



Toby Samet

September 1, 1936 - September 26, 2025

Toby Samet, 89, passed away Friday, September 26, 2025. She was born September 1, 1936 to the late Harold and Lillian (nee Schecter) Goldstein. Aside her parents, she is preceded in death by her devoted husband, Samuel Samet, and daughter, Michelle Samet. She is survived by her son, Michael Samet and grandson, Daniel Samet. She also leaves behind many nieces, nephews and their children.

A lifelong teacher, Toby taught pre-school, Hebrew and religious school, where she touched the lives of generations of Cincinnati's Jewish Community. She was also a fixture at the Mayerson JCC, greeting guests and sharing smiles,

Services will be held Monday, September 29 at 11 a.m. at Adath Israel Congregation (3201 E Galbraith Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45236) where guests will be received from 10 a.m. until time of service. Burial will follow immediately at Love Brother Cemetery (1619 Rosemont Ave. Cincinnati, OH. 45205). In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Adath Israel Synagogue or Chabad Jewish Center of Blue Ash.

Cemetery Details

Love Bros. Cemetery

1619 Rosemont Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45205

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 29. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Adath Israel Congregation
3201 E. Galbraith Road
Cincinnati, OH 45236

Funeral

SEP 29. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Adath Israel Congregation
3201 E. Galbraith Road
Cincinnati, OH 45236

Tribute Wall

NF

“ *The Desk is not the same, the J is not the same, the Festival of Lights won't be the same, & Graeter's won't be the same. I love you, my friend. You are missed every single day. I'll carry your humor & mischievous smile with me always. BDE.* ☐ 🕯️



Nicole Rose Forbus - December 05, 2025 at 07:53 PM

SH

“ *A diamond has been taken from the "Queen Cities Crown". All will miss her smiling face and gentle voice. My life was made better because Toby was my friend. Rest in peace beautiful lady.*

Stuart Hodesh

Stuart Hodesh - September 29, 2025 at 12:36 PM

DM

“ *I will miss Toby's smiling face at the J. She was a hoot. I will miss her.*

Debra Miller - September 29, 2025 at 08:48 AM

PK

“ I entrusted my precious two year olds with Toby and never doubted that she treated them with the affection and respect the best teachers offer those in their care. Toby continued to follow their progress over the years, never failing to ask about them and their lives. Toby was a special individual who, with her calming presence, gave children a gentle introduction to life away from home. Thank you, Toby.
Pam Kuby

Pamela Kuby - September 28, 2025 at 02:02 PM

EP

“ Toby was two of my son’s preschool teacher at Adath Israel. Her love, warmth, and caring gave them such a strong early foundation of the love of learning and humanity. Toby later was someone my grandchildren looked forward to seeing with her “raccoon” at the JCC. She embodied and exuded such an aura of love in every gesture and word. Always teaching along the way. Her friendship was a precious gift and she made the world a better place. We will all miss her deeply. May her memory be for a blessing.

Elisabeth Pridonoff - September 28, 2025 at 12:38 PM

KL

“ Toby was the consummate teacher. She excelled with preschoolers-never talking down to their level but actually raising up their level. She opened their minds with all sorts of activities (raccoons in cages)and stories. We especially shared a bond because Toby had been friends with my mom(Regina Cohen Eisenberg) and they often asked about each other. When Toby retired from teaching we were pleasantly surprised to see her “working” at the JCC. Smiling and greeting everyone. She will be sorely missed! So sorry for your loss. Karen Eisenberg Lavenda

Karen Lavenda - September 28, 2025 at 11:26 AM

LA

“ *LOIS ASKIN lit a candle in memory of Toby Samet*



LOIS ASKIN - September 27, 2025 at 10:02 PM

SL

“ *Dear Toby, how much we will miss your presence, you were such a wonderful, dedicated teacher with such enthusiasm for Judaic teaching's, so many children are surely so grateful for your help and guidance; you made learning fun! Thank you, Toby for all you did. May your memory be a blessing!*

Susan Lawson

Susan Lawdon - September 27, 2025 at 04:01 PM

SG

“ *One of the most treasures times of my life was going to the J and meeting the dearest of friends. Love you and miss you.*

Sherry Goldfon - September 27, 2025 at 01:25 PM

SG

“ *Sherry Goldfon lit a candle in memory of Toby Samet*



Sherry Goldfon - September 27, 2025 at 01:17 PM

“*The world is not as good a place today as it was when Toby Samet was in it. That is the truth, and it rips me apart to my core. To know that she is gone is to know that something irreplaceable has been taken from us. The pain I feel cannot be measured, because Toby was more than my teacher, more than a mentor, more than a friend. She was living proof that one person’s devotion, love, and faith can shape hundreds—if not thousands—of lives.*

*My first memory of her goes back to preschool at Adath Israel Synagogue, when I was just four years old. From that moment, she was the most consistent force in my Jewish education. The classroom was alive with her presence and with the warmth of her partnership with her inseparable friend and colleague, Marlene Braha. It is impossible to speak of Toby without speaking of Marlene. Together they read us *Moses and the Bulrush*, my favorite book as a child. But what made the story sacred was not the book itself—it was the way Toby and Marlene told it, how they made the words of Torah come alive, how they gave children in Cincinnati the gift of Sinai itself.*

Toby believed in every single child she encountered. She saw our uniqueness, our intelligence, our worth. Even when we tested her patience—and I tested it plenty—her love never faltered. She disciplined with care, and she built self-confidence like few others could. Every interaction mattered, because with Toby, every interaction conveyed love.

Her role in my life was always full circle. The same Bima where she stood with me at my consecration, she stood again at my bar mitzvah, and again at my confirmation. I insisted that she be on the Bima with me for my bar mitzvah. It would not have been right without her. She had molded me from the very beginning, and her presence beside me on that day was not just important—it was necessary. For me, she was continuity itself, a steady current in the turbulent river of life.

Toby's bond with me stretched far beyond childhood. Whenever I returned from Israel, I would go to her. She believed in my Zionism. She encouraged me when others doubted. She never wavered in her faith that I would one day reach the place I was striving to get to. I remember lunch with her in Tel Aviv, at the Sheraton Hotel, with a visiting delegation. I was not in a good mood. She knew exactly how to fix it—with a perfectly timed quip, a sharp, funny observation. That was her gift: to see not only what we were, but what we needed.

When her beloved husband Sam passed, I often sat beside her during the High Holidays. His seat next to hers remained open, but some years I filled it—not to replace him, but to keep her from sitting alone. She had given me love all my life; it was natural to return it in her time of loss.

In her later years, everyone saw her at the JCC front desk. She was the first face of the building, but more than that, she remained a teacher to her very last days. The last time I saw her, just months ago, she was in the children's playroom. I sat in a tiny four-year-old's chair, and it felt like a time warp—back to the very beginning. I hugged her so tight that day. Something inside me told me to hold her longer, tighter, as if I knew it might be the last time. For the first time, she seemed frail. And though I didn't believe she was leaving me yet, I felt something in my bones. I'll never forget that hug. I loved her so much. I still do. Words will never capture how much she meant to me, how much she gave me, how much I wish my own children could have had her as their teacher. That is a sorrow I will carry all my life.

Toby had an unmatched gift for knowing people. My mother once told me about a car ride with Toby and other Jewish leaders. They were criticizing me, misunderstanding my choices. Toby stopped them and said: "You don't know Adam very well. He's had a plan since he was four years old." That was Toby. She didn't just see students. She saw souls.

Jewish tradition reveres teachers above almost all else. The Shema commands: "You shall teach them diligently to your children." The Talmud teaches: "Whoever teaches a child Torah, it is as though they themselves stood at Sinai." Rambam wrote that the highest act of kindness is to educate a child, for it sustains generations. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks said teachers are the builders of the Jewish future—that Jewish survival has never depended on power or money, but on education, on Torah, on the transmission of wisdom.

Toby lived all of this. She was Sinai for us. She transmitted Torah and love and identity to generation after generation. She was the cornerstone of Cincinnati's Jewish community. She was a foundation, a pillar, a force of nature—and above all, a force of good.

And she deserved more. She deserved to see Israel beyond this terrible war. She deserved to see what the world would be once this chapter of pain ended. She deserved that.

The next generation of children who will never know her cannot comprehend what they are missing. The loss is immeasurable. But her spirit endures in every life she touched, in the confidence she gave her students, in the love she radiated, in the Jewish future she built one classroom at a time.

Toby, I wish I could say these words to you now. I wish I could tell you again how much I loved you, how much I still do. You were my teacher, my protector, my champion. You were the one who believed in me when others didn't, who reminded me of my plan when I forgot it myself. You gave me Torah, you gave me identity, you gave me love. I am sorry that my children will never sit in your classroom. I am sorry that others will never feel your humor, your wit, your strength. But I promise you this: I will carry you with me. I will carry forward what you gave me. Your memory is not only a blessing—it is a commandment. To teach as you taught, to love as you loved, to believe as you believed. I will not forget you, ever. And though the world is darker without you, my life—and the lives of so

many—will forever shine brighter because you were in it.



adam scott bellos - September 27, 2025 at 03:10 AM

EZ

“ *I am so saddened to hear of Toby's passing. She went to school with my husband Bill and would share stories with me. She always had such a big smile and was so friendly. She will be missed by many*

Elinor Ziv - September 26, 2025 at 06:56 PM

MF

“ *Michael Feldman-Purcell lit a candle in memory of Toby Samet*



Michael Feldman-Purcell - September 26, 2025 at 05:19 PM

SW

“ *Baruch Dayan haEmet. Toby Samet was a very special lady and I was privileged to get to work with her for six years. May her memory live on for a blessing.*

Sharon Wasserberg

Sharon Wasserberg - September 26, 2025 at 03:35 PM