

Ruth

Ruth was born in Brooklyn of parents who immigrated from the Ukraine around 1920, a shoemaker and a homemaker. In the late 1930s, she met Sidney at a Communist Party meeting. She believed in workers' rights and equality. He was there to meet girls.

They dated, married, had two sons. He formed a jewellery business, a decent living. They sold the house in Brooklyn and moved to Long Island. Sidney retired, seemed lost. She knew he was no longer working, had nothing to do. He was creative, she suggested painting. She found work clerking in the local library and started a union.

Their boys moved out. Ruth had a garden in the back yard, by then was head of the union, which worked with the library. She continued her involvement in politics as the secretary of Women's Strike for Peace on Long Island. Sidney painted. At 72, he passed from a heart. She found him on the porch, he died in her arms, she never spoke of it to the boys.

Ruth continued with the library, living alone, one son in California, the other Canada. She had nieces and nephews nearby, and her sisters, and they held regular family dinners with lots of home cooking. While at work one day, someone broke into the house and stole most of her jewelry. One afternoon, after shopping at a local mall, she fell approaching her car, fracturing her hip. Ruth did not want to leave the car in the lot so she got in and drove home. It was hard driving, she could not move her right leg. When she reached home, she made it into the house and called for an ambulance.

She continued working, living alone, receiving regular calls from her sons and seeing her nieces, nephews and sisters. Then she fell again, this time breaking her hip. She needed surgery, had general anesthetic and afterwards could not make sense out of her check book. One of her sons brought her to Canada, to a retirement home. She remained cheerful but was confused and felt isolated. By then one sister had moved to a retirement home in Florida, the other had died. She spoke with friends and relatives on the phone, long distance. Still, Ruth found much to enjoy.

After a heart attack at 92 her son was with her in the hospital, by her bedside, reading poetry to her. When he left, she quietly passed during the night. Many

turned out for her service in New York, where she was celebrated for her love, political commitment and knishes.