

# Judith Langer Merlin



Light a Candle



Post Event on Timeline



Born in Pittsburgh, PA on April 11, 1945

Departed on February 27, 2018 and resided in Decatur, GA

Judith Langer Merlin, was equal parts Matriarch, with a capital M, and trailblazing entrepreneur. Born in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1945, the middle of three children, she was raised in Memphis, TN, and spent most of her adult life in Atlanta. She was most recently a resident of Decatur, GA. Growing up as a girl in the 50's and 60's, the expectation was for her to be a mother and housewife. There was no expectation for her to know herself as strong, capable, deserving woman. But her life is a story of stepping into just that, and learning how to take care of herself and others in a way that grew clearer and deeper over the decades. All the while, through all of life's ups and downs, she preserved the tenderness of her loving heart and acted accordingly.

After having four children with the confidence, joy and a superhuman embracing of all that that entailed, she realized she had a calling for something more to give to the world. She had a vision to create a business that would both ensure the wellbeing of children and elevate the status of caregiving. Her relentless work ethic made this possible. She, along with Cary Merlin, started and ran her own childcare agency for more than 30 years and supported a family of six on this income.

She was a pioneer in an industry that brought new found dignity and professional wages to those who provide care for others. Her industry was one that brought more job security and pride to a sea of skilled women, many of

whom were women of color and from widely varied backgrounds with limited access and options. She employed dozens of people in her office throughout the years and prided herself on the sense of community she created and the opportunities to educate her caregivers. There were countless picnics, games and award ceremonies.. She was one of the founding members of the national organization APNA (Association of Premier Nanny Agencies) and received many awards and accolades over the years including a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2015.

Her greatest joy in life was always children, so being a grandmother ("Bubbie") was a passion to which she devoted almost all of her time and energy. She spent most of the year travelling all over the country constantly to be with them. She could not bear the thought of missing a birthday, performance, soccer game, or spending a holiday without them. For all of her children, she has been like a third parent to our kids. She does it all: from changing diapers and bathtime (her sincere favorites!) to cooking and cleaning, taking them on trips and experiences, to talking to them about difficult but necessary subjects. Above all she treasured each one and saw each of them for their own brilliance.

She was known for taking in and adoring her in-laws, her children's friends, her extended family and anyone in her circle, as one of her own. In her desire to love, she always cared and was always tuned in to those around her with great empathy. She helped us all see the best qualities in each other, find the fun and beauty in every event and celebration, and helped us value the part that we all play in each others' lives.

She grew into a fuller wisdom with age and created a life for herself rich in culture and friendship. She moved to Decatur on her own and made a fresh start for herself. She quickly took up with book clubs, writing groups,

dance and improv classes, and continuing education. She started volunteering for local political campaigns. She developed a new network of dear friends and started to look inward and began constructing a memoir. This was an opportunity to understand her life's story in a new way, with greater presence. The result was a soulfulness that made all of her relationships and interactions more intentional and endearingly heartfelt. She never missed an opportunity to tell us, how much she valued and loved us and our children in all of our uniqueness.

The news of her passing is shocking and devastating to everyone who loved her. She was walking with a friend and was hit by a car while crossing the street near her home, and died from sustained injuries on February 27, 2018. She leaves a hole in the world and in our hearts that cannot be filled. And yet we know that every second of grief we feel is a result of the immeasurable gift we all have received from her life.

She is survived by Cary Merlin; children: Mia Merlin (Alan Rieger), Louis Merlin (Ki-Wing Merlin), Hilary Merlin (Javier Fernandez) and Shana Merlin; and grandchildren: Lily Merlin, Isaac and Sam Merlin, Luna and Felix Fernandez, Sebastian and Maxwell Bownds. She lost her dear sister Carol Katz in 2016 and is survived by her brother Larry and stepmother Joan Langer. In lieu of flowers we kindly request donations in her name be made to Georgia's Win List, helping prepare women who are running for office for the first time: <http://gawinlist.com/> or UNICEF, an advocate for children's rights globally: <https://www.crowdrise.com/o/en/campaign/in-honor-of-judi-merlin>

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## Guestbook Entries

**Debra Draluck** March 2, 2018 at 2:13 pm - [Reply](#)

Beautifully written. A tragic loss.

