

## **Eulogy for Rabbi Emanuel Rackman by his granddaughter, Jessica Rackman**

I have been given three minutes to speak, and as my first tribute to my grandfather's extremely punctual nature, I will say what I have to say within the next 2 minutes and 45 seconds.

Very few people are blessed to know a grandparent for 50 years. I stood on this pulpit, his pulpit, 11 years ago to say goodbye to my grandmother, and now on behalf of all the grandchildren, I close a chapter in our lives that brought us great honor and pride from this very spot.

While my grandfather's life was primarily dedicated to Jewish community service, to us he was "Grandpa." We knew no occasion would go by without a brief but eloquent note accompanied by a gift, we knew the simple pleasure he derived from cup of tea and good chocolate dessert, we knew that if we happened to be staying in his apartment, we would hear him doing his Canadian Royal Mounties routine at 5 in the morning, we knew that we would never, ever see him without a shirt and tie, and we knew that any attempt to engage him in a conversation related to popular culture was going to last under ten seconds.

But for all the teasing we gave Grandpa for his disinterest in the mundane, we looked forward with great joy, to the prospect of spending every holiday with him and Grandma. They were among the happiest times of our youth.

Given my grandfather's position within the religious community, we were deeply grateful that his approach within the family was never dogmatic. He never imposed religious compliance on us; instead he led by example. These standards of excellence he set in behavior and achievement left indelible impressions on the younger generations, and his willingness to pursue what he thought was just and fair even at personal cost, is an invaluable lesson to all of us.

A recent brief note from one Agunah read, "Thank you Rabbi Rackman, for giving me back my life." What could possibly be more inspirational for those that follow in his footsteps?

My grandfather lived to be 98 years old. He was blessed to have been married to his beloved, Ruth, for 67 years. After the loss of my grandmother, he was fortunate enough to have the companionship of Mona Gelbart for many years. We think of you Mona as family, and are deeply grateful to you for your dedication to grandpa.

The last few years of my grandfather's life were challenging as his health declined. Several people provided care for grandpa during these last several years, and they were all wonderful. But Zeny Edmonds is in a category all her own. Zeny, we cannot begin to express our gratitude for the unstinting devotion and compassion you displayed day after day, year after year. You will always be a part of our family.

Yesterday, my sister, sister-in-law and I went to visit my grandfather for what we assumed would be the last time. We sat at his bedside and sang his favorite zemirot. He drew his last breath as we sang to him. His legacy will live on in all of us, and as my grandfather would say, forever and ever, amen.