly remember your house, and the times we had, and I also very clearly remember the smile on your mothers face. She was always kind to me, and I appreciated that greatly." And my old next-door neighbor, Adena Goldschmidt-Burstein, said she was as pure as they come.

My dear friend since childhood, Rafi Muller, reminded me that about five years ago, when his family was about to leave America, my mom was upset that she hadn't seen them yet. She called his mother, Marion, a dear friend of hers, and asked, "Where's Rafi right now?" and found out he was at the pizza shop. So she came and sat with them, and gave his kids a book that Rafi told me they still have today. Rafi was telling me how our mothers have been friends for over 40 years, and how his mother shared with him how much she appreciated that. And I told him, their friendship isn't over, even though my mom went to the next world. He agreed: "These friendships are eternal, never-ending." Mommy, I'm your son forever, and that's never ending either.

In rehab and the hospital, I wanted to bring extra cheer, so instead of just saying hi, I would sometimes walk in with something like, "How's the most important person in this facility doing?" I loved to see my mother smile, and to have the nurse or caregiver know how important she is to us. At rehab they would call her the queen, with her hats. She carried herself with such grace, and I felt so bad for all her suffering and for how much it limited her freedom. She had such a joie de vivre, and she just wanted to be herself again, her regular self again. But luckily, we have a big family that my mother and father, of blessed memory, built in partnership with Hashem; she often liked to say that things were in partnership with Hashem. So we had a big support system. My sisters and my aunt picked out beautiful gowns to express her bright, joyous personality, and caregivers from all walks of life bonded with her. I was nervous about whether a new caregiver would bond with her, and within a couple of days, or even less, they already had. Even in her illness, she shined. She was just so lovable.

For Rosh Hashanah, I was staying nearby in a hospitality room at Suburban Hospital, and I was with her in her hospital room, spending time. My mother said she didn't know if she would have another Rosh Hashanah in this world, but she guessed she would celebrate it somewhere. I had a really hard time with that. I was hoping a surgery would fix things with her heart. When it was called off in late September, that same night she texted me: "Dearest Jeremy, Thank you

for everything that you do as a devoted son, at least because I am not having the surgery now, I will have more time with you." A couple of minutes later, I wrote back: "Thank you dearest Mommy. I love you infinitely. Thank you for your kind words. I do my best, I know I fall short sometimes, but I appreciate your kind words and I hope that I live up to them. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and feelings. I am here for you and I want to be the best son that I can be, and I would like to know whatever I could do to help things be the most comfortable as possible for you going forward. Maybe we could do a little more music tomorrow, if you would like it. My friend is willing to come as well. I want you to enjoy and live life to the fullest, and I'm still hoping beyond hope for a miracle." I ended it with a red heart.

My mom was always cheering me on. In October 2024, when I was in Israel playing for the soldiers, she wrote me: "Hi Jeremy Dear, Thinking of you! I am so glad that you enjoyed the YK davenning at Netiv, and that you are now reaching out with your music to give comfort and strength to the chayalim! Stay Safe!!" She had a couple of exclamation points. And she was so excited about the sukkah, perhaps her favorite holiday, although she was a Hanukkah baby, born on the eighth day of Hanukkah. Really, she loved and found the good in every holiday. My brother Reuven and most of his kids came over to help her hang posters and decorations, she was telling me, and she told me about a multicolored globe-light that "really looks cheery!" I wrote back: "It's really great the sukkah is up and so nicely decorated. Love you. I'll call you quickly now." She loved her sukkah, and she loved making it a cheery home for everyone. If you've been in her home, you know there's a lot of art, and she loved decorating the sukkah with all these beautiful posters.

This past Thursday night she wasn't really having conversations anymore. She would say some things in response, but it was hit or miss. I sat with her, played some music on my guitar, and I poured my heart out and asked her to forgive me for my shortcomings. And she said, "I totally forgive you." Not a little grunt, not a yes, which is mostly what we could expect at that point. I was so touched by the way she said it,

the way she really speaks: "I totally forgive you." Then she called out that she needed a doctor, somebody good. I called her home hospice team and told her I was getting her help. She was saying, "I need help, I need to get well." And she said, "Thank you." Every word at that point was precious. Her words were always precious, but we were so lucky when she responded. When the nurse came and spoke about the inevitability, I told her, "I know, the inevitability that my mother is going to have a miraculous recovery and get better!" I was still hoping for a miracle.

I told her we all want her to be comfortable, and she said, "I know." When I kissed her forehead, she said, "Good!... That you're here." I felt so touched. At the end I was holding her hand and singing a song I knew she loved. I was with her in the last moments, and I hope I gave her some comfort. I was so scared when I saw something happening with Mommy. A couple of my siblings were already resting nearby in the room, and I called the others in. I was hoping I was wrong. I'm still in disbelief. I couldn't believe it would happen like this, and so soon; I was hoping things would turn around for the good.

I found a note from 2010 encouraging me. She wrote: "I am making a toast right now, figuratively, with a glass of organic skim milk, to you and to your energies and potentials." (By the way, my parents were both teetotalers.) And she told me I should have a "sense of awe about each day of life being a true gift from Hashem… All My Love, Mommy."

Over 400 people joined a Tehillim chat to daven for her, and now it's l'ilui nishmasa. As Rabbi Rosenbaum shlita told me, prayers never go to waste. So thank you so much for all the Tefillos and Tehillim.

Mommy, I could never do you justice in words. Your smile was infinitely beautiful. Your soul was infinitely deep. You had so many dear friends, and a lot of them are here today. Your friend Laura Margulies wrote: "It is so hard to understand that she is gone. Your mother was a pillar of the community, a best friend to many of us and just a wonderful, kind and thoughtful woman. She will be missed terribly. Your father has surely opened his arms to embrace her."

Mommy, I'm sorry for the trips we didn't take, though we did travel some. We went to Florida together for an event in the Margulies family, when you hadn't flown on a plane in many years. We took car trips as a family in New Jersey and New York, and sometimes to see a rabbi of mine. We had beautiful family trips when we were younger, and meaningful times traveling with Daddy, of blessed memory, and with you as a young adult and as an older adult too. I remember us being together this past Pesach, and I couldn't have imagined it would be your last. I'm so glad for those times. I want to carry you in my heart wherever I go, and feel like you and Daddy are traveling with me.

Mommy, I am so lucky to have you as my mother. As my dear friend Rabbi Dr. Hillel Broder said when he visited on Friday, you're the beating heart of this family. I don't know how we're going to go on without you. Your light shines outward, and I hope to carry your light too, in my own way. Mommy, I hope to give you more nachas. I hope I did a good job of being a loving son to you, especially these last trying few months. I wish you didn't have to suffer like you did. I wish you eternal bliss with Daddy in Shamayim. I love you forever. I love you infinitely.