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**Toby Merlin** March 2, 2018 at 3:12 pm - [Reply](#)



Your obituary captures the essence of Judi. She truly loved children, her widely extended family, her colleagues, and her friends. She did make the world a better place, and she is one of my heroes.

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**Matilda Young** March 2, 2018 at 3:22 pm - [Reply](#)

You have captured the many facets of Judi; her spirit will continue to shine through her family and friends who loved her. We were lucky to have her with us, and vow to honor her memory.

With love, Tillie

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**Heather Clark-Frazer** March 3, 2018 at 2:43 am - [Reply](#)



This is such a thoughtfully written and heartfelt obituary. Good job Mia. It has been a long while since I have seen Judi, but I am so thankful for some of my childhood/teen years being in the Merlins' lives. Judi was definitely a big part of the visits there. Clearly I can remember her love for chewing gum (LOL) and she was always "on the go" with Friend of The Family! I really remember she seemed to care deeply about her family which I sensed in her gentle demeanor that she displayed while she seemed to hold it all together and multi-task tool! What a blessing to she was in this world! Hilary, Shana, Cary, Mia, and Loius- I feel for you all so deeply and cried some tears over here across the country when I heard the news. May she rest in peace 🙏 and forever inspire all she has touched.

Love you all ((( ♥ ))) Hang in there and take comfort in all the many memories.

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**Shana** March 3, 2018 at 7:58 am - [Reply](#)

Thank you heather. I love these memories. You are the first to mention her chewing gum! That made me lol! Thank you for sharing.

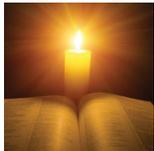
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**Angelika Pohl** March 2, 2018 at 3:38 pm - [Reply](#)

I was privileged to have had beautiful, memorable moments with her, as she revealed so much inner beauty in our memoir writing group.

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**Fran Gersten** March 2, 2018 at 3:47 pm - [Reply](#)



Judi – What a special lady!! Always organizing & planning for everything & everyone. She already planned for Passover. She loved her family so completely. She was always available to them. She took care of everyone. She loved being Bubbie. Glad to have spent some time.

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**Sandy Epstein** March 2, 2018 at 3:52 pm - [Reply](#)

Very sorry to hear of Judi's death. She was always very kind and considerate.

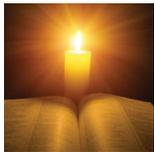
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**Marcia Soldat** March 2, 2018 at 4:30 pm - [Reply](#)

Each day, every day we will miss Judi. She was a light in our lives, a truly welcoming, loving, and caring friend. All that others have said rings true.

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**Karina D Smith** March 2, 2018 at 4:51 pm - [Reply](#)



My deepest condolences for your loss. An, obviously, lovely and beautiful soul. What a loss.

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**Cliff Lutton** March 2, 2018 at 5:52 pm - [Reply](#)

I feel a profound loss.

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**Denise Collins** March 2, 2018 at 6:17 pm - [Reply](#)



Words can't express the deep loss I feel for my dearest friend passing. She was my parent mentor when I faced challenges I did not know how to handle, she was my business mentor and partner in creating ethical standards for an industry association that we founded. We were like minds wanting to make sure that nannies were paid legally and children received the best of care and we found the best people and agencies in the country to partner with. We loved our board meetings because we found ourselves together with like visionaries and creative minds. We also got to share our hopes and dreams with each other. We cried and laughed so hard some nights when we would split off from the group and talk about our loved ones and our challenges or success.

Judi received the highest honor from the association she had founded in 2015. She received the APNA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD. Her agency A Friend of the Family was also the award winner of AGENCY OF THE YEAR twice in a span of 20 years. The business she built was focused on providing the BEST CAREGIVERS for the children. She was passionate about education and that passion set high ethical standards for others to follow. She was a trail blazer providing Corporate Back Up Care before corporations knew they needed the benefit.

She never had a bad word to say about anyone and was always encouraging others to do their best. She shared her knowledge with new agency owners and mentored many agency owners the past 30 years. She never judged a person. She offered suggestions when asked and offered a kind word when someone was struggling.

Judi was passionate about her children and grandchildren. Her love for her children and grandchildren was immense. She put them first. She celebrated every achievement no matter how small or how big with me about her children. I learned that Mia was going to have her first grandchild when I found Judi crying with joy at a conference in Washington DC. She loved being Bubbie and I loved hearing about each and every grandchild each time I spoke with her on the phone.

Judi made me feel very special that she let me meet her children and grandchildren. We shared my love of Disney... ( I should say she tolerated my love of Disney) and became my yearly Disneyworld travel partner where I had the honor to meet her children and grandchildren. She also was a great friend to my oldest son who she accepted without judgement and encouraged his growth who joined us on a couple of our trips.

Judi made me a better person. I loved every minute I spent with her no matter what we were doing. She has four amazing children: Louis, Mia, Hillary and Shana. She loved her children more than life herself. I feel blessed that Judi shared her life with me. No woman has had such an impact on me as Judi. I trusted her where I trust few in life.

My heart is heavy with her loss but grateful for the time she gifted me. I love you Judi Langer Merlin. My deepest condolences go out to her family.

Denise thank you so much for this piece of writing. My heart aches with you and I wish you were here with us. You were an extremely special friend to my mom. She thought the world of you and your heart. So grateful for your presence in her life.

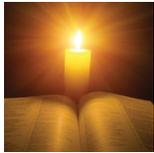
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**Mia** March 3, 2018 at 8:21 am - [Reply](#)

Denise thank you so much for this piece of writing. My heart aches with you and I wish you were here with us. You were an extremely special friend to my mom. She thought the world of you and your heart. So grateful for your presence in her life.

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**Annie Davis** March 2, 2018 at 6:19 pm - [Reply](#)



Judi was a wonderful woman and a friend to many. She will be sorely missed.

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**Emily Gist** March 2, 2018 at 8:08 pm - [Reply](#)



I'm so thankful I had the chance to meet your beautiful mother. She was a shining gift to the world and was so kind to me when she really had no reason at all to support a practical stranger. This was such a lovely tribute to a well lived life. When I look at her children and grandchildren I see all the beauty and light she continues to give the world in her legacy and I'm so thankful for her. She will be so dearly missed. If I can do anything for any of you please let me.

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**Shana** March 3, 2018 at 8:03 am - [Reply](#)

Thank you Emily. She loved to take in Orphans. ❤️

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**Carla Craft** March 2, 2018 at 9:16 pm - [Reply](#)

What a lovely, moving, and thoughtful appreciation of you mom and her very full and meaningful life. We are so heartbroken by your great loss. You are all very much in our hearts and on our minds.

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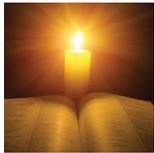
**Rick Merlin** March 2, 2018 at 9:30 pm - [Reply](#)



Judi was a loving mother and grandmother. She has been part of the Merlin family since 1969. I could see from her Facebook posts that her happiest moments were when she was with her children and grandchildren. I am still in disbelief that this has occurred.

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**Marilyn Vanderhoof** March 2, 2018 at 10:06 pm - [Reply](#)



Judi was a gifted, amazing compassionate parent and grandparent. Tragically she was taken from the world and her family so abruptly. We all feel the loss deeply and are privileged to have spent time with her. My heart aches for the grandchildren who will miss her all encompassing love, warmth and wisdom.

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**Kathy Webb** March 2, 2018 at 10:51 pm - [Reply](#)

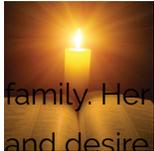


Judi made her life count where it was important- foremost with her family, then her community and not least the scores of colleagues she mentored, counseled and encouraged.

Judi will be missed. Blessings to her family in this difficult time.

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**Stacey R Merlin** March 3, 2018 at 12:45 am - [Reply](#)



My heart goes out to my nieces and nephews. Judi was a committed mother and grandmother and lived her priorities to family. Her children are a testament to her wisdom, love, and desire to raise them to be thoughtful, compassionate human beings. Each of you, my nieces and nephews are good stewards of human compassion and care of others. All of you have grown up to be wonderful people and Judi's influence and love can be seen through all of you. May you find comfort in knowing you made her and the rest of the Merlin family proud.

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**Shana** March 3, 2018 at 8:04 am - [Reply](#)

Thank you aunt Stacey. That is beautiful

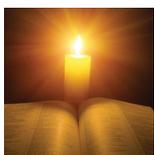
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**Aunt Barbara and uncle Marvin Drraluck** March 3, 2018 at 9:46 am - [Reply](#)

It was with a heavy heart when we heard of the tragic event that took the life of your dear Mother. It was a terrible shock to all of us and we extend our heartfelt sympathy to all the children. She was a loving Mother and Grandmother and all of you brought so much joy to her life. The wonderful and outstanding quality and character of all her children certainly attest to the influence she had in your lives. May her memory always be a. Blessing to all of you.

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**Jill Lepo-Wieniewitz** March 3, 2018 at 11:06 am - [Reply](#)



Mia, Lily, and family,  
Please accept my deepest and sincerest condolences at the loss of your beloved mother and grandmother. Mia you did an eloquent job surmising her life and contributions to making the world a better place. Please let me know if I can help in any way. May god wrap his loving arms around you and comfort each of you as you learn to live with your loss.

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**Michael Gerard** March 3, 2018 at 12:19 pm - [Reply](#)



Inspiring, kind and so accomplished – Judi touched so many lives, including mine.  
זיכרונה לברכה – Z"l – may your memory be a blessing, always. Cary and family, my heartfelt condolences.

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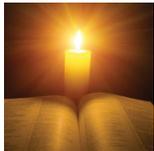
**Susan Crowder** March 3, 2018 at 1:41 pm - [Reply](#)



Hilary and family, so sad to hear of your loss. It helps to know how fully she lived and how deeply she impacted the lives around her.

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**Erin Lynn** March 3, 2018 at 11:49 pm - [Reply](#)



Judy was and is an inspiration to me always. Every moment I encountered with her was filled with awe. I will always treasure the wisdom and kindness I received from Judy. My thoughts of comfort go out to the entire family

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**Michael Black** March 4, 2018 at 1:25 pm - [Reply](#)



Thank you for this wonderful tribute. We only knew Judi through times when her grandkids played with ours because she was at so many of the major events of Luna and Felix's lives. Even in those moments, her loving spirit shone through. Her powerful and loving presence clearly lives on in her children and grandchildren. Our hearts and prayers go out to you.

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**Elizabeth Walsh** March 4, 2018 at 7:43 pm - [Reply](#)

I lived on the "outskirts" of Judi's life and knew her enough to say hi at nanny agency conferences. Since she

was the role model for all of us who started our own agencies, it was hard not to feel flustered when actually having a conversation with the "grand lady" of nanny agencies, but she gracefully put us all at ease. My heart goes out to all who loved and admired her, and I wish peace to all of you.

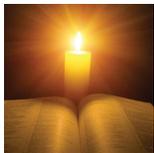
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**Sherrye Beckett** March 5, 2018 at 8:34 am - [Reply](#)

What a beautiful tribute to a very special woman. My heart breaks for your loss.  
I pray for you and your family during this very difficult time.

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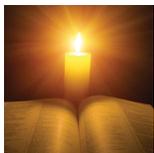
**Linda and John Jensen** March 5, 2018 at 9:04 am - [Reply](#)



Mia, I wish I could say something that could ease the pain but I can't. I only wish I could have known this amazing woman!! You were so lucky to have her as a Mother and she was so lucky to have you as a daughter. Your tribute was absolutely beautiful. Writing is one more "Art," to add to your long list! Our love goes out to you and your family.

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**Cindy Dillard** March 5, 2018 at 9:35 am - [Reply](#)



Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family...

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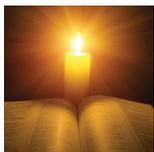
**Christina Colon** March 5, 2018 at 12:04 pm - [Reply](#)



Beautiful tribute, our deepest condolences go out to you and your family.

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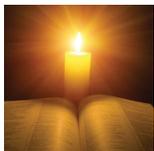
**Jaya Lawrence** March 5, 2018 at 12:27 pm - [Reply](#)



I am so sorry for your loss, my heart goes out to you and your family.

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**thelma theresa martin** March 5, 2018 at 3:06 pm - [Reply](#)



Praying for you and your family.

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**Mark Johnson** March 6, 2018 at 9:11 am - [Reply](#)

Mia, What a beautiful tribute to your mother whom you have lost so suddenly. I can only wish you and your family my heartfelt condolences during this most challenging time. Having lost both my parents, I understand the void left that will never be again. You will find comfort in those around you and your reflection on a life well lived. Mark Johnson

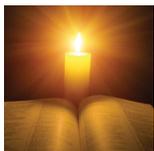
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**Theresa Martin** March 7, 2018 at 12:17 am - [Reply](#)

Deeply feel your sorrow and pray for you and your family's comfort in the midst of such grief. You are dearly missed and loved by Kenneth and I.

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**David Hsu** March 7, 2018 at 5:25 am - [Reply](#)



I was so very sorry to hear this news: I have terrific memories of your mother, as a warm, sharp, and funny personality, from meeting her with Louis and all of you over the years. Best wishes and memories in your time of sorrow.

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**Sara Davis Buss** March 7, 2018 at 4:53 pm - [Reply](#)

Mia, Louis, Shana and Hilary:

I'm so sorry that I could not be with you last weekend. I

think that my reason for not being able to come to Georgia – the birth of our first grandchild – would have made your Mom very happy and I'm struck by the profound irony of a life's end and a life's beginning happening so close together. Judy was my glamorous southern cousin, the calmest of the Langers (believe it or not) and I was always so happy to be around her. She was the one who made me think that having four children wasn't an insane idea – in fact, it was a great idea and one that would be the source of so much fun and love. As you know, she adored all of you and was always so proud to be your Mom.

Judy obviously made a terrific impact on all of the people she touched. I'm sure you are still reeling from this sudden and horrible crack in the universe. Please know that her gentle, warm and loving spirit will always be with us. Wishing you comfort, healing and love. Your cousin,  
Sara

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**Mia Merlin** March 9, 2018 at 12:03 pm - [Reply](#)

Sara it is so lovely to hear from you. Thank you for all that you have written here and for your understanding. Every piece of writing about our mom is so dear to us. Hope we will get to visit with you sometime in the not so distant future. Lots of love, Mia

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**Chiquita Jones** March 7, 2018 at 5:40 pm - [Reply](#)

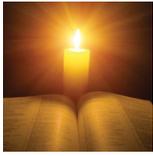


Thank you for everything. You will truly be missed! A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY HAS BEEN A LIFESAVER FOR SO MANY CAREGIVERS AND CLIENTS.

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**Neshanta Jones** March 7, 2018 at 6:13 pm - [Reply](#)

THANKS For being You.



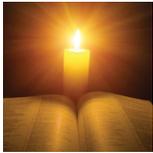
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**Ina moore** March 12, 2018 at 7:40 pm - [Reply](#)

To every one in judys family we look back on the mamy happy times we spent together with our children and the merlin kids. I was so sadden the hear of judy passing.our thoughts are with one and all.

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**Ina moore** March 12, 2018 at 7:44 pm - [Reply](#)



So sadden to hear of judy passing.i think back on all the happy times we shared together.

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**Ina moore** March 12, 2018 at 7:46 pm - [Reply](#)

I think back in time what woderful times we shared.

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## Sign the Guestbook, Light a Candle

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No candle at this time