



Judith Lee Margolis

JUL 23, 1941 - FEB 4, 2026



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Judy Margolis of Tucson and Sante Fe, made her last buying trip on Wednesday, February 4th 2026. She passed away in her mother's home in Tucson.

A Tucson High School (58') graduate, and world traveler in her teen's, she attended the University of Arizona and later The University of Mexico City studying Art and Anthology. While living in Mexico City she worked for CARE, and picked up additional work as a translator. For a brief period in 68', she put together a baby-sitting service for foreign families attending the Summer Olympics in Mexico City.

After living in Mexico City, she split her time between San Christobal de las Casas, Chiapas Mexico, and Guatemala working with Gertrude "Trudy" Blom, photographer and wife of Frans Ferdinand Blom, at the Mayan Historical Center and Museum in Mexico. Danish Archaeologist Frans Blom was one of the great authorities on Mayan culture, who had discovered several long-lost cities of the Mayan culture, c.300-900 AD. It was here, working a long side Trudy that Judy fell in love with pre-Columbian woven fabric and artifacts of the period. She helped photograph and catalog artifacts for the museum.

In 1969', she started her first business in Tucson with Marilyn Grant, on 6th street. Together they sold clothing and native Indian arts from Mexico and Latin America and from around the world.

In the 1970', Judy opened "The Departure Store" in Tucson. She came into prominence after an interview about the Store appeared in Women's Wear Daily. Sometime after that, other Stores were opened in Beverly Hills, and Boulder.

Early travels for merchandise, took her to Afghanistan, Iran and later New Delhi, where she designed and manufactured clothing for import and worldwide sales under the name "New Morning Designs," along with a best friend Molly.

Judy was a risk taker her whole life, who made life-long friends along the way. While traveling in Mexico and India, she helped establish cooperatives to make clothing and other items for sale. In India, she helped create a cotton gauze fabric, which was first used in New Morning designed clothing, and later spread throughout the clothing industry.



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After the sale of the Departure Store in 1979, she traveled again to Afghanistan. This time against US State Dept. wishes, just weeks after the Russian invasion in 1980. She shopped in Kabul, when the streets were full of Russian tanks and military personnel.

The items purchased included: Oriental rugs, ethnic jewelry, tribal arts, camel bags, and hand-woven fabric. This inventory comprised the basis of a new store specializing in ethnic clothing and tribal arts called "Origins." The new store was located in Santa Fe, just off the main square.

Origins was the first store of its' type in Santa Fe. Others would follow, but Origins was the first and led the way for forty years. She appeared on an NBC Today Show segment high-lighting Sante Fe in the 1990's, and was then featured again, in a Women's Wear Daily article high lighting her unique marketing skills in 2001. Among other things, Judy was one of the first, to put on Trunk Shows, and feature clothing as Wearable Art.

She was a woman with boundless energy, who cared about people. Santa Fe and New Delhi were her favorite cities and she had extended families in each.

Born in Detroit, she spent most of her childhood in Los Angeles, before her family moved to Tucson. She was the daughter of Herbert & Mildred Margolis (deceased) and is survived by her brother Michael Margolis, (Lida Haden) of Tucson, with longest and closest friend, Arlene Leaf of Tucson. She loved being Aunt Judy to her many cousins, friend's children and grandchildren.

In addition to her family, she leaves behind dear friends in Tucson, Santa Fe, New York, Dallas, Huston, Ft. Worth, Mexico City and New Delhi.

In lieu of flowers, friends may make donations to Animal Protection New Mexico, or Espanola Humane of Santa Fe.

A remembrance of Judy' life will be held in Tucson, March 3rd 2026 at the Tucson Botanical Gardens. Because space is limited, those wishing to attend should text Mike Margolis at (520) 870-5400 or email: mikemargolis@cox.net for details.

Condolences or special memories may also be shared at <https://evergreenmortuary-cemetery.com>



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Anand Jain posted:

I've known Judy for over 30 years and she was the most humble person. She always welcomed everyone with open arms and a precious smile on her face. Her nature was so sweet and caring. She always made sure to take care of every petty need whenever I visited her. She was a very spiritual and pious person. Judy was not just a friend but like family to us. We wish her a peaceful journey in the arms of God.

February 27 at 3:14 PM

BC

Barbara Bruneau Cleaver lit a candle in honor of Judith.

Oh Dear Judy , We knew her for many years, even before our move to Santa Fe over 40 years ago . We had a store in Palo Alto called Folklorico , that was a akin to Origins (maybe not quite as fabulous) . In those days, there were a handful of stores across the country that had similar ideas... along with us there was Nepenthe in Big Sur, Tail of the Yak in Berkeley , and a handful of others. We all knew each other, and Judy became a dear friend Judy was a iconic figure in Santa Fe , and her marvelous store was a gathering place of like-minded friends and clients . She also cared greatly about indigenous people, and several times when I had Mexican Indian friends visiting, I would take them to see her because she understood... and was always so kind and generous with them. A little Chacho story ..Judy had asked my daughter to dog sit Chacho at our house, and as we were getting him out of the car to take him inside... he ran off. He was pretty famous for running off..So I ran after him, and I probably ran 5 miles through the east side hills, trying to catch him(I did not know I had it in me!) But he was very smart and he would wait, just beyond where I couldn't reach him, but I could see him. I simply could not catch him , finally and I had to give up.. Late that night, I went out my front door... and there he was. Back at the house he had only ever been for about five minutes...so smart! Finally was able to catch him and call Judy and tell her he was safe 😊 He was an adorable dog. Dear Chacho . I miss them both. Adios mi querida amiga, Judy 🙏



February 16 at 3:51 PM



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John Ladd lit a candle in honor of Judith.

Judy was usually the first person I spoke to when entering the City Different...her store was always buzzing so I rarely got to speak with her very long, but I always went by to say hello...for years. I just liked her presence, and being in her presence. She had this kind, wise voice and people like my mother and sister lined up to buy her beautiful wares from all around the world. I always appreciated the great light inside of her. And much later, after she had moved her store again and again, my partner Stacy and I would track her down, or she would reach out to find us. She cared for us, knew us, loved us, shared her life with us, and was a part of ours. She was like a wonderful aunty, with the best advice and wonderful stories. We would liken her to Ultima. She had energy, wisdom, big love in her heart, and an incredible drive. We will always miss her voice and beautiful words.



February 19 at 7:19 AM



Stacy Luecker shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I met Judy through my partner, John Ladd, who has known her for more than 40 years. She has been like a member of our family, meeting in Santa Fe often, and enjoying her stories at Origins, a shop she owned since the '70s. Every time we eat at her favorite dumpling restaurant, walk past her store locations, or visit Cafe Pasqual's in Santa Fe, we will fondly remember the time we spent with this very special, gifted, and beautiful friend. Judy was one of those once-in-a-lifetime type of friends. She entered your heart and stayed there. Her experiences, advice, love, and the beauty of her spirit is like no other.



February 16 at 4:47 PM



Elaine Vindiola lit a candle in honor of Judith.

Judy was our dear and loving neighbor who we lived across the street from us for the close to 20 years we've been here. We mourned her mom, Millie's loss back in 2011, and miss her dearly also. At that time, Judy would travel back and forth from New Mexico with her sweet dog, Chacho. She was a beautiful and loving soul who prepared chicken soup for us regularly. She would bring Hatch green chile for us and I would prepare dishes with it and take them over for her. We will miss Judy so much. It was such a nice feeling knowing such a kind, beautiful lady lived across the street. It pains us to feel her absence. I remember a card she wrote us that said all of our names would be written in the Book of Life. I went over her house crying to thank her for the beautiful sentiment. Rest in Peace dear Judy. We love you. Please say hello to your mom. Elaine and Harrison



February 16 at 3:51 PM



Media

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February 16 at 4:47 PM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Judith by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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