

A HUMANIST CEREMONY
TO CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF

Dr. Andersen Maria Burrows

“Andy”

1st January 1921 – 27th March 2019



10.00 a.m. 5th April 2019

North East Surrey Crematorium, Lower Morden Lane SM4 4NU

Funeral Director: Frederick W Paine, 6 Coombe Lane, Raynes Park, SW20
8ND

Celebrant: Anne Delaney, Humanists UK

Dr. Andersen Burrows

Date of birth: 1st January 1921

Date of death: 27th March 2019

.....By living our lives honestly and developing our capabilities and our commitments to family and friends and the greater human family we leave the world a better place.

Andy did leave the world a better place. She embraced life and made the best of what it had to offer. Over the course of her 98 years she was a loving daughter, sister, wife, mother and grandmother. Andy was a strong, independent woman of great energy and tenacity. She was not constrained by the social norms of her generation. In her professional life she was a pioneer in the world of medicine and was one of the first female A & E consultants. Through her work she saved the lives and improved the quality of life of innumerable people. Andy was an exceptional human being who leaves a space that cannot be filled.

Andy was born in Freiburg, Germany; she was the first child of Ulla, an artist and Paul Otto Rosin, a fuel technology scientist. Her sister, Helge Brodie live in USA and no doubt will be thinking of us today. Andy's brother Sebastian (Seb) lives in the UK and is here today.

When Andy was 12 the family moved to France then to England five years later. Andy completed her secondary education at St Pauls Girls School then went on to study medicine at the Royal Free Hospital. It is difficult to imagine the enormous challenges that faced Andy during her childhood in a Europe in conflict, then as a young adult hood in war torn Britain.

Family life was very important to Andy. With her husband David, she created a happy home where their children Nicholas and Beverley grew up to be successful adults and loving partners and parents. A desperately sad time came in 2000 when David died and their marriage of 56 years ended. Thirteen years later Beverley died at the age of 61.

Andy took great delight in being a grandmother. Andy's granddaughter Merrigan had a very close bond with Andy, they cared for each other for the last six years.

Now Merrigan is going to share her memoirs with us.

My grandmother had a fighting spirit, was brave and she never gave up. This was indicative of her achieving the position of an A & E consultant in a predominantly man's world. In 1945, she graduated from The Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine for Women. There were only seventeen women out of one hundred sixty- two people who graduated.

I don't really recall her years as a consultant as I was only 5 when she retired. However, I think you will agree that the cartoon which was drawn of her when she retired, on the back of the funeral card would suggest that she was fierce and a force to be reckoned with during her career.

She showed strength and determination against all adversity. At the age of 95, she broke her hip and needed an operation. The doctors told me she may not make it and probably would not walk again. After the operation, I was called to be told that it had been successful and she was awake and ready for visitors. When I went in to visit her, there she was with a smile from ear to ear, stoic as ever, claiming she was fine and had no pain. Obviously, she must have been in agony but she never complained. She charmed all the doctors (her peers) and actually seemed very relaxed and at home in the familiar territory of the hospital.

When she was discharged, she persevered and went on to walk further than she had ever walked previously, defying all the predictions. I congratulated her and joked calling her Super Gran.

As she pushed along her zimmer frame with intent, she responded with "Well Merrigan, you must remember, I am very determined".

She had a wonderful sense of humour and a beaming smile. On one occasion, we had been out to visit Kew Gardens and she was getting the lift up the stairs to her flat, when the lift got stuck. The porters and other residents were trying to assist with the situation to get her out. In the end, we had to call the fire brigade. Whilst everyone was very concerned and worried about a little old lady stuck in the lift, you could hear her roaring with laughter as she thought it was absolutely hilarious. Eventually after an hour or so, the firemen saved her and got her out of the lift.

As the doors opened, she was greeted by these strapping young firemen and had a grin of a Cheshire cat on her face. She invited them into the flat and they all gathered round to listen to her as she charmed and entertained them. It really was extremely funny to watch.

Suffice to say, that it was an honour and a privilege to look after such a phenomenal woman. She has taught me a lot and is an inspiration. I know her fighting spirit, strength and determination, sense of humour and her unforgettable beaming smile will live on in all of our memories.

Now George Archdale is going to share his memories of Andy.

'How are the antiques?' This was a question that Andy asked me just a few weeks ago. In the past it led to a fuller discussion about the market and her recent purchases of Mason' ironstone jugs of which she collected hundreds. It was an alert and piercing question at a time when she was inclined to say thank you repeatedly to anybody or nobody when she was half asleep. In a way we met through antiques because I met her daughter, Beverley, while attending the Sotheby's training scheme in 1974. We were one of three couples to marry from those attending that particular course.

Andy had another hobby in gardening. She took cuttings from geraniums and South African violets in the flat and grew them on. You will know that she became one of the first ever female consultants on hospital admissions.

