

8/2/2021

Dearest Esti

I know that I am speaking on behalf of all your dear friends in Australia who are brokenhearted that they aren't able to be with you now.

There are those who made friends with you during your teenage years in Habonim and those who met you on Machon. It was a very special year meeting in Jerusalem and absorbing the fascinating sights and sounds of an only- just-reunited Jerusalem. Esti's pen busily recorded our exciting experiences and relayed them back to the chevre in Melbourne. But more importantly Esti laughed. Her laugh surprised us all with its strength and openness and developed into her trademark. Nobody could outdo Esti's laugh.

From my first day in Jerusalem Esti became my mate. She stayed with me while I recuperated from the Hong Kong flu while our group left for Kibbutz Yizreel and we shared most moments together. I was the little country bumpkin from Perth and Esti from big-time Melbourne. Life was good.

Then it was back to Australia for tertiary studies and then back to Israel

אנו באנו ארצה לבנות ולהבנות.

Ulpan on Kibbutz Hamadia and then each to his kibbutz of choice. Life was without phones so it was the occasional postcard or meeting. Didn't seem to matter- a friend is a friend forever.

With time conditions improved. Friends from Australia came to visit and Esti and family were welcomed with open arms on their visits to Australia. Esti would always remark on her wonderful friends in Melbourne, Helen and Robin Shifman who each time organized a get-together and the Sydney-siders who would make their way down to say hello. Esti took nothing for granted.

Only a year ago almost to the day Esti, Milton and I were in Melbourne together at the same time and so attended a Machon reunion at Pauline and Leon Orbach's home. It had only been 52 years ago that we met in Jerusalem!

Esti, in October of last year, during the second lockdown, you celebrated your 70th birthday. Your Aussie chums bought you a chair to sit next to the computer and

your friends on Mevo Hama had a small, intimate BBQ celebration. Unbeknownst to you, your wonderful children, who gave you so much nachat, made a surprise visit later on in the day and organized a video presentation. What joy it gave you!

Esti, with every obstacle, and you had so many, you told me "That's what it is –
"זה מה שיש!"

I guess we must come to terms with the harsh reality of life without Esti.

We were blessed with your presence, your laugh, your generosity of spirit, your creativity and your friendship. Yes, we were oh so blessed!