



## Barbara Ann Gordon

April 10, 1946 - May 6, 2020

Barbara Ann Gordon was born in St. Louis, MO, in 1946 to Sylvia and Irvin Birenboim and grew up in Kansas City. After spending summers at camp in Wisconsin, she studied English at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she met her future husband, artist Harvey Gordon. Barbara and Harvey married after her graduation in 1968. They lived together in New York, Maryland, and Kansas before settling down in Kalamazoo, MI. There, they brought up three children, David, Sarah, and Rachel. While doing so, Barbara attended graduate school at Western Michigan University, obtaining an MA in Public Administration in the early 1980s. She worked as Director of the YWCA Sexual Assault Program before beginning her 16-year career with the City of Kalamazoo, where she eventually served as Assistant City Manager for Economic Development. In this position, her dedication to and personal investment in her community helped to build the foundations for today's thriving Kalamazoo.

Barbara was dedicated to improving the lives of women and families in Kalamazoo. She was active in women's organizations and behind the scenes in local politics, volunteering her time to make a difference in the region. Barbara and Harvey moved to Glen Arbor in 2004, where Barbara continued her commitment to public service by sitting on several local and county committees.

Barbara was a loving and supportive mother and wife, an empathetic friend, a perceptive listener, and had a wonderful sense of humor. She loved to share meals with family and friends, and she always cheered for the Michigan Wolverines.

Barbara is survived by her devoted husband, her children David Gordon (Nichole Argyres), Sarah Gordon (Martin Saad) and Rachel Gordon, and her grandchildren Griffen Argyres-Gordon, Gabriel Saad and Aaron Saad.

Donations in her memory would be welcome at the following organizations:

University of Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Center (online at

<https://leadersandbest.umich.edu/find/#!/mimed/mimed/madc>) or The Leelanau

Conservancy (online at [www.leelanauconservancy.org](http://www.leelanauconservancy.org))

# Comments

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“ Barbara was one of the first “other Mom’s “ I’ve known. As a child and childhood friend of David’s, I spent lots of time at the Gordon residence. Barbara treated me like family: Warmly, securely and if needed, you’d get it too. The strength and stability of her character solidly grounded the family and was enlarged to include some rowdy extras like me. I have the fondest memories of those times and feel she was also an anchor forming up the people we are today. My sincerest condolences to the family. Know that you all were and are loved.

**Jourdan Schermerhorn** - May 14, 2020 at 04:02 PM

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“ Barbara was an amazing women. She was my mentor and saw something in me which provided me opportunities to advance during my career. I admired her deeply and am grateful our paths crossed...My heart goes out to the family. RIP Barbara

**frances jewell** - May 14, 2020 at 09:29 AM

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“ A wonderful public servant who make Kalamazoo a better place to live.

**zadie jackson** - May 14, 2020 at 07:52 AM

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“ Barbara was an an amazing woman with such futuristic ideas. Her devotion to her family was always on the forefront when she worked at the City of Kalamazoo. I was fortunate to witness her passion at work for her community. Prayers of peace and comfort to her family and colleagues. Her presence will remain a strong force in Kalamazoo.

**Heather Stiver** - May 13, 2020 at 05:19 PM

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“ I remember Barbara with nothing but fondness and respect. I worked with her for nearly four years at The City of Kalamazoo. As I look at all that has taken root in downtown Kalamazoo in the last decade and the things that are continuing to move forward it is easy for those of us who sat in endless comprehensive plan meetings to see her thumbprint all over this city. My condolences to Harvey and her family.

**Eric Marvin** - May 13, 2020 at 04:37 PM

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“ I had the privilege of working with this fine lady for many years at the city. She was a compassionate and caring public servant and role model for us all in the public domain. She was tireless, innovative and a leader. May God bless her and her family.

**Bob Cinabro** - May 13, 2020 at 04:07 PM

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“ I have such fond memories of working with Barbara on social justice initiatives put forth by Leelanau Women for democratic Action . So smart, soft spoken and strong. Have missed seeing her around Glen Arbor since she moved to the Highlands many years ago. Harvey, please know how much you are admired for your constant caring love given to Barbara. With great sincerity accept my sympathy and that of my husband, John. And, please extend our condolences to the rest of your family.

