

MERNA POPPER

Passed May 24, 2019

by John H. Vargo, Publisher



There have been two woman in my life. My wife of 54 years that passed in 2013 and Merna Popper who I met only two short years ago and passed quite suddenly on May 24 2019.

Merna Popper was a character! Raised by a father and mother that loved her dearly and brought her into the business world of her fathers in New York City. When only in her teens Merna would play secretary in her fathers office. One day her father yelled through the door, Toot's, (her father always called Merna Toots). "get Jack Kennedy on the phone,, here is the telephone number for the presidents office in Washington!"

Toots dialed the number and sure enough the presidents secretary answered the telephone call. Toot's father and Jack Kennedy spoke for 45 minutes according to Merna's recollection.

After Sara Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY she had a series of jobs, and traveled the world. In 1983, Merna with a partner created a monthly newspaper in Westchester County, New York that opened up an entirely new world to Merna. Sixty thousand copies a month, Women's News focused on the ability of woman to have equal rights with men. It devoted itself to individuals and events that

were giving woman equal rights with men. The most influential individuals in Westchester County were Merna's friends and she used the friendships and acquaintances wisely.

In 1999 Merna sold Womans News to a group of Wall Streeters. On February 6, 2000, Elsa Brenner of the New York Times interviewed Merna as to why she sold the newspaper when other newspapers were thriving.

Typically Merna answered, "They lie!" Further she said, you have to be a Rupert Murdoch to own a newspaper, I could not afford it!"

Merna's love of art led her to opening an antique and art business in Andes, NY under the name of Andes Art and Antiques. This was about as far away as you can get from the roaring New York City crowd and Merna Love of country life. Over the past 12 years Merna had serious bouts with lung cancer. She would beat it, then, after a period of time it would come back. Stubborn and a decision maker to the end she decided that she would put a hospital bed in her house and try to recover there.

Merna always believed in first person journalism. She was an inspiration to me. I thoroughly enjoyed her company!