



## Eli Seth Berens

June 13, 1960 - September 4, 2020

### OBITUARY FOR ELI SETH BERENS

June 13, 1960 – September 4, 2020

Eli Seth Berens of Hollywood, Florida passed away suddenly of natural causes on September 4, 2020. He was the beloved husband of Joanna Polinsky Berens and proud father to Samuel Gabriel Berens, a junior at the University of Florida. He is also survived by his sister and brother-in-law, Nancy and David Johnson of Pittsburgh, nieces and nephews, Julie Tritt of Miami, Kathleen & Eric Johnson of Pittsburgh and Michael Johnson of New York City, his aunts, Piry Weiss of Melbourne, Australia, Marilyn Goldstein of Boston and numerous cousins from around the world, whom he held close to his heart. He was pre-deceased by his parents, Yolana, a Holocaust survivor and art dealer, and Julius G. Berens, a financial editor and banker, as well as his brother, Marc, and sister, Debra. Born in Manhattan, Eli and his family moved to Miami Beach during its first heyday, the early 1960's, when Jackie Gleason was at his peak and the glistening resorts of South Florida beckoned all honeymooners and vacationers, as well as retirees. Eli reveled in his idyllic surroundings and was proud to be a 1978 graduate of Miami Beach Senior High School, having spent summers working at several of those beautiful resorts either as a tennis pro, pool boy or kitchen help, where his engaging personality allowed him to meet interesting people from around the globe. After attending Miami-Dade College and Florida International University, Eli followed his passion for food and cooking and began his career in catering, first working in the social catering scene at The Pavillon Hotel Miami (now InterContinental), followed by Gene's Catering. In 1984, when a little known TV show called "Miami Vice" came to town, Eli was the first to volunteer to take a 2 week vacation so that he could help pioneer what would become a vibrant production and location catering scene in South Florida. He never returned to his regular job and instead launched his company, Commercial Caterers, importing California-customized mobile kitchen catering trucks (now known as food trucks) to create a fleet that would serve the burgeoning TV, film and production scene until the early 1990's. He would end up working on dozens of films, including "Caddyshack", "Planes, Trains and Automobiles", "Cape Fear", and "Blaze" just to name a few, and would serve as personal chef to numerous

stars on location including Don Johnson, Burt Reynolds, John Candy, Paul Newman, Robert Conrad, Lolita Davidovich and many others. In 1993, he launched Mazel at 195th Street, Inc., a company devoted to the ownership and management of commercial real estate. While entrepreneurship was always at the heart of Eli's passions, his biggest passion was his beloved extended family and long-term friendships, of which he was very proud. He, along with Joanna and Samuel, traveled far and wide to be present at as many occasions as possible, understanding that in the end, what really counts in life are the memories made and the relationships cherished. Eli will be buried on September 9, 2020 at the Berens Family Grave at Mount Ararat Cemetery on Long Island, NY. Memorial donations may be made to either the US Holocaust Memorial Museum ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)), Mazon ([www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org)) or Temple Solel of Hollywood ([templesolel.com](http://templesolel.com)).

Please click the following link to view the Zoom service recording

[https://viewneral.zoom.us/rec/play/YktdR1f-M565iov06ESFLe-Xo4x5S\\_xUuH-LDioOCMs\\_XpXIft\\_EDCKQome5ILV0qJ5B-O8mKz2iXt4h.D8FvcUEkIgTYYcmZ](https://viewneral.zoom.us/rec/play/YktdR1f-M565iov06ESFLe-Xo4x5S_xUuH-LDioOCMs_XpXIft_EDCKQome5ILV0qJ5B-O8mKz2iXt4h.D8FvcUEkIgTYYcmZ)

Thank You

# Cemetery

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## Mount Ararat Cemetery

Long Island, NY,

# Comments

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“ AEPi reunion and Rachel & Jacob’s wedding. Eli’s always so much fun!