Once a patient came in while being given a blood transfusion. Andy gave him preliminary aid and then found him a bed in a ward. The blood in the transfusion bag would normally have been disposed of but Andy did not want to waste it. She took it home and used as fertilizer on her pot plants

Before Beverley and I were married, she and her father walked the borders of the City looking for a place to hold the reception. Through Andy's medical connections the Apothecary's Hall could be hired. A City church proved more difficult to find because most don't open at weekends. With the wedding date set, I decided to have my stag night week before. After too much booze and a curry we were all invited to a friend's flat off the Gloucester Road. On the way it was decided that I should streak there. They had my shirt off and were going for my trousers when I tripped and hurt my ankle. The hurt was bad enough for me to be taken home. The following morning I could not stand on it and Beverley decided that I should be taken to Accident and Emergency, in fact to Andy. Andy arranged for the ankle to be x-rayed. She discovered I had broken and dislocated it. She went into overdrive to arrange for a surgeon and anaesthetist. Within that week, she was able to get me up the aisle on crutches.

My best man had a field day with his speech. Seb Rosin had kindly lent us his house in Megève for a skiing honeymoon and the Archdale family motto is Better Break than Bend. We stayed with Andy and David until the plaster came off. At that time I took the surgeon a bottle of malt whisky and asked him whether I could drink alcohol now the plaster was off to which he said yes. Andy exploded don't tell him that if he carries on drinking excessively he won't see the age of 30.

As coincidence has it Andy was 30 years older than me and I am 30 years older than Merrigan. I am delighted that Merrigan has inherited Andy's strength of character and determination much of which has been needed in the last 6-7 years of their care for each other. I can hear Andy's voice saying thank you repeatedly as I said earlier. I am sure that many of these thank yous were directed at and deserved by Merrigan

Andy's son Nicholas is going to share his recollections of Andy.

As all of you know, my mother had endless fascination with everything around her, be it nature, news, travel, and learning new things. Also, as Merrigan has already mentioned she had massive determination and commitment about everything she did. A story to demonstrate this is during the Second World War, as a medical student, she needed blood for transfusing people injured in the bombing, so she got my father to donate blood and promptly took two pints, whereupon he passed out. Her success in her profession has already been talked about.

Another example of this determination was during our visit to China in 2003, when part of the itinerary was to get up at 3 in the morning and walk for a fairly long distance to view the sunrise over the Yellow Mountains. She did this without a moment's hesitation and when we got to the viewing point with a lot of Chinese tourists, many of them wanted to be photographed with her as they did not often get to see foreigners of her age.

Again, a few years later, in Uzbekistan, she would not let the fact that she was by far the oldest person in the group make her hold up the group and the tour leader wrote of her admiration of Andy.

However, she had little patience with things mechanical and I remember my father trying to teach her to drive. As I said, my mother was endlessly fascinated by what was going on around her. This naturally let her to watch other things rather than the road ahead. My father was a very patient man, but he gave up declaring that the world would be a safer place if my mother did not drive. In a sense, this is another aspect of her character as I suspect that she had made up her mind that she really did not need to drive, so why bother.

She loved to travel and after I went to the United States in 1977, we had an arrangement that one year she and David would travel westwards and we would meet up for a holiday and the next year I would head to London and we would go east. In the early years we toured parts of the US, spent 3 weeks driving through Mexico and later visited nearly every Central and Latin American country. On the other side of the world we had great times in Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Viet Nam and Cambodia. I recall that when we started doing this, we were affected to differing degrees by travellers' digestive upheavals. My father was never affected, I was sometimes, but my mother was the most often affected. She used to say that she only needed to look at her passport to get a stomach upset – the actual words were a little different.

She had very high expectations of everyone around her; I remember that in my early school years I did not do very well and this was not satisfactory, but once I started doing better, the pressure was relaxed.

I recall that we did not have a television in the house until after I left for university in order to ensure that there were no unnecessary distractions to get in the way of school work. Her high expectations extended to her work and until she was advised not to, she kept a little black book of the general practitioners, who she felt were not up to par.

While Andy was a very generous person, in some respects she could be very careful with money. An anecdote that springs to mind was when we went to Mexico she had used a rather dated guide book to plan the trip and when we arrived late in the day in Guadalajara, we found that where the hotel should have been was a huge construction site for a road improvement project. After that, my father and I insisted that we use current maps and guidebooks.

There is absolutely no doubt that she instilled in me many of her own characteristics, both good and perhaps not so good, and I am very grateful for the good ones and try and manage the others.

Towards the end of Andy's life she needed full time care. Her family would like to say a special thanks to Josephine Pasgar, Andy's carer of 5 years, for her 100% reliability, kindness, loyalty and going the extra mile. They would also like to thank the other carers who have joined us today for all their support. Her family are most grateful for the staff at Beaumont Barchester Care Home who treated Andy with respect and gave her a dignified, comfortable and peaceful end of life.