
https://buffalonews.com/obituaries/features/leslie-shuman-kramer-60-leader-in-jewish-organizations-locally-and-nationally/article_22873e56-99e4-11ec-9ab1-b3d625b1f25a.html

Leslie Shuman Kramer, 60, leader in Jewish organizations locally and nationally

Dale Anderson

Mar 2, 2022



Leslie Shuman Kramer

Dale Anderson

Nov. 1, 1961 – Feb. 24, 2022



When Leslie Shuman Kramer led a tour group from Buffalo to Israel in 2018, they got a warm welcome when they reached the city of Sderot.

Established in 1951 near the Gaza Strip, Sderot was Buffalo's Project Renewal community in Israel. Mrs. Kramer had visited there numerous times. Her parents, Irving and Marilyn Shuman, were instrumental in bringing civic improvements to the town.

Mrs. Kramer carried on their service to Israel and Jewish organizations in Buffalo in many ways. She chaired the Campaign for Jewish Buffalo, which her parents had previously chaired. Like her father, she served as president of the Buffalo Jewish Federation.

Also a leader in Jewish organizations nationally, she died Feb. 24 after a nine-month battle with cancer. She was 60.

Born in Buffalo, the second of four children, her parents set an example of caring for others as she and her siblings were growing up.

"As she put it to me," her husband James Kramer said, "she saw people sitting around their dining room table talking about issues affecting the community here and in Israel and their passion for it. That created the role model for her."

A 1979 graduate of Williamsville East High School, she first visited Israel on a family trip when she was 13. She then convinced her parents to send her back for an entire summer the following year, when she lived on a kibbutz and got to know cousins who had emigrated from Ukraine.

While earning a bachelor's degree from Cornell University, she spent her junior year at Tel Aviv University and became fluent in Hebrew. She returned to Israel after college and worked entry-level jobs for more than a year, then decided to pursue a career in law.

She enrolled at the University at Buffalo Law School and, after graduating, moved to Chicago, where she worked as a bankruptcy attorney and was a member of the Chicago Jewish Federation's Young Leadership Board.

She returned to Buffalo in the mid-1990s and joined the firm that is now Gross, Shuman, where her father was a partner. She and her husband, president of Luminescent Systems Inc., a subsidiary of Astronics Corporation, were married in 1996.



Mrs. Kramer stepped away from practicing law when her children arrived and devoted herself to volunteer work.

“If she felt strongly about something and someone asked her to do it, she’d go for it,” her husband said.

The Buffalo Jewish Federation honored her in 2000 with its Milton and Ruth Kahn Young Leadership Award.

She was president of the Bureau of Jewish Education, now LiNK Jewish Buffalo. She was a board member of the former Temple Shaarey Zedek and co-chaired the education committee.

A Snyder resident for the past 20 years, she was a member of the Amherst Central School District Board of Education from 2010 to 2013.

A longtime board member of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, she served as president from 2018 to 2020 and developed a women’s leadership initiative for the women members of the Federation’s Board of Governors.

She was a tireless fundraiser. She headed the Jewish Federation’s Super Sunday Phonathon in 2007. She was a member of federation’s Campaign Cabinet, where she co-chaired a number of divisions, including Lion of Judah.

She chaired Women’s Philanthropy, leading their 2009 and 2010 fundraising campaigns. She also chaired the 2015 and 2016 Campaigns for Jewish Buffalo, during which she raised money to start the Jewish Community Relations Council, which promotes understanding and combats anti-Semitism in Western New York.

She was elected last year to the American chairmanship of the national Jewish Federation’s Partnership2Gether program, which connects Buffalo and 15 other American communities with Jewish communities in Western Galilee in Israel and in Budapest, Hungary.

She also was a leader on the board of the national Jewish Federation’s National Women’s Philanthropy, which honored her in 2018 with its Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award, which honors inspiring women in Jewish communities across North America.

She co-chaired the Buffalo Jewish Federation's Leadership Development program and helped lead missions to Israel in 2012, 2017 and 2018.

She also was a volunteer for the Jewish Coalition for Literacy and Buffalo's Viva la Casa.

With her husband, she traveled the world, hiking in Patagonia, cycling across the continental divide in Canada and skiing across the U.S.

A longtime supporter and a rider in the Ride for Roswell, she was recognized as one of its top fundraisers in 2021, raising more than \$30,000 for Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center while undergoing treatment for cancer.

In addition to her husband, survivors include two sons, Josh and Joseph; a daughter, Leah; her mother, Marilyn Shuman; two sisters, Catherine Miller and Diane Harkavy; and a brother, James Shuman.

Services were held Feb. 27 in Temple Beth Tzedek, Amherst.

Dale Anderson

Reporter

Dale Anderson has been a Buffalo News staff reporter since 1968. He was the chief rock and pop writer for 20 years and helped establish the weekend entertainment magazine *Gusto*.

