

SUSAN MAHLER SINGER

Writer and long-time Squirrel Hill resident passed away on January 13, at the age of 81. Suzy was a writer first and foremost and always. In the early 1960s, she wrote a children's book called Kenny's Monkey that was published by Scholastic Books and went on to sell more than 1,000,000 copies; the book sales paid for the down payment on the longtime family home on Shady Ave. in 1966. Over the next four decades, she was always writing book drafts or poetry and keeping a journal on the hearty IBM Selectric that sat on her desk, or later on the computer that she begrudgingly adopted. She was always ready to share a new poem she had written or to talk about a book she was reading. Suzy was devoted to her two sons, Shepherd (Roe) and Paul, and their families. Even as she was losing the ability to have full conversations, she would still end every phone call with "I'm so proud of all you do." Her apartment was full of photos of her two sons and their families, and she always loved getting more. Suzy's life was harder than she deserved. When she was a child, her family was riddled with mental illness; when her parents divorced, neither was capable of taking custody so they put her and her sister in an orphanage. When she was about 14 she was kicked out of school and her grandmother took her in. She married Marshall Singer when she was only 18 and he was 27; they were divorced by the time she was 35. She was in and out of psychiatric hospitals all her life and held a string of secretarial positions until she had to give up work in the early 1990s. In 2015 she suffered an infection and sepsis that dramatically curtailed her abilities, and she ultimately had to give up her apartment and spent the last several years moving through steadily rising levels of caregiving. Born and raised Jewish, she spent some time in her 40s exploring other religions, but she ultimately returned to the faith and found a loving home with Congregation Dor Hadash, where she loyally attended for many years. Her Judaism was a central part of her identity and her social life. The family gives thanks to Community Life, an organization that helps seniors remain in their communities by providing care and services in their homes; and to the Reformed Presbyterian Home in Pittsburgh where Suzy received dignified and compassionate care for the last year of her life. Mostly the family is eternally grateful to a small cadre of caregivers at these organizations who treated Suzy with such kindness and dignity. Suzy's last decade was only possible because of the care and support of these wildly underpaid angels, and there is no way we can even begin to thank them for what they gave. In lieu of flowers, the family encourages a donation to Community Life (<https://www.commlife.org/make-a-donation/>) or the Reformed Presbyterian Home (<https://rphome.org/give/>). Services were held at **RALPH SCHUGAR CHAPEL, INC.** Interment Dor Hadash Section of Homewood Cemetery. www.schugar.com.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb