

# Marcia Rothenberg, feminist, leftist activist and nurse, dies at 89 May 22, 2023



Marcia June Rothenberg

Marcia June Rothenberg, 89, feminist and leftist activist and nurse, passed away peacefully at home in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, May 14, Mother's Day, 2023.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Marcia graduated from Glenville High School and earned her bachelor's from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and her master's from University of California at Berkeley, both in English. She earned her nursing degree (from?) and worked for many years as an RN at Cook County Hospital, where she helped found the Breast Cancer Detection Program, teaching women to perform self-examinations.

Marcia was always a fighter. She never met an authority she wasn't willing to confront. She and Mel were always to be seen for many decades at protests against the Vietnam War, for civil rights, for women's liberation, against political repression and for health care for all. But in addition to protesting, she was instrumental in building organizations that embodied her values.

She was active in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Chicago Women's Liberation Union. In the 1970's, she was involved in the advancement of Second-Wave Feminism in Paris, France. During her nursing career she was active in her union, the Illinois Nurses Association, and a leader when nurses struck at Cook County Hospital. Later, she was a founding member of the Illinois Single-Payer Coalition. She helped bring ISPC into the disability rights movement and the (winning!) fight for a trauma center at the University of Chicago.

Marcia was passionate not only for justice but also for music and cultural affairs. She took up jazz piano playing and became really good at it, performing with other musicians. She and Mel went to many concerts and films, and Marcia even loved the opera. She loved to dance and went to folk dances where she danced with much younger partners into her 80's. She was a longtime member of a book club.

Her spirit and energy also was poured into her family. She loved her husband and children and grandson and vigilantly looked after them all her life even when ill health made that difficult.

Beloved wife of over 70 years to Prof. Melvin Gordon Rothenberg, mother of Julia Helise (Geoffrey Berliner) Rothenberg, Aaron Rothenberg, and Louise Michelle Rothenberg. Adored grandmother of Theo Rothenberg Berliner. Respected comrade of many. Daughter of the late Louis Cherko and Alice Trotsky Cherko.