



## Merle "Mickey" Stern

February 5, 1929 - September 25, 2017

(nee Borofsky), age 88, born Feb. 5, 1929, passed away Sep. 25, 2017. Mickey (Merle) Stern passed away on September 25, 2017. She was a lifelong feminist, activist, and gardener, a lover of the theater and art, a world traveler and explorer, and a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She lived in Cleveland for the past 70 years, when she first arrived from Canada as a freshman at Case Western Reserve University (Mather College). Four years later, she helped organize a meeting to protest the death penalty of Ethel & Julius Rosenberg. And it was there that she met Al Stern, her beloved husband of 55 years. Mickey and Al shared a commitment for peace and justice, a passion for travel and adventure, and a love for the ages. Most importantly, Al was the only person she dated that who didn't mind when she beat him in ping-pong. She was equally proud that her FBI surveillance file documenting her decades of political activism was thicker than Al's. And they made a great mixed doubles team on the tennis court. Her commitment to social justice continued, when in August 1963, she joined the historic March on Washington for Jobs & Freedom, where she heard Martin Luther King, Jr. deliver his "I have a Dream" speech. It was a profound experience for her, and upon her return she joined the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Starting in 1965 she opened her home as a center for activities against the Vietnam War, where the demonstrations at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago and two Marches on Washington against the war were organized. In 1970, Mickey befriended Jane Fonda after Al bailed her out of jail. Fonda regularly stayed at Mickey's home whenever her anti-war and feminist activities brought her to Cleveland. In 1967, Mickey and Al and four other families started the Cleveland Jewish Secular Sunday School, which has blossomed over the next 50 years into the Jewish Secular Community. Her feminism started in the early 1960s, when she joined a women's consciousness raising group. Following the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion, Mickey cofounded Preterm, a non-profit feminist abortion clinic, which is Mickey's proudest legacy. Her feminism and love for the arts drew her to "The Dinner Party," a monumental feminist art piece created by Judy Chicago and 400 volunteers. In 1981, Mickey organized a project to bring the work to Cleveland, which was attended by more than 30,000 people. In 1983 she received an award from Womenspace for her outstanding contribution to social change for the betterment of women, and in

1994, she received the Creative Philanthropy award from the Women's Community Foundation. She is included in the 2006 publication *Feminists Who Changed America, 1963-1975*. Mickey lived her life with joy, excitement, outrage, and wonder. She had an amazing ability to create communities, and when she became involved with a person or project, she was all in. She practiced loving-kindness, and in doing so inspired people to follow their dreams. Mickey is survived by her children Laura (m. David Broudy), Brian (m. Marcie Levine), and Gary (m. Nancy Segal), and grandchildren Juanita, Matthew, Alexandra (m. Jorge), and Benjamin, her brother Sidney (m. Liela) and sister Doris (m. Herman), and her extended family and friends. A memorial service will be held 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 28 at Landerhaven, 6111 Landerhaven Drive, Mayfield Heights, OH 44124. Shiva will take place from 2:00-8:00 on Friday and Saturday at Mickey's home: 13900 Shaker Blvd, #916, Cleveland, OH 44120. Donations in lieu of flowers are welcome at Preterm ([www.preterm.org](http://www.preterm.org)) and the ACLU of Ohio ([www.acluohio.org](http://www.acluohio.org)).