

Thank you for coming. In a letter to her children and grandchildren to be read before this service, Mother asked that we not think of her with sadness and that, respectfully, is our intention. Hers was a great journey, spanning most of the century and much of the world. Wherever she went, she brought laughter, intellect and compassion. She was, by any measure, indomitable, Nazis, subway muggers, a severe burn, heart problems, even Cancer itself, couldn't bring her down. Last June, her surgeon offered the prospect of a quick, quiet death from the tumor spreading through her body or the risk of another difficult operation and a few months more of life. "Some choice," she joked and then replied, "How could I say no to a little more life." So the operation was scheduled. A few days after it was over, recalling the gloomy faces of her sons on the fateful day we awaited her decision, she told the doctor, "I showed those boys." She did indeed. In the last weeks of her life Mother knew that she had responded heroically -- and certainly not for the first time -- to a life challenge.

Mother had many names. She was Marta to her parents, brothers and schoolmates, Martha to her many American friends, Marciu to her beloved Jiuzu, her mate of 60 years, Mamusui Kohanya to her sons, Baba to her daughters-in-law and grandchildren and, a little improbably, Ossie to her colleagues of over 30 years at Columbia.

There were as many facets to Mother's character as there were names. She was ahead of her time in many ways. Her mind

was open to all new ideas, styles and people, curiosity abounded. In fact, I think the only great frustration of her life, especially as she grew older, was that she couldn't do as much as she wanted to. Still on the day she died, there were three books on her night tables, one in French, one in Polish and one in English about the women of India. How appropriate. For Mother, Poland was her homeland, France, a land of youth and romance and India, a place of salvation. Three books at once! That was Mother's idea of rest.

Perhaps my favorite story about Mother, one that connects many of the features that made her so, well, different, took place in 1964 as I was preparing to move back to New York for graduate school. Having attended boarding school and college, it had been some years since I lived at home, but Mother wanted to entice me back to the Beresford. "Mother," I said, "I'm used to my, ehem, privacy." The very next day, a young woman friend came to visit me at parents' apartment. It was raining, as Mother might say, dogs and cats, but not until my friend was gone did Mother appear, damp and bedraggled. "Mother," I asked, "where have you been?" "Piotruis," she replied wide-eyed, "I didn't want you to think I was intruding on your privacy so I went for a walk."

Life called on mother to be brave, brave when she escaped from Poland in 1940, brave as she, Father and Robert made their way across Europe and the Middle-East at war, brave as she coped with India, brave as she built a home and

career in America, brave as she endured the physical misfortunes of her later years and brave beyond imagining as she battled her final illness. Only a very strong heart could bear so much and leave so much room to love and care for others. So finally on Saturday afternoon, in her own bedroom, surrounded by her beloved photographs, with Juzui nearby and blessed Eva at hand, her heart said Yush, enough, its time. We cannot mourn Mother. She asked us not to. But we do cherish her memory and honor her wonderful life.