



## Rodger Popkin

July 13, 1950 - June 17, 2019

Rodger Morris Popkin, 68, of Fort Lauderdale, passed away peacefully on June 17, 2019. Son of Herman and Rosalie Popkin (of blessed memory), beloved husband of Maryann (aka Candy), loving father of Lauren (Seth) Herschthal and Jason Popkin, dear brother of Vickie Popkin Kligerman (Barry), dear brother in law of Nancy Niman Weber (Jeff), uncle to Matthew, Maxwell, David and Seth Kligerman, Jeanette Weber Martin (Sam) and Benjamin Weber (Kim) & Annie Weber (of blessed memory), cherished grandfather of Eli and Rose Herschthal. Rodger was born in Atlanta in 1950 and was raised in Georgia, always spending his summers at camp in Hendersonville, North Carolina. He attended Boston University where he met his beloved bride and wife of forty-eight years, Candy. They were married in the Elmore Solomon Chapel at Blue Star in 1971 and began their active careers as Camp Directors immediately after returning from a one-night honeymoon at the Pisgah Inn off the Blue Ridge Parkway near Asheville, North Carolina. Both Rodger and Candy devoted themselves to their work at Blue Star for over forty years. His legacy will live on in the thousands of Blue Star campers, staff and camp alumni who have been part of our camp family over the past 72 seasons. Rodger also served as the National President of the American Camp Association from 1999 to 2002. Under his leadership ACA found deeper purpose and direction by viewing the camp experience not just as “recreation” but as youth development. Rodger always believed that meaningful and happy camp experiences have the power to positively change the world, one person at a time. He partnered with Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul & Mary to pilot a national anti-bullying campaign. He was an accomplished man; an intellectual, a creative thinker, a visionary, a kind, generous and loving spirit. His greatest legacy will be the genuine nature of his relationships with family, friends and members of our camp family. We know Rodger’s memory will live on in the hearts of those who loved him and for generations to come.

Funeral arrangements have been made for Thursday, June 20th at 2:00 PM at  
Levitt Weinstein at Beth David

3201 North 72nd Avenue

Hollywood, FL, 33024

<https://levitt-weinstein.com/contact-us/beth-david-memorial-gardens>

Shiva will be held at the Palms in Fort Lauderdale (2100 N. Ocean Blvd. Fort Lauderdale, FL 33305 in Tower One) directly following the funeral.

In lieu of flowers, if you wish to make a charitable donation in Rodger's memory, we have provided two options that were both very near and dear to his heart...

<https://www.bluestarcamps.com/pdfs/Campership-Program.pdf>

<https://pcsnetwork.org>

# Cemetery

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## Beth David Memorial Gardens

3201 N. 72nd Ave  
Hollywood, FL, 33024

# Events

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**JUN 20** **Chapel Service** 02:00PM

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Levitt-Weinstein at Beth David  
3201 North 72nd Avenue, Hollywood, FL, US,  
33024

# Comments

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“ Hey Jason,  
I'm so sorry for your lose, I just found out about it and I feel terrible. I will always remember how kind your mom and dad were to me every time we just showed up at the house and got pizza and maybe some mischief.  
He was a very kind man and loved talking to me about Boston...  
Take Care my friend  
Paul Cardone

**Paul Cardone** - July 21, 2019 at 09:56 PM

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“ Dear Candy and the Blue Star Family,  
  
In the early days, when I was a youngster at Blue Star, I was often a pain in his ass. However, he later seem to forgive me, and became the greatest source of joy and laughter. Man, he could be FUNNY!  
  
I still hear his voice in my head, and will keep him alive in my memory.  
  
Blessings,  
  
BJ Leiderman  
Asheville, NC

**BJ Leiderman** - July 03, 2019 at 11:35 AM

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“ Rodger was a major influence on my political IQ. I enjoyed talking to him many a summer evening after my campers were asleep. I am forever grateful for Blue Star and the experiences I had there as a camper, counselor and unit leader. Godspeed, Rodger.

**Merrie Meyers** - June 23, 2019 at 08:52 AM

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“ Bill and I were saddened to hear that Rodger had passed away. He always had such a positive outlook on life, we thought he would beat the latest twist on his unforgiving illness. He had an incredible sense of humor, always sharp as a whip. He had an ability to understand everybody's position and always showed so much empathy. We'll miss him at The Palms and will always be grateful to have had the chance to know him.  
Our deepest sympathies to Candy and their family.

Pat and Bill Heessels - June 21, 2019 at 07:33 PM

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“ We send our deepest sympathy to the entire family. We are reminiscing about our two summers on staff 74 and 75 and our subsequent times together in Florida. The miles and years have not diminished our respect for Rodger. May he rest in peace.

Donna and Harvey Leviton - June 21, 2019 at 11:58 AM

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“ As long time attorney for the Popkins and Camp Blue Star, I worked side by side with Rodger for decades. We immediately became close personal friends as well. I always admired the gentle and mature way Rodger handled the many complex and emotional situations which occur at camp, with campers, staff, families, and alumni. Everyone I know viewed Rodger as a true gentleman. His influence will be felt for a long time at Camp Blue Star and the camping industry as a whole. His leadership of America Camping Association inspired me to become ACA's attorney for the Southeast Region. Rodger also was instrumental in my joining the board of directors of Foundation for Jewish Camp. Carol and I send our love to the Popkin family, and we are confident that Rodger's memory will be for a blessing. Z"L. Bob and Carol Deutsch

Bob Deutsch - June 20, 2019 at 03:28 PM

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“ I am so sad to hear this news and send my love and sympathy to your family. Camp Blue Star was one of the most important experiences in my life and your family is always in my heart. Our last contact was when Lauren came to visit Judd in New Orleans. Such fun!  
Thinking of you and keeping you in my prayers!  
Lois Sheridan Harris Sutton  
l.sutton@jgeco.com

LOIS HARRIS SUTTON - June 19, 2019 at 04:13 PM



“ Our son's philosophy paper in 2011, begins....."I was born 2002, at the top of a mountain at a Jewish Summer Camp in Hendersonville, NC." Blue Star gave Kevin life by exposing him to mountain biking and nature, his passion for living. I shared that with Rodger, just this year. Kevin continued to maintain relationships with the International Staff, Vojta and Clemens who would visit him in Portland, Oregon to continue their bike journeys. Rodger, thank you for all that camp did for Kevin, and for creating an environment of fun and growth. As a mature staff member, I had the time of my life, with memories that will last an eternity. You were the real deal, even when there were serious issues to discuss. You were always there to hear the campers and staff, and find a way to always make things better. You will be sorely missed and forever in our hearts.

Paula and Scott Neidorf

**paula neidorf** - June 19, 2019 at 11:12 AM



“ Really beautiful. Rodger gave us all so much!

**Ellen Elias** - June 19, 2019 at 04:36 PM



“ As Rodger's administrative assistant from 1982-1992, I had the opportunity to work with him in a wide variety of situations. If I can only share one thought here, it would be that Rodger had the ability to give his full attention to every individual - - child or staff member. He made everyone feel important, listened fully to their problem, and suggested a way to resolve their issue. I have never met any other individual with such superb “people” skills.

**Ilene Brause** - June 19, 2019 at 07:17 AM

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“ Rodger always gave everyone the benefit of the doubt. I remember when he was a new camp director and I was a CT. It was the summer of 1975-Candy and Rodger returned to Blue Star and were running the camp alongside Herman and Rosalie. Boy did we give him a hard time! Fast forward many years later and I was invited to return to help reignite the Camping Unlimited program. And then when Herman died, Rodger asked me to revive the Living Judaism program. I know that some of the best years of my life were at camp, both as a camper and an adult. I loved watching the chapel come alive again, and seeing the smile on Roger's face every Shabbat when those children were having the best time. I will be forever grateful to Rodger for helping me become the adventuresome, confident adult that I am. Many of us that were camp parents know the importance of giving our children roots and wings. Go in peace, my friend. You were always a drum major....  
Ellen Elias

**Ellen Elias** - June 18, 2019 at 10:32 PM