

# Remembering Leslie Frankheimer



We walk to carry on the legacy of our dear friend and loved one Leslie Frankheimer and to remember her always.

Our goal is to bring together everyone who cared about Leslie to help raise money for City of Hope's research, treatment and cures.

Below are some memories and stories about Leslie from her friends and colleagues.

## **This is why we walk.**

### **Erin Frankheimer, Leslie's Daughter**

My mom was a force.

The kind of person who lights up a room and the kind of person that, that statement hardly does justice for. She could connect with strangers like no one else. At the drop of a hat she would interrupt you midsentence, distracted by the bride that just walked by, "oh, wait!" she would say to me waving her hand in my face and off she would go, chasing down the unsuspecting girl just to tell her she was the "most beautiful bride" she had ever seen. God help you if an elderly lady strolled by, dressed to the nines with blue eye shadow or a great coat. Again, you would be dropped midsentence so she could tell the woman how "fabulous!" she looked.

And Dogs. My mom never loved dogs the way she did after she fell in love with my 15 pound, nervous, yippy, nippy rat terrier, Dexter. Once she had Dexter in her life she was the authority on cute dogs. If she saw one, again, she would cut you off, pull the car over to yell or stop people dead in their tracks at the park to tell them theirs' was "the most handsome beast" she had ever laid eyes on! The owners would blush as they walked their severely overweight, one eyed Chihuahua away. Every time she made believers out them, because she so earnestly believed these moments and the way they made HER feel to be true.

Of all these "Stop! Wait! I MUST TELL THEM WHAT I AM THINKING" moments, nothing made her more determined than when she saw men and women of service in their uniforms. Without hesitation she would cut every person in line at Starbucks just to make sure she got to buy them their coffee, shake their hands and tell them how grateful she

was for their service. She would often tear up and take a few minutes to pull herself back together, the daughter of a decorated war veteran who saw her father and a friend in every service person she met.

My mom was a force.

The way she saw the world; the people in it, the landscapes that surrounded her, it was always the way I wanted to see it for myself. A place where there is a right and a wrong way to treat people, and if you didn't treat them right, there would be Leslie to answer to (she was, after-all a triple Libra, always balancing the scales.) She never shied away from confrontation because things could get messy. If there was a mess it needed to be addressed, and she was fearless about it.

There was no one you wanted on your side more than my mom. She was a force, one to be reckoned with, full of conviction and fight.

She used to tell us to "drink it in" and to "take a mental picture" when we found ourselves in a beautiful, natural place. Her excitement and gratitude about being in these locations was contagious. We fed off her positive energy and always found ourselves more in awe of her appreciation of the moment than whatever wonder was before us. She could do that to you. It was all a part of her magic.

My mom was a force.

But she was no match for the abuse Leukemia put her through. She beat cancer. Twice. Thanks to Dr. Forman and City of Hope. She would tell you today that the two years she was in remission were the two best years of her life. She told us that often. She was not one to leave things unspoken or undone.

She did not die from cancer but from an infection that snuck in the day she was supposed to come home to us. She had an emergency surgery. Four days later she was gone.

As my grandfather used to say, and Mom often echoed, "Life is not fair."

Life is not fair, but it is for the living and we walk the Leslie Frankheimer Walk a Thon to raise money so another family, with a remarkable and unmatched family member can share with them 2, 10, 40 of the best years of their life.

We hope you will support this cause, the memory of my mother and the work and research done at City of Hope by donating and walking with us this year.

Thank you for letting me share a little bit of my Love of Leslie with you.

## **Mara A. Spear, Friend and Colleague**

I have been a small part of Walk for a Cure, and City of Hope asked for a few words from her friends to put on the website. I have several journals and just happened to turn to this page tonight. Hmmm, how convenient Leslie...

*February 3, 2013*

What makes anyone's life fair? Who determines this fairness in life? Is life just one pendulum that swings rhythmically with its own plan? Does it ever get tired, or bored? Is that how mistakes are made? Is there any way to take control of your life or is it already absorbed into a predetermined plan?

In my life's predetermined plan I had the greatest pleasure of knowing Leslie Frankenheimer. I met her by accident - I filled in on a pilot she was decorating and yes, she did win an Emmy for that pilot. What I won though was far greater. It was a front row seat on Mr. Toads Wild Ride and Leslie was my driver. I eventually grew to be hers.

It was fate that brought us together and she continued to bring me on every single job since the day we met. In those short 9 years she taught me the right way to see and be seen in our industry. She also taught me secrets that are now long since buried, what to watch out for and most importantly....who to watch out for. She was by far the most stand-up, professional, by the book decorator I've ever known. She was feisty but fair and protected her crew in a way that made grown men run in the other direction as fast as they could.

There were so many sparkling lights and the most unbelievable energy that emanated from her that made her simply infectious. She never tried to be that way that's just who she was. Half the time I just got a kick watching her when she wasn't aware of it. She unconditionally gave me permission to be myself and showed me how to be strong, how to be proud of myself and many times how to love myself. She didn't know what she was doing - she just did it because it made her happy and proud to see me succeed. I always had the bones and the heart but she was that milestone in my life that gave me the legs and the confidence I needed to stand on my own and trust myself.

I am truly blessed to have spent so much time listening to her. My entirety is absolutely rich because of her. I still feel she is nearby checking up on everyone she loved so much. Being so spiritually attached to so many people in all different ways is not something that can be taught. She had a hidden talent of being able to make you feel you were on top of the world, enticing you with her horoscope readings if not something else.

I love her so much and there hasn't been a day in my life since I met her that I have not thought about her. She is my inspiration because if I could even be half of the woman she was my life would be all laughter.

It's not fair and there is no one to blame. I think that damn clock just skipped a beat for less than a second and life began a new plan for not just her but her family, her friends and every single person that ever met her. There was no one she couldn't make smile.

And Leslie, I promise you there will never be a day that goes by that I don't smile or laugh out loud thinking about you. I miss you more than anyone else in my life. As Erin would say, much love from your fake daughter Mara...

### **From Dwight Jackson, Friend and Colleague**

Quite honestly, I don't remember exactly when I met Leslie Frankenheimer, partly because it was one of those déjà vu experiences: that rare moment, when you meet someone and you feel as if you've known them forever. We decided later that we had likely been married in a past life, or perhaps brother and sister. We certainly squabbled and fussed with one another enough (to the never-ending amusement of our close friends). We laughed a lot too, though. No one was better able than Leslie to prick your ballooning ego with one perfectly placed verbal stiletto. And while the average person would inflict the damage and walk away, Leslie would carefully remove the dart, pour antiseptic on your wound, bandage you up, give you a kiss on the cheek and a cookie as a reward for being so brave.

Leslie was Doris Day: bright, bubbly, sweet, fun; a gorgeous blonde with those incredible aquamarine eyes. She was Marilyn Monroe: beautiful, vulnerable and mysterious. She was Auntie Mame: elegant and sophisticated, with her philosophy of "life is a banquet and most poor S.O.B.'s are starving to death!" And she was Emily Latella, Gilda Radner's hysterical SNL character: befuddled and misguided, sweet and well meaning, but frequently off on the wrong tangent. All this packaged in an all American, wisecracking, smart aleck "never met a problem I can't fix," ethereally feminine woman.

I know she's in Heaven now, likely re-decorating some of those overly gilded rooms and suggesting better ways to get things done. Some angels are in for some big surprises. Knowing our long history, I feel certain that soon she'll eventually meet up with the right connection, figure out the mechanics, and manage to come back to haunt me like Elvira in Blithe Spirit. Objects will float around the room, doors and windows will open and close unaided. I can hear her laughing even now. I can't think of anyone I'd rather have haunt me.

### **From Ed Brown, Business Agent and Friend**

Leslie was, is and will always be one of the most unique human beings I will ever have the pleasure of calling my friend. I was with her on the day she got a call about a family emergency. As she ran off in a panic to be with her family, whom she adored, she paused to ask if I would be alright in her absence. This was typical Leslie. Even in the face of her own pain, she never forgot others. Not once.

Over the many years of our friendship I have witnessed her during life's many twists and turns. Working with Leslie was always a complete joy. Her never ending cheerful and positive perspective was a dependable and special treat when coming to work. Leslie's unique perspective made her one of the strongest advocates of Set Decoration I have ever known. Leslie Frankenheimer stood for everything great about her art.

Heaven help anyone who attempted to get in her way when she was in her creative mode. Defiant, strong willed, and adamant about her sets, she was often found

engaged, toe to toe, in lively debates over what would in fact give those sets the life that she envisioned. Yet she was always able to broker common ground with the team in creating beauty in all she did. Then there was that laugh. When Leslie laughed, the whole world laughed with her, you just couldn't help it. If she sensed that you didn't get the humor, she'd respond by a, "C'mon buddy, lighten up!"

Leslie was a loving mother, who beamed with pride whenever she spoke of her children. The kind of woman any man would be proud to call his wife. I always got a kick out of her referring to her husband as "my roommate." Always graceful, always radiant; she was the true meaning of a "Classy Lady."

Personally, I will miss her dearly. Professionally, our industry has lost one of the greats. I guess heaven needed another Angel, and now heaven has the best you can get. Sweet dreams, dear friend.

Yours always,

Ed Brown & Family