

Judith Susan (Grosz) Hertanu

September 7, 1931 – January 9, 2026

Judith Susan (Grosz) Hertanu died peacefully on January 9, 2026, at the age of 94. Her life was marked by resilience, devotion to family, and a deep commitment to caring for others.

Judith was born on September 7, 1931, in Timișoara, Romania, to Emeric Grosz and Elizabeth Grosz. She grew up with her parents and younger brother, Ivan Grosz. The family initially enjoyed financial comforts and security. Her father was a successful businessman who owned a flour mill, and the family lived well before the upheavals of World War II and its aftermath.

Hungarian was Judith's mother tongue, but she also learned German from German nannies and Romanian at school. After the war, when the communist regime took control, her father's business was confiscated by the state, and the family lost much of what they had. In 1952, her father died tragically in a motorcycle accident, plunging the family into further hardship and financial instability.

Despite these challenges, Judith persevered. She attended medical school and became a physician, practicing medicine in Timișoara. When she and her family applied to leave Romania, they were labeled "enemies of the state," and suffered harsh consequences: her brother was expelled from college, and Judith was removed from her hospital post and reassigned as the sole doctor in a remote rural village, far from home. For nine difficult years, the family worked tirelessly, sustained by hope for a freer and better life.

In 1961, Judith left Romania with her mother and brother and moved to Vienna. They lived together there for nearly a year. Ivan soon left for the United States as a refugee in 1962, while Judith remained behind to care for their mother, whose health was fragile. During this time, Judith practiced medicine in Vienna and served as her mother's primary caregiver. Ivan later spoke often of his gratitude for Judith's devotion to their mother, which allowed him to begin building a new life in America.

In 1964, Judith and her mother joined Ivan in New York City. Judith passed the ECFMG exam and resumed her medical career in the United States. Initially interested in anesthesiology, she ultimately specialized in psychiatry, focusing on cardiac rehabilitation. Her work centered on helping patients regain independence and function after strokes, heart attacks, and other serious illnesses—work that reflected her deep compassion and commitment to helping others.

Judith worked at St. Vincent's Hospital and then at Beth Israel Hospital, where she practiced for more than three decades. She was beloved by the physical therapists and others she worked with. Medicine was central to her identity, and she remained

determined to work for as long as she could, commuting daily by subway from the Upper East Side to Union Square. She retired from Beth Israel at the age of 80.

In 1977, Judith married Herold Hertanu, whom she met through the Romanian community in New York. They were married in a backyard ceremony in her brother and sister-in-law Judy's house in Scarsdale. Judith and Herold shared a love of travel and skiing—especially at European ski resorts. They also appreciated cultural events together such as classical music concerts. After Herold's death in 2012, Judith continued to travel with friends, visit museums, and attend concerts and ballets.

Judith maintained lifelong friendships, especially with those she had known growing up in Timișoara. She traveled in Europe with friends from England and Germany, and was part of a close-knit Romanian/Hungarian community in the New York area.

Family was the center of Judith's life. She was deeply devoted to her mother, whom she cared for lovingly until her mother's death. Judith and Ivan affectionately called their mother "Anyuka," the Hungarian word for mommy—a name that Ivan's wife, Judy, and children, Maya and Peter, also used for Elizabeth.

Judith shared an extraordinarily close bond with her brother, following him to the United States and becoming an extended part of his nuclear family. She spent Jewish holidays with Ivan and Judy's family, and celebrated all their birthdays with them. Each summer she and Herold spent time with Ivan and Judy at their beach house on the Connecticut shore. She traveled with them, for example, traveling with Judy to Puerto Rico before Maya and Peter were born, and then more recently, traveling with Ivan and Judy to Israel. When Ivan died in 2022 she was deeply shaken by the loss.

Although she had no children, Judith treated Maya and Peter as her own. She gave them unconditional love, was generous with gifts and celebrated their school and career achievements. She visited them in college and in the cities where they lived, she walked down the aisle and gave heartfelt toasts at their weddings, and she attended Peter's plays. When they had kids, she delighted in her great-nieces and nephew, taking on a third grandparent role.

Judith was known for her gentleness, intelligence, generosity, playfulness, and appreciation of art, culture, and people. She had a keen sense of style and took pleasure in choosing beautiful, thoughtful gifts. She was deeply appreciative of others' kindness, frequently expressing gratitude—even for small acts—well into her final days. For example, she recently repeated how grateful she was that Peter brought her to her first Covid vaccination, that Maya brought her to see Ivan right before he died, and that Siddhu drove her to Ivan's funeral. When Judy visited her in the hospital last week, Judith woke up and immediately was concerned that her sister in law would be comfortable and have enough rest. Though often focused on her physical ailments, she also

possessed remarkable toughness, meeting setbacks with determination that she would get better.

After a fall in the summer of 2023, Judith required full-time care, lovingly overseen by her sister-in-law, Judy. Though her world became smaller, she continued to find joy in reading classic novels, and watching favorite films. She seemed to enjoy her weekly visits to doctors. She looked forward to regular visits from Judy, Maya and Peter. She truly loved her caregivers, Audrey and Carol, who were dedicated to her well-being, and often expressed how much she appreciated them. As her hearing declined, she mastered texting, using it to share memories, thoughtful reflections, and humor until the very end.

Judith Susan Hertanu lived a life shaped by history but defined by kindness, devotion, and grace. She will be remembered as a gifted physician, a devoted sister, sister-in-law and aunt, a loyal friend, and a woman whose quiet strength and care for others touched generations.

She is survived by her sister-in-law Judith Grosz; her niece Maya Grosz and Maya's husband Siddhartha Nadkarni; her nephew Peter Grosz; her great-nieces and nephew Tara, Zora, and Abraham; her cousin Ingrid Arden; and her aunt Eva Donath.

Donations in memory of Judith Hertanu may be made to: City Harvest <https://www.cityharvest.org/>, or Fresh Air Fund <https://secure.freshair.org/a/fy26-maindonate>.