

Elaine Gershman

FARMINGDALE and ORONO - Professor Elaine S. Gershman, of 373 Outlet Road, Farmingdale, formerly of 6 Frost Lane, Orono, died on Aug. 19, 2013, after 83 years of appreciating life and its wonders. Even her last five years, as she wended her way through dementia's maze, were marked by her gentle concern for others and a profound sense of gratitude.

She began her professional career as a nurse at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York City. Later, after marrying Mel Gershman and after giving birth to two beautiful girls, the family traveled north, landing in Orono where he taught Microbiology, and eventually she taught Child Psychology, both at the University of Maine. Elaine made a number of pioneering efforts during her tenure there. Among them: she was one of the first to mainstream pre-schoolers with Down's syndrome and Autism into the regular classroom; she sponsored efforts to get women into the sciences; and she helped found Maine's Senior College. As Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences, she was an outspoken champion for academic freedom. She was a founding member of Cancer Mount, after her youngest daughter, Dr. Melaine Gershman married to Dr. John Tewkesbury, died of breast cancer at a young age. In her later years, Elaine became active in Congregation Beth Israel, Bangor.

She leaves behind a loving daughter, Dr. Karen Gershman and her spouse, Dr. Michele Lazerow; grandchildren, Marie-Jacqueline Gershman-Mannocchi, Abu Michael Mannocchi, and Havah Gershman-Tewkesbury; as well as a bevy of devoted friends.

A funeral service will be held 2 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 25, at the Jewish Funeral Chapel, 118 Center St., Bangor. Interment will be in the Beth Israel Cemetery, Bangor. The family invites relatives and friends to share conversation and refreshments at the Family Reception Center of Brookings-Smith, 163 Center St., Bangor, following the interment. In lieu of flowers, small amounts of dark chocolate would be acceptable, and donations may be made to Maine General Hospice, P.O. Box 828, Waterville, ME 04903; or the Gershman Family Scholarship Fund, care of University of Maine Foundation, Two Alumni Place, Orono, ME 04469-5792. A service of Brookings-Smith, Bangor.