**Peachy Rentenbach** - May 11, 2020 at 03:54 PM



“ We invite you to attend a virtual shiva to honor the life of our mother, Barbara Gordon. It will take place this Thursday, May 14, at 7:00 pm EST, via Zoom. There will be prayers, memories, photographs, and an opportunity for everyone to speak about Barbara, if they wish.

Please RSVP to one of us if you would like to attend, and we will send a Zoom invitation later in the week. You are welcome to share this invitation with others who may also like to attend, and they can also RSVP to one of us.

David (david.gad@gmail.com)

Sarah (sarahagordon@gmail.com)

Rachel (rachelemilygordon@gmail.com)

**David Gordon** - May 12, 2020 at 10:52 AM

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“ Barbara and my mother were at Highlands, so I was privileged to see the loving care her husband Harvey gave her. Faithfully, so faithfully, he visited and kissed her and spoke quietly with her. He brought fresh raspberries, a favorite of hers. Their bond was clear and strong. My heart goes out to Harvey and the children.

**trudy carpenter** - May 10, 2020 at 08:44 AM



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Sarah (sarahagordon@gmail.com)

Rachel (rachelemilygordon@gmail.com)

**David Gordon** - May 12, 2020 at 10:52 AM

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“ I had the pleasure of working with Barbara when I was a member of the City of Kalamazoo Economic Development Corporation. As the Assistant City Manager, Barbara was liaison to our board and provided consistently thoughtful insights and suggestions. I appreciated her creative approach to problem-solving, and her ability to see the big picture even when focused on a small project. Kalamazoo is all the better for Barbara's contributions, and her wisdom is missed.

James Marquardt  
Kalamazoo

**James Marquardt** - May 09, 2020 at 01:17 PM



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Sarah (sarahagordon@gmail.com)  
Rachel (rachelemilygordon@gmail.com)

**David Gordon** - May 12, 2020 at 10:53 AM



“ So sorry to hear this. I was hired by Barbara and the city manager in 1995. She was my boss for most of the nine years I worked for the city. She was extremely bright, articulate, and meticulous. She made me and those around us better at our jobs. On a personal level she was wise, worldly, supportive and had a sly sense of humor. I'll miss her greatly. My sincere condolences to Harvey and the Gordon family.

Rick Goff

**Rick Goff** - May 13, 2020 at 07:05 PM

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“ I worked closely with Barbara throughout the 1990's as we planned the redevelopment of downtown Kalamazoo's Arcadia Creek. Barbara's contributions to Kalamazoo's success are seen in Downtown's dynamic turnaround. She was a go to person at City Hall. Now retired, I think of her on occasions when I drive through Kalamazoo and reflect on the work we accomplished together. My thoughts and prayers are with Barbara and her family.

Ken Nacci, Kalamazoo

Ken Nacci - May 09, 2020 at 10:18 AM



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Sarah (sarahagordon@gmail.com)  
Rachel (rachelemilygordon@gmail.com)

David Gordon - May 12, 2020 at 10:53 AM



“ I appreciated Barbara's dedication to the citizens of Kalamazoo and her leadership in helping us improve our city. I also appreciated her support of my efforts to do the same when I was a young professional working in the nonprofit sector. A couple times she took time to reach out to me personally and explained how I could contribute as a volunteer. She didn't need to do that. I thought it showed how much she cared about our city.

Brent Hepp - May 13, 2020 at 03:16 PM



“ What a wonderful tribute the shiva was for your wife and mother. I am forever grateful to her for the 16 years i was an assistant city attorney for the City of Kalamazoo. Needing a career change in 2001, Barbara told me of a newly created position in the City Attorney's office that focused on economic development. Her vision and determination for the revival of the downtown were an inspiration and the extensive downtown development that occurred is a testament to that vision.

John Kneas

John Kneas - May 18, 2020 at 09:00 AM



“ Barbara was a great contributor to the City of Kalamazoo and an early worker for women's health and well-being, all in ways that that still matter to this community. We are grateful for her gifts and her remarkable kindness.

Barry Ross and Jane Rooks Ross

Barry - May 20, 2020 at 10:41 AM