**Pamela Friedman** - September 17, 2020 at 11:30 AM

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“ I've been reading your many posts about what a great family man he was and would like to add just a bit more to those very heart-warming stories. I barely knew Eli, but I felt as though I did from hearing Joanna's stories the last several years as we worked together on our many food-rescue initiatives. I finally did get to meet the man and immediately saw that tight family bond that you who knew him well have all been talking about.

The occasion was at Taste of the Nation, a fundraiser of the No Kid Hungry project when Eli, Joanna and Samuel showed up on a Saturday night to help me recover all the food leftover from this grand annual affair. That amazing event brings together 50-60 of the best chefs every year from across South Florida to show off their creative culinary talents for a truly great cause.

I'm so happy to be able to share this photo of the four us at right around midnight on April 27, 2018, dead tired but still smiling upon delivering 91 trays of amazing nutrition to the Miami Rescue Mission. The next few days the food we recovered from the charity event became an even greater charity effort as it was turned into more than 1000 meals for the homeless of the Overtown area and the formerly-homeless residents of the Mission.

This is the Berens family; always concerned about those in greater need and trying to do something about it. May Joanna and Samuel long continue this legacy of deep care for others that Eli clearly had instilled in this wonderful family. Long live all of these great memories of Eli Seth Berens!

Dr. John D. Buschman  
Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management  
Florida International University  
North Miami Beach, FL



**John Buschman** - September 10, 2020 at 10:09 AM



“ The system isn't allowing me to LIKE your photos so I'm writing that I love them!

**Pamela Friedman** - September 17, 2020 at 11:21 AM

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“ Sending our heartfelt sympathies to you, Joanna and Sam on your loss of your beloved Eli. I was only able to watch a part of the beautiful funeral service, but did hear you, Joanna clear and oh so strong. Your tribute comforted everyone there as well those of us zooming in. Unfortunately, I missed Sam's talk, but I am sure it was full of loving memories. Today is our Dad's Yahrzeit, so I will also light an extra candle in memory of Eli. He was so special to so many. Now may his memory be a comfort and blessing to you and Sam, his family and friends and to anyone who knew and loved him.

Penny - September 10, 2020 at 08:12 AM

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“ Penny lit a candle in memory of Eli Seth Berens



Penny - September 10, 2020 at 08:00 AM

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“ Eli provided a great energy to our block. His presence will be deeply missed. It was clear during our conversations how important his family was to him. May you be comforted by the mourners of Tzion and Jerusalem.

Elana, Shimmy, Eva, Keren, and Ronen Lazar

Lazar Family - September 09, 2020 at 09:40 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Ron Friedman - September 09, 2020 at 09:18 AM

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“ I remember the rich treasure trove of pictures and keepsakes of family and friends he proudly displayed and shared. He was a loving and entertaining storyteller. He was excited for life, love and family. We will miss him. ~Sheila Bernstein

Sheila Bernstein - September 08, 2020 at 10:10 PM

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“ Eli I will miss you so much. You lit up the world and spread joy to those you touched. Proud father and husband, loved by many.

Robert Lansburgh - September 08, 2020 at 08:59 PM

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“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Ron Friedman - September 08, 2020 at 06:50 PM

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“ 2 files added to the album Eli loved the Ocean ...



Amy & Jim Pelaggi - September 08, 2020 at 06:02 PM

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“ Judith Gerberg lit a candle in memory of Eli Seth Berens



judith gerberg - September 08, 2020 at 05:23 PM

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“ 5 files added to the tribute wall



Ron Friedman - September 08, 2020 at 05:17 PM

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“ Love you and miss you already

Ron Friedman - September 08, 2020 at 05:16 PM

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“ My dear cousin Eli was extremely loving, and so very proud of his parents, wife, offspring and many relatives. His interest in everything was often very effusive in conversations, for his intent to learn about family in particular was so sincere. Remember, as I will, those happy times and the support he always provided, and let the tears of grief eventually lead to smiles.  
Love always, Norman

Norman Berens - September 08, 2020 at 03:57 PM