

Eulogy for Diane Kadanoff
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My mother Diane was born in 1937 at a time when a woman's destiny and role was to become a wife and mother. That she aspired to high achievement was apparent from a young age. She attended Girls Latin High School, earning a place in Simmons College, and looking much like a young Elizabeth Taylor, caught the eye and attention of a handsome scholar over at Harvard College. They married at 20 with three daughters arriving in short order.

The next few years were challenging as my mother set up house Copenhagen, Denmark with two children in diapers, and later in university in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

Diane learned to cook elaborate chinese, french, and mediteranean cuisine for faculty parties at the U of I, since restaurants were scarce there. She lost her beloved father by the time she was 30. And by 35, having moved the family to Providence, RI, her marriage was over, along with a lot of her sense of self.

But here's the funny thing. Along with this loss, my mother Diane reinvented herself, which is what I want to share with you today. After her divorce, Diane became an active feminist, found her voice as a woman, and went back to work as a librarian -- eventually becoming the library's director, where she managed a multi-million dollar budget and a staff of 20 plus people. My mother was erudite, and could converse about any topic she was interested in - and her interested ranged wide and far. She loved the books, had exquisite taste, liked to travel, and was passionate about spending time with her friends: friends we dubbed "Hell's Librarian's" for their racuous manner. The plan was that all of Hell's Librarian's would buy a guest home in New Orleans, run it, and retire together.

Of course, that never happened. She had a difficult period with the murder of her brother, and placing her mother in a nursing home. Diane kept her sense of humor throughout this, and even lectured widely about women's issues on the national and regional lecture circuit.

It was also about this time that my mother came out as a lesbian, eventually settling down to share her life with Dee - who she met through another member of Hell's Librarian's - and then Marion - a woman she met through OLE - which stands for "older lesbian energy". Both Dee and Marion are gone now, but they were important parts of my mother's lifes and loves - and I cannot honor her memory without mentioning them both by name.

Diane declined rapidly over the last few years, but kept tremendous love in her heart for us, her family: Myself, my two sisters Felice and Betsy, our spouses - my

husband Rich - and Betsy's husband Jon who joined the family only recently in 2008... Sasha - her only granddaughter. Her sister Myrna, her niece Arielle, her two aunts - Rae and Cookie. While our family circle got smaller over the years - as every family circle does inevitably, it also got richer, as my mother got to see her granddaughter attend Harvard, see Arielle receive her Ph.D., and see Betsy marry Jon in a story-book wedding ceremony.

But more importantly, our family was only one part of the blessing that made up her life, and important part. In the later part of her life, my mother did not navigate the road alone, but like a true hell's librarian, road in a pack of people who were wonderful, adventurous, full of life, lovers of books, fine food, and wine - just like herself. I'm talking about her friends - of course - Ilene and Marie, Carol and Maureen, Faye and Louise, Carol Rici (no longer with us), Rep and Pat Mac, Lisa, and Angela - who has been friends with my mother since nursery school. These friends were always there for her, calling her almost every day, visiting her often, making sure she got out and about to the many cultural events, dinners, and nights out that made her life full and complete. Spiritually you were there for her holding her hand in her last hours and we cannot thank you enough for that. Truly.

So now it's time for this Hell's Librarian to hang up her boots, her bike, and put away the last of the books. Diane was never the life of the party but always at the heart of any heated conversation. She lived her life as a complete original, died very much on her own terms, and would be thrilled to be here, see each of you again, and tell you personally how much each and every person - both friend and family meant to her.