



# Joseph Adler

OCT 5, 1940 - APR 16, 2020



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## **Joseph Adler**

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**J**oseph Adler, consummate director of GableStage died after an 18-month battle with pancreatic cancer on April 16, 2020. Born in Brooklyn in 1940, from a prominent rabbinic family, Joseph attended the Center School in Brooklyn, where Mark Rothko was an art teacher. Joseph later moved to South Florida with his parents and brother Robert, where his parents opened Dubrow's Cafeteria on Lincoln Road. Interested in theatre early on, Joseph saved his lunch money during his early years at North Beach Elementary School to buy film and props to shoot a scene from Hamlet. As best friend Ira Shapiro remembers, under Joe's direction, Ira as Polonius was stabbed to death and bled profusely using barbecue sauce. Later, Joseph attended Miami Beach High and the Lear School. It was Principal Dorothy Lear, who recognized Joseph's talent, despite his rebellious nature, and recommended him to Carnegie Mellon, which he attended. This was followed by NYU film school, where he studied film along with Martin Scorsese. Returning to Miami in the 70's with his late wife, actress Joan Murphy, Joseph made TV commercials and directed a few films. Joseph's son Noah was born in Miami. Ultimately, he settled on live theatre for his career, initially at the Player's Theatre, and ultimately at Gables Stage, where he was Producing Artistic Director for 22 years, garnering many Carbonell awards. Joseph's commitment to the Miami community was indefatigable. He worked tirelessly for over 10 years to secure a permanent home for the GableStage at the Coconut Grove Playhouse; he nurtured and supported up-and-coming young artists including those from the New World School of the Arts. He also sponsored productions for Miami-Dade public school children, and offered his stage to young directors and actors, including writer/director Tarell Alvin McCraney. He offered his previews to community agencies as a vehicle for fundraising at no charge. Transformed by the civil rights movement in the 50's and 60's, Joseph credited his life-long commitment to the ACLU and Planned Parenthood to this early



## Obituary

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influence. While publicly effusive and incisive in his opinions on and off stage, he was nonetheless a very private, tender and loving man. His only hobby was watching all movies, (including the old musicals), and could recognize at a glance who the actors and directors were from a dead sleep. Affirming life to the end, and always cognizant of his responsibilities to the GableStage, Joseph worked relentlessly throughout his illness to direct the “The Price,” which was ready to open when the theatre was forced to close due to Covid-19. He nonetheless ensured that the actors and staff continued to be paid. He resigned the day before his death. Joseph is survived by his wife Donna Urban, son Noah (Patricia), step-children Arianne Urban and Karl Skyler Urban , grandchildren Jonah, and Kaleb Adler, brother Robert Adler, nieces Felicia Mayer (Scott) and Michele Friedlander (David), grand-nieces, nephew and many beloved cousins and their children. It was Joseph’s request that there be no service. All donations in Joseph’s memory should be sent to the ACLU [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org) or Planned Parenthood [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)  
Arrangements by Levitt-Weinstein-Blasberg-Rubin-Zilbert (305) 932-2700



## Tribute Wall

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**Margaret M Ledford** lit a candle in honor of Joseph.



April 21 at 9:43 AM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

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