

Joyce Warshow
1937–2007
GLBT Activist Filmmaker



Joyce Warshow
Photo courtesy of Dorothy Sander.

Remembering Joyce Warshow
by Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum

We were honored to have Joyce Warshow as a long time member of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah in New York City. She will be deeply missed by the many friends she left behind here. But it's not only the people who knew her who will miss her. Joyce Warshow had an enormous impact on the world; many people have benefited from her vision, her activism, her commitment to social justice.

Joyce died at home on October 2, 2007 at the age of 70. She died with her beloved partner of 25 years, Dorothy Sander, at her side. She created a deep family with many close friends as well as her family of origin: two brothers and a sister-in-law, nieces and nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews and an extended family of choice.

Joyce came from an activist Jewish background. While not religious, she came from a strong cultural Jewish world. As a child she attended the famous Yiddish summer camp, Camp Boiberik. She lived a rich and full life on her own terms, remaining true to herself and her values. She chose action over passivity. She chose to reform rather than to conform. Her diverse background and interests led her down many paths. As a renowned feminist, filmmaker, psychologist, educator, author, and activist who fully invested herself in every fiber of her work — literally, physically, metaphorically — Joyce touched the lives of many.

She was a formidable champion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights. She conducted sensitivity trainings with the New York City Police Department to explore the roots of hate crimes against gays. She was a leading spokesperson against ageism in the LGBT community and was honored by Senior Action in A Gay Environment (SAGE) with its Lifetime Achievement Award for her work. Sadly, she died before she was able to accept the award.

As a filmmaker, Joyce was dedicated to presenting a full spectrum of pioneering lesbian activists. She sought to determine how these women's experiences influenced their lives as activists. Her films, *Some Ground to Stand On* (1998) and *The Biography of Blue Lunden and Hand on the Pulse* (1992), a documentary about [Joan Nestle](#), profiled older lesbian activists. At the time of her death, she was completing a film about Charlotte Bunch, American activist, author and organizer

in the women's and human rights movements. Who will tell Joyce Warshow's story now? Who can fill her shoes?

Neither her gender nor her age ever kept her from pursuing what she cared about. Rather, they compelled her to action. Her work and its importance will honor her memory as we all should.

May Joyce's memory be for a blessing in our lives and may our lives be a blessing to her memory.

Share your own Joyce Warshow memories or reflections for inclusion in our archive and for possible posting on JWA's website. Please email us at weremember@jwa.org.