

Nazwisko EYSMUND

Imiona Aliga Maria

Pseudonim

Z domu

Data urodzenia 17.02.1925 Miejscowość, kraj Warszawa

Data śmierci 27.10.2017 Miejscowość, kraj Londyn, UK

Lat życia

Adres cmentarza

Źródła: Tydzień Polski 03.11.2017

Zawód Tytuły naukowe

Rodzaj wojska Stopień wojskowy

Odnaczenia

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J. P. 3. 11. 17.



ALICJA MARIA EJSMOND

Ur. 17 lutego 1925 r. na Starym Mieście w Warszawie

Uczestniczka Powstania Warszawskiego
Żołnierz Armii Krajowej

Pracownica Polskiego Stowarzyszenia Powierniczego
ukochana Matka i Babcia

zmarła 27 października 2017 r. w domu

Msza św. pogrzebowa zostanie odprawiona
w czwartek 9 listopada 2017 r. o godz. 14:00
w kościele św. Andrzeja Boboli,
1 Leysfield Road, Londyn W12 9JF
po czym nastąpi spopielenie w Mortlake Crematorium.

Z wielkim smutkiem zawiadamiają
Córka z Rodziną

J. P. 3. 11. 17.



ALICJA MARIA EJSMOND

Długoletnia pracownica
Polskiego Stowarzyszenia Powierniczego,
gdzie pracowała do 81-go roku życia.

Urodzona 17 lutego 1925 r. w Warszawie,
zmarła 27 października 2017 r. w Londynie.

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Wyrazy współczucia dla Rodziny składa
Polskie Stowarzyszenie Powiernicze

My name is Filip Sikorski and I am Lusia's brother Wiktor's grandson.

Lusia was born in Warsaw Old Town on the seventeenth of February 1925.

Her father, and my great grand-father, was Wiktor Natanson. He was a rather academic lawyer who in Lusia's words, was more interested in studying law than making money. Later on he became a well-regarded judge. He was from a Jewish family, and during the German occupation of Warsaw, he had to go into hiding because a local policeman had betrayed him.

Her mother was Zenobia Trajdos. She was from a large family and her brother was a well known personality in a Polish political movement. He was executed by the Germans during the occupation.

She had a brother and a sister. Her sister Anna, married Jurek Dobrzanski during the war. She was very pregnant in 1944 during the Warsaw uprising, so she was not deported to a labour camp like her siblings. She and her two daughters were eventually able to join Jurek who had fled to Canada to escape Nazi persecution.

Her brother Victor was four years younger than Lusia and lives today in a Polish Combatants Care Home near Warsaw. He was a champion amateur Bridge player and was always able to get a rise from Lusia, especially when playing card games. As children they lived in a district called Zoliborz – a suburb not unlike Richmond or Wimbledon. Lusia always spoke of her childhood as a very happy time.

The occupation of Warsaw and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 were a terribly difficult and tragic time for the nation and the city, but Lusia remembered it as exciting, despite the hardship. She always said that the adults found it desperate, but the youngsters weren't as aware of the dangers, and had a lot of fun living communally in the basements of each other's houses, being home-schooled when possible, and acting as messengers to the Underground Movement. Lusia was involved in the underground like everyone else. One of her jobs was delivering food to people who were in hiding.

After the failed Uprising, Wiktor was sent to one labour camp, and Lusia to another, near Munich. She was forced to work in a Volkswagen factory. One day she deliberately cut her hand and rubbed it with copper to cause an infection. It worked; she was let off work, but nearly lost her hand as a result.

On liberation of her camp by the allies, Lusia was given the choice of going back to Russian-occupied Poland or going to England. She chose England. First she went with the Polish forces to Italy under General Anders where she spent some time in an 'Officers' school', and from there to a refugee camp in Pickering, Yorkshire and eventually to London, where she initially worked as a lady's maid.

Lusia always said that she knew that finally a new post-war era was dawning when she heard that Clark Gable was going to star in *Gone with the Wind*. She remembers saying: 'All's well with the world'.

She knew Stanisław Ejsmond from childhood holidays in Mazowsze. During the war Stan served on a Polish ship in the British navy; 'Piorun' (Lightening). They met again by accident when they bumped into each other in a Police Station in London. She was there to translate for a friend, and he always claