



Andrea Schwartz

September 6, 1943 - June 30, 2023

Dr. Andrea Weller Schwartz died on June 30, 2023 at 79 years old after a massive stroke. Prior to her death, she had also been experiencing the effects of vascular dementia.

Andrea Millicent Weller was born to Mildred Hannah Skerball Weller and Ross Russell Weller on September 6, 1943 in Milwaukee, WI. She was the younger sister of James Weller, now deceased.

Just as she went out with a bang, in her life, Andrea Schwartz was a force!

After receiving her masters and doctoral degrees in Human Development, and teaching elementary school students, she founded, directed, and created organizations for the blind (twice), winning her a key to the city of Fresno for her nonprofit, Friendship Center for the Blind, now called, Valley Center for the Blind.

She also created a nonprofit for senior Jewish people, as well as leading unincorporated groups for people with MS (for 20 years), and women in abusive relationships (for 7 years). Many of these groups were held inside her home or at a local church. There was a huge overlap between Andrea's work and her life.

Andrea was very much her own person. She did things her own way and was proud of the unorthodox ways she had of recruiting blind members and volunteers. One of her favorite stories was how she grabbed a blind person at a stoplight and invited him to join her friendship circle. He did!

She was also known for her persuasive ways of encouraging vendors to give free services, food, and experiences.

Andrea convinced her local grocery store in Pittsburgh to give complimentary Thanksgiving dinners every year for 20 years and a Fresno caterer to offer 3-course lunches to 20 blind people for over 7 years. She was on a first name basis with the grocery store baker who made and decorated personalized birthday cakes for free for 20 years, and, she also received weeklong vacation packages, massages, and all kinds of entertainment over the years for her groups.

At one point, she had the Pittsburgh zoo (complete with uncaged animals) as well as the Irish dancers come to her house for her blind group.

Andrea, even towards the end of her life, kept a steady schedule of weekly events for her members which included sing-a-longs, inspirational speakers, "Yes I Can!" empowerment classes, a book club, walking group (with paired partners), and a crochet and knitting group, led by volunteers.

One of Andrea's favorite ways of celebrating volunteers was to sing them personalized songs, always set to the tune of "You are my Sunshine," and to give them awards. She was generous with her time and energy and always wanted to leave the world a better place.

Her work and friends were the center of her life. As her memory declined over the past 5 years, she created ways to help her remember who each member

was; she never wanted anyone to feel forgotten.

As a mother and a wife, Andrea showed a different side than at work or with friends. Though she could be playful at times, she was often moody and driven by high standards.

However, Andrea wanted to be a great mother and wife and was also a supportive listener who prided herself on having insight and answers. She championed her kids' interests and passions, was proud of her daughter's advanced degrees in psychology, her son's advanced degree in IT, and her husband's success as a medical doctor.

Andrea was also a great defender, making sure no one was forgotten. When her daughter came out, Andrea immediately joined PFLAG, and would happily volunteer to any right-winged conservative person that her daughter's marriage was better than a lot of heterosexual ones.

Andrea was proud, outspoken, and direct. She often shared her thoughts to friends and family, including on greeting cards she crossed out and doctored to reflect her sentiments. She was very much herself all the way to the end.

Andrea Weller Schwartz lived a very full life. She was married for 57 years and is survived by her husband, Ray Schwartz, her daughter, Heather Schwartz, daughter-in-law, Erin Schwartz, son, Dustin Schwartz, daughter-in-law, Samantha Schwartz, granddaughter, Savannah Schwartz, and her niece, Barrett Weller.

If you would like to share a memory about Andrea Schwartz, please do so. And, if you would like to honor Andrea Schwartz's life through a donation, she requested in her will to please donate to her nonprofit, Valley Center for the

Blind: <https://myvcb.org> or, because of her love of animals, to your local Humane Society. Thank you.

Tribute Wall

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“ Our lunches together and her encouragement were life changing for me. She touched lives wherever she went. Her love for the blind was never ending and our love for her was, too. We have been blessed to have her as a friend. To Ray my heart and prayers go out to you. Love you, too.

Joan Sturtz - August 23, 2023 at 07:24 AM



Thank you for sharing this, Joan! 🙏

Heather Schwartz - November 20, 2023 at 12:59 PM



Joan, even though you and I never met, she talked about you often and said you were her good friend. Thank you for your kind words about her. I'm so grateful that you got to know her and could share about her here. Many blessing to you. Heather

Heather Schwartz - December 09, 2023 at 09:16 PM



“ Heather Schwartz lit a candle in memory of Andrea Schwartz



Heather Schwartz - July 11, 2023 at 03:51 PM

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Sending so much love and light to you and the whole family during this difficult time. She will be greatly missed

Barrett Weller - July 13, 2023 at 09:17 AM