Obituary - Virginia Felson

Virginia Felson was born on October 12, 1914 to Jacob and Ida Raphaelson, immigrants from Eastern Europe, and sister of the late Selma and Nettie Raphaelson. Born in Newport, Kentucky, she moved with her family to Cincinnati at age 9. She graduated from Hughes High School in 1932 and from the University of Cincinnati in 1936, where she completed several years of graduate work in their School of Social Work.

Virginia was a social worker at the Welfare Department and at the Salvation Army, where she met with victims of the 1937 flood. For most of her life she was active in volunteer work. As a volunteer for the Red Cross she interviewed discharged soldiers during WW II, while her husband was overseas. Later, she served as long-time board member of the Women's City Club, Camp Joy, and the Jewish Center Speakers' Forum (where she served as Vice-President). She read for the blind over the radio and served as a parent-teacher. Virginia was also involved in liberal causes. She was an active member of Fellowship House, an organization dedicated to peaceful race relations. She also organized a gun control rally on Fountain Square and worked to alleviate the sub-standard conditions for inmates at the Cincinnati Workhouse. Still an active force in her nineties, she organized social gatherings for elderly residents at her apartment building before moving to Evergreen Retirement Home, where, as the "hat lady," she was esteemed and loved by residents and staff. Up to her final weeks, she was a paragon of courage and good cheer.

Known for her uninhibited nature and her wit, Virginia had many friends in Cincinnati and, from her travels with her husband, around the world. Throughout her life, she generously gave of herself to people of all ages and to people of all backgrounds. She maintained a zest for life and was relentless in pursuing her ideals with compassion and creativity. A woman of integrity, generosity, and spirit, Virginia will always be a role model for her family and for those whose lives she has touched.

Virginia Felson died peacefully in her sleep on June 30, 2016, at the age of 101.

Virginia was the beloved wife of Dr. Benjamin Felson, a renowned radiologist, and a generous and loving mother to her five children: Stephen, Nancy, Marcus (Mary Eckert), Richard (Sharon), and Edward (Marsha Weston). She had a wonderful relationship with her eight grandchildren (Joseph, Rachel, Sabrina, Alexander, Amit, Yifot, Jacob, and Benjamin), her eight great-grandchildren, and her nieces and nephews. The last of her generation, she was the beloved matriarch in her extended family.