



# HENRY SIWEK

NOV 26, 2020



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# HENRY SIWEK

NOV 26, 2020

**H**enry Siwek, age 74, passed away peacefully on Thursday, November 26, 2020, in Houston, Texas.

He was born on July 16, 1946 to Adek (Eddie) Siwek and Mala (Tenenberg) Siwek in Furth, Germany. Adek and Mala were both holocaust survivors originally from Poland.

In 1949, at the age of 3, Henry and his parents moved to Israel where they lived until 1953 and again moved back to Germany in hopes of eventually moving to the United States. Henry told of the many obstacles they met along the way, both scary and exciting for a young child. It was both challenging and traumatic to live in four different countries, learn many different languages and customs. In 1955, the family grew when Henry's sister Regina was born. One year later the family made the big move to the US and settled in New York City, a city he loved.

At an early age, Henry showed a tremendous artistic talent and won many awards for his artwork. He attended The High School of Art and Design and The Cooper Union in New York City, where he received a Bachelor Degree in Fine Arts. This was followed by a career as a graphic

artist. Henry's independent spirit led him to open his own studio, Beehive Designs.

In 1983, Henry married Carol Rosenberg Siwek. They loved to travel with special memories of their trips to Greece and Israel.

In 1987, Henry and Carol were blessed with the birth of their son Jordan. Nothing in Henry's life brought him more joy than his relationship with Jordan. They were both Father and Son and lifelong best buddies.

Henry and Jordan had many adventures together such as when Jordan was in Les Miserables on Broadway in 1997. Henry was a great "stage dad" and was with Jordan every step of the way, always



## Obituary

**HENRY SIWEK**

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bringing out the best in him. Henry also loved the experience of being at NBC Studios when Jordan was on Saturday Night Live in the late nineties. They also got to travel to Paris and London together on a school trip, which was an amazing experience. Henry always encouraged Jordan to be creative, and his love for Brazilian Jazz inspired his son to learn all of his favorite melodies and start going down a musical path that would go on to define Jordan's life.

In 2008, Henry moved down to the Lone Star State where and lived with his sister Regina and brother in law Jerry where he was able to help out their elderly Dad who lived nearby. While living in Houston he worked at the Houston Zoo. Being a talented photographer, Henry spent all of his free time taking photographs of the animals, especially the giraffes for which he had a special love. Henry also enjoyed working with young students as an elementary school math tutor for the Houston School System.

His warm and friendly personality was enjoyed by anyone who knew him and upon retirement Henry frequently walked the family dog Tex where neighbors got to enjoy chatting with him. There was a very special connection between Henry and Tex.

During this trying time for our country, there will be a virtual funeral service held on Tuesday, December 1st, at 2:30pm EST. Family and friends whose lives Henry touched are invited to attend. Check your email for an invitation to connect on Zoom



MR

**Mark Rubin** posted:

Very Dearest Regina and Jordan ~I sincerely apologize that it's taken me a couple of weeks since hearing the sad news of Henry's passing to put a post here on the Beth Israel website. Irwin Leibowitz was kind enough to forward to me your email to him, and so I have your contact info. Please accept my deepest condolences on your profound loss, and my condolences to anyone lucky enough to have known him. By the way, our friend Paul Grange— who gave me the sad news— would want me to add his name to this email, as he was extraordinarily close with Henry for years. Just now on the site I saw the wonderful photo of you, Henry, your dad and Jordan at the piano..... and though I never got to meet Jordan, the beautiful faces of you (fairly unchanged since our last contact when you were still a pre-teenager!), Henry, and the very familiar face of your dad (who was always, like your mom, so kind to me) set off waves of wonderful memories that have been coming to me for the past 2 weeks. My deepest sadness is that we fell out of communication when Jordan was born, though I know we were never out of touch on inner levels as soul buddies. As you know, Henry and I were pretty inseparable for 20 years— from discovering that we were fellow Art & Design schoolmates whileriding the Remsen Avenue bus to school (the big black portfolios were a giveaway), through Cooper Union, our stints as teachers at P.S. 138, and our design studios. And, in fact, every New Year's Eve I reminisce about him convincing me to go to Times Square on 12/31/1966, something I think we both regretted for years to come :-). We also partnered in many very financially-unsound business projects as young artists (which fortunately we were able to laugh about while laboring). No one could ever have had a more loyal, caring, supportive— and adventurous— friend than I had in your brother. The gusto with which he loved picking me up in his T-Bird to go either to one of the schools or anywhere else was boundless, and a treasured memory. My parents loved him, as did my brother Dave— who with me, Henry and Dave Klaboe formed a philosopher's group that met very often for years at one of our offices to try to make sense of art, life and the female of the species. There are far too many memories to share about Henry's unique greatness to relate here, but perhaps we will get to say hello, and to Jordan as well, if he'd like to make contact. My cellphone number is 941-356-9922, and my email address is mark@luminahealth.com. Regina, it sounds from your email to Irwin that you're doing well, which warms my heart, as you were the sweetest, cutest 'little sister' anyone's buddy could have had....! I celebrate Henry's life, and truly always have, for he helped my own life to get off to a much better start through his friendship and love. I feel like I'm experiencing inner communication with him these very days, so I'm doubly blessed. With much love, and wishes for a Happy New Year ~Mark Rubin

January 2 at 10:12 AM



## Tribute Wall

HENRY SIWEK

IL

**Irwin Leibowitz** posted:

Dear Regina; This is Irwin Leibowitz. I don't know if you remember me, but I was a friend of Henry from his years at 138. I just 30 minutes ago learned of Henry's passing from Mark Rubin and I am devastated--i just had to write you before I even had a chance to fully compose my thoughts. Henry was such a dear, dear friend--I loved him as a brother and we took care of each other as best we could during those horrible 138 years. I had tried to track him down many times over the years--through Dave Klabe and internet, but was never successful--perhaps because i innocently focused on searching in New York. If you have a spare moment in the coming months I would most appreciate you reaching out to me for a chat; I would be proud to contribute something to his legacy page--i have a lot to say. I do hope you and your family are safe and healthy and that the years have been kind to you. Do you still like the Grateful Dead? Most Sincerely, Irwin 914-419-2678 Bedpsych@gmail.com

December 17 at 8:43 AM

JC

**Jessica Carp** posted:

Part 2 A couple of years ago, I was sitting alone with Henry and he asked me how Jordan was doing as a music teacher. I told him the truth — that Jordan was doing a fantastic job. That Jordan was just so passionate about it and was always working to make his teaching better and better and that it paid off — his students just adored him and he brought up the team. I explained that Jordan definitely has no idea what a terrific teacher he is. Henry told me he was glad I found Jordan and gave him this job. He told me I was a special person because I could always see how brightly Jordan shines. “When you shine that brightly, sometimes it’s hard for other people, you know?” I told him I understood. As Jordan’s first piano teacher, I like to take FULL credit for all of his musical accomplishments. Now, I know that’s not entirely true. Still, I’m so very thankful to have been Jordan’s teacher and to be able to work with him. During this unprecedented time there is still much to be thankful for. We talk about our students and families and how we are important parts of their lives and how they are important parts of our lives. It’s true. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that Jordan’s Dad passed away on Thanksgiving. To be filled with such fierce pride, to love so desperately and so completely, to respect everyone — what a tremendous legacy Henry has left us. And without Jordan’s Dad, we wouldn’t have Jordan. Rest in peace, Jordan’s Dad. May your memory be a blessing.

December 4 at 1:18 PM



**Jessica Carp** posted:

Part 1  
Jordan's Dad for Jordan with love from Jessica  
Before we get officially underway, I wanted to take a little bit of time to pay tribute to one of the original Jess And Friends dads. So original, it pre-dates Jess And Friends, back when I was just Jess. I had just graduated high school and I was completely supporting myself. One job I had was selling merchandise at the front of the house for Les Miserables on Broadway. The audience would pass me by on the way in, maybe buy a program or a t-shirt or a lapel pin or a CD Rom as they had back then, and then they'd go in to see the show. There was one audience member who I saw every day. From his first day there, I knew who he was because he made it a point to introduce himself to everyone at the theatre. His name, as he introduced himself, was "Jordan's Dad." I had never seen anyone more filled with pride for their child than this man. "Hi! I'm Jordan's Dad," he said extending his hand, always a class act. "Jordan plays Gavroche! What's your name?" Jordan's Dad, saw every single performance that Jordan did. And he didn't just watch them from the back of the house. He figured out exactly where to stand during so that he could get the best view of Jordan's acting in each particular scene. A few times, Jordan's Dad would bring me around the audience with him and I was terrified we'd get into trouble! Jordan's Dad would run across the street to a little French bakery, called Le Mirage, to get snacks for Jordan and he'd always offer to buy me something too. "You're so skinny. Are you hungry? You must be hungry. What can I get you? An apple turnover? A chocolate croissant? They're delicious!" Jordan's Dad, Henry, as I'd later learn, remembered the name of every single person who worked in the front of the house, from the people who sold merchandise, the people who distributed the infrared hearing system, the ushers, the house manager, the ticket sellers, the scalpers, the janitors, the bartenders — everyone. And Henry always made it a point to say hello to everyone and ask about our lives and see how we were doing. It was through one of these conversations that Henry learned that I played and taught piano. He knew that my main thing was singing musical theatre but that I felt strongly that every good musical theatre singer had to know at least some piano. Whether someone was starring in the show, sweeping the floor or selling lapel pins, Henry regarded you with utmost respect. He invited me to come to his home and teach his son. And so I became Jordan's first piano teacher. Now, I was still a teenager myself. I had just stopped speaking to my father (and my mother) and at that time in my life, I felt so jealous when I saw parents with their children. But there was something about how genuinely and fiercely proud Henry was of Jordan and how desperately Henry loved Jordan, that instead of making me feel horrible, it filled me with with hope. And I just loved teaching Jordan. He was just the sweetest and so extraordinarily talented. Within a month he was creating arrangements using chords and we were belting out the top hits from our favorite new Broadway flop, Side Show, including Who Will Love Me As I Am? And I Will Never Leave You. Years later, I found Jordan on Facebook and was so delighted to see that he was still playing piano and not just that — piano had become his main love. I asked Jordan if he wanted to join Jess And Friends, which was just unofficially getting started. He accepted. Jordan was new to teaching but after the first month or so, he told me that he just loved his job so much and that this is what he wanted to keep doing his whole life. (see part 2)

December 4 at 1:18 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring HENRY by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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