



## Maya Zelitsky

April 24, 1932 - January 21, 2021

Maya Zelitsky passed away on January 21, 2021 at age 88. She is survived by her daughter Marina Brunson, son Andrey Akopov, granddaughter Katia Brunson and grandson Nick Brunson.

Maya was born on April 24, 1932 in Novosibirsk, Russia, to Alexander and Vera Zilberstein. She graduated from Novosibirsk music college with a major in vocale.

People who knew Maya described her as having a spark and being full of life. Before coming to the U.S., she was the lead singer for a “big-band” orchestra, singing in the top Soviet-era clubs and restaurants of Moscow. She had a beautiful deep voice and always performed with great emotion and energy.

In the early '70's, Maya managed to arrange two trips to Los Angeles to visit her cousin Anna. She was absolutely dazzled by the abundance and beauty of southern California, and after the second visit, Maya decided to emigrate to the U.S. with her two grown children. Unable to speak the language, it was not easy to start life in a new country, but she always managed to communicate even with her limited English.

Or her even more limited Italian, when they lived in Rome awaiting clearance to travel to America. To make money, she and her children sold coral necklaces, popular among Italians at the time, at a fleemarket in Rome. Maya was a hard worker and had a lot of hutzpah. She so impressed the Italian natives with her pitch, they bought tourist trinkets from her!

She loved her new home country and often pronounced with intention: “America is the best country in the world!”

Through her friends Maya met her second husband Alex Zelitsky and they married in Las Vegas in 1979. They had a good life together, traveling around the world, hosting dinner parties for their friends. After Alex passed away Maya ran their carwash business working

long hours seven days a week. She was known in the area as a 'carwash lady'.

She loved travelling, watching old American movies, and listening to classical music. She enjoyed people and was ready to engage in conversation anywhere she went; at the beach, in her neighborhood, her synagogue, and at the Encinitas YMCA (where she used to go every morning). In her most recent years, after she stopped driving and could not go to her synagogue, she started attending her daughter's church every Sunday and felt welcomed there. Pastor Greg and his wife were even part of her last birthday party. For her, it was a relatively quiet affair on Zoom due to the pandemic.

Maya loved her children and grandchildren and is deeply missed by all her family, friends and neighbors.

# Cemetery

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# Events

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## Greenwood Memorial Park

4300 Imperial Avenue

San Diego, CA, 92113

**FEB**

**26**

## Graveside Service

10:00AM - 11:00AM

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Greenwood Memorial Park

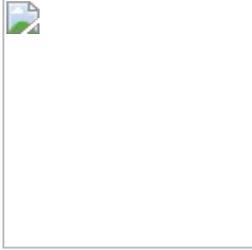
4300 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, CA, US, 92113

# Comments

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“ 1 file added to the album Life in Pictures



**Michael Brunson** - February 27 at 04:05 PM

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“ Maya.....always had the right answer. No matter what we talked about her advice fit perfectly. We spoke mostly about love and family. Maya bragged about her children, friends, things she had done and her children's father with great passion.

My name is Laura Windsor. I have had the pleasure of spending many mornings sitting with Maya on "her" bench. Our community was definitely family to Maya. I'm sure Maya had a special place in everyone's heart at Meadowridge and no doubt when we stroll through our neighborhood we will forever glance over at "Maya's Bench".....and our hearts and souls will connect with hers forever .

I loved Maya, my dogs loved Maya. In just the 4 short years Maya and I knew each other we spoke of lifetimes and unforgettable moments in our lives.

I am truly blessed having known Maya and will continue to say good morning to her because I know she's still watching over us as she sits on her bench.

RIP Beautiful.

Blessed are you and your Family.

With love, Laura Schep and Olive.

**Laura Windsor** - February 26 at 11:54 AM

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“ Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Maya Zelitsky.



February 24 at 04:11 PM

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“ Maya always made me feel special, calling me by a Russian name and asking me to sit with her in church, or afterwards, just to enjoy the fresh air and talk. I always looked forward to seeing her on Sunday and will miss her greatly.

**Kathy Bostrom** - February 23 at 02:40 PM

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“ Maya has been a friend and relative for many years as she was the mother of Marina, my daughter-in-law. She always made me feel good as she was always so complimentary. I will miss her so much when I am again in Carlsbad. We share two wonderful grandchildren, Katia and Nick, I know she will be missed so much by them. Go with God, Maya

**Mary Brunson** - February 23 at 12:07 PM

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“ As a neighbor of Maya, I, too, would like to extend my condolences to Marina and her family as they mourn their loss. Over the period of several years, I had numerous opportunities to attend classical music concerts with Maya. From her music education in St. Petersburg and later in Novosibirsk, Maya had extensive knowledge of classical music, and a deep appreciation for the works of particular composers. She always took a special interest in the performances by young Russian musicians, or by young American artists of Russian descent. Several years ago, she and I went to hear the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra perform in San Diego. She had a special place in her heart for that orchestra, and it was a joy to attend that concert with her.

In addition, Maya was a great fan of the Metropolitan Opera, and enjoyed listening to opera performances. She especially enjoyed the live broadcasts of the Saturday afternoon matinee performances from the Met. We often went to see and hear these performances together at the local movie theater. Maya's enthusiasm for every one of these performances was contagious. Her own background as a professional singer contributed to her great love of opera, and increased her respect for those who had the privilege of performing with the Metropolitan Opera.

Perhaps some of you have read the novel by Amor Towles, "A Gentleman in Moscow". If you have, you know that most of the novel takes place in the Metropol Hotel, which is located across from the Kremlin in Moscow. In her younger years, Maya performed as a singer in the restaurants of this elegant hotel, as part of the entertainment for the guests.

This remarkable woman, who is known to some in our community as the "car wash lady", had a fascinating life, full of enormous challenges, which she always met with courage and enthusiasm, and she never allowed adversity to stand in her way. As has been noted elsewhere, she was grateful for the opportunity to come to the US with her adult children as an immigrant, to become a citizen, and to prosper and thrive for nearly half of her life in southern California.

Connie Yanicka

Connie Yanicka - February 23 at 04:48 AM



“ Dear Connie, thank you for your beautiful and thoughtful remembrance of my mom. You highlighted some things that I have forgotten, like going to Live broadcasts of the Met in the movie theatre. You were a very special friend to her and you spoke Russian, that was amazing! Thank you

Marina Brunson - February 23 at 01:52 PM

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“ To Maya's family:

Our family (Mike, Danielle, and Nathan) is so sorry for your loss and you are all in our thoughts. We wish for your continued strength during this sad and challenging time, and hope that you may find some comfort in the support and love of your family and friends.

The obituary you prepared is beautiful. Thank you for sharing some history about Maya that my family didn't know before. I bet Maya would feel so proud and honored by your words.

Maya was very special to us for many years. We had the pleasure of living right next door to Maya, since the time we moved in next to Maya in 2006, sharing a wall between our homes. From the very beginning, Maya was always so friendly and kind. We didn't know Maya during her 'Car Wash Lady' years (that would have been fun!), but we were lucky to know her as our close neighbor friend.

Here are some memories we have:

Maya always said 'hello' to us...Actually, it was usually "Hello, Hello!," and chatted with us... even when our son was very young and shy, she made special efforts to engage with him and ask him about his activities. She also enjoyed telling us about her children and grandchildren.

Maya kept her front door open often when the weather was nice, such that we enjoyed many years of hearing her beautiful singing, and hearing her grandson masterfully play the piano (though he may not have known we were listening)! We also enjoyed the sounds of Maya's television billowing onto the street, and the many types of musicals, music performances, and movies she loved to watch in different languages. She was impressively worldly.

On one occasion many years ago, we were having a party at our house and were concerned that the late night noise may bother Maya, so we let her know in advance about the party. Her reaction was: "Good! I am happy to hear this! You should have parties!! I have enjoyed so many parties in my life, and it's good for you to have parties and enjoy your friends!" It was so nice of Maya to react this way, and we felt blessed to have such a cool neighbor!

On another occasion, still years ago but more recently, we had a 'street party' with many neighbors joining, and even in her later years, of course Maya came outside to hang out with us and eat, and enjoy the music and dancing on the street! She loved being with everyone and had a great time.

In the most recent years, even after Maya stopped driving and began to slow down, she still always managed to captivate others with her kindness and love for life. Maya was a fixture in our neighborhood! On any day, you could catch Maya chatting with neighbors, sweeping her front porch or landing, going for a walk, or sitting on our community bench just enjoying the outdoors and visiting with all of the passers by

and petting all of the adorable doggies in our neighborhood.

It is not the same here now without Maya, and there will never be anyone else like her.

Sending hugs and love. RIP Maya.

**Danielle Wexler** - February 22 at 09:04 PM

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“ Maya was very important to me. She was always protective of us, warm and welcoming. Maya made a difference in my family's life and will be missed very much. We shared over 25 years of glorious celebrations, concerts, food and laughter. I will always treasure our beach day in September of last year when Marina, Brad, Maya and I enjoyed each other, just being together. It was a beautiful day, a loving afternoon, and a perfect symbol of a successful, extraordinary life lived with enormous courage, and a deep appreciation of what matters.

**Sabine** - February 21 at 06:41 PM

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“ Thank you for sharing these loving memories. What a beautiful woman she was. I always looked forward to our Sunday morning " talks". She was lots of fun and I am going to miss those times if and when we ever get back to indoor worship. I also regret I never heard her sing. She was blessed to have such a caring family to show her their love.  
Bobbi Miller

**Bobbi Miller** - February 20 at 11:26 PM

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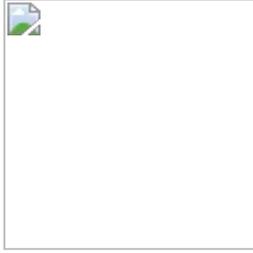
“ Our thoughts are with you as you make your way through this emotional landscape. Blessings to you and to all of your family.  
Kim and Bill Huelsman

**Kim and Bill Huelsman** - February 20 at 01:11 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Life in Pictures



**Michael Brunson** - February 20 at 01:39 AM



“ Loved it. Beautiful young woman...bet she was a lot of fun in her day. Always sorry I never got to hear her sing. So happy had the chat time we did at church Maya. Will Miss you. Rest in peace dear lady.

Bobbi Miller

**Roberta M Miller** - April 11 at 06:06 PM

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“ Godiva Gold Ballotin (36 pc) was purchased for the family of Maya Zelitsky.



February 19 at 09:32 PM

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“ I remember First meeting Maya at the car wash!  
Then when my girls and I moved to a new neighborhood we found out she lived there. We became friends with Maya and her daughter Marina, Michael, Katia, And Nick. Maya and her family treated us like family, always welcoming us into their home for dinners and lunches, family celebrations! We would love when Maya would start belting out a song! There was never a dull moment when Maya was around.

**Amy Kelts** - February 19 at 09:24 PM