

In Memoriam

Rose Hoffer

April 10, 1919 - August 6, 2001

The adage, "behind every great man is a great woman" has never been more beautifully exemplified than by the almost sixty year relationship of Rose and Abram Hoffer. But in Rose's case, she was clearly beside her man, not behind him. Her support and encouragement were essential to Abram's success; she shared his vision and provided a challenging sounding board for his ideas, and Rose was the major influence that persuaded Abram to study medicine. In my first meeting with the Hoffers, in 1987, where I was being interviewed as a prospective Managing Editor for this Journal, it was evident that Rose's opinion of others was highly regarded by Abram, that her judgment was crucial to his decision process.

As with many struggling families in the 1940s and 1950s, the Hoffers endured much hardship and separation; Rose cared for her two boys, Bill and John, alone in Saskatoon while Abram completed his last two years of medicine in Toronto. Abram was unable to attend the birth of their third child, Miriam, who was born while he was writing his final medical exams.

Later, as Director of Psychiatric Research in Regina, Abram, in his passion and commitment to improve the treatment of his schizophrenic patients, sometimes brought his work home with him. One of the worst of the chronic patients from the Mental Hospital in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, came to the Hoffers' to work as a maid for two years. Rose showed much courage and trust in Abram's judgment, despite the disapproval of their families,

and her supervision was essential to the rehabilitation of the patient, who went on to work at the University Hospital. Rose always embraced those in need, providing them with patience, insight and care.

Like her husband, Rose was very practically minded. In 1980 she, along with her good friend, Muriel Warrington, combined 25 years of Abram's work in orthomolecular medicine with her experience as a homemaker and mother to write a book of recipes for wholesome, nutrient-rich snacks. "Everybody's Favorite Orthomolecular Muffin Book" was published by Keats and became a best seller, at least among our readership. My children and I enjoyed countless Saturday mornings baking these muffins, sampling more than half of the wide variety of recipes in Rose's book.



Rose Hoffer in June with Steven Carter.
Photo taken by Abram Hoffer

Rose participated in every "Nutritional Medicine Today" Conference until this spring, when she was too ill to travel. Many of our long-time delegates missed her presence, especially at our thirtieth anniversary banquet.

Over the years, Rose became a close friend to me. She was invariably supportive and appreciative; in my many visits to the Hoffer home, often with my children, she was a gracious, thoughtful and generous host. I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to see Rose a last time in June. After our dinner with Abram at one of her favourite restaurants, we returned home where I said goodbye to the woman who was integral to the heart and soul of orthomolecular medicine and the Hoffer legacy.

–Steven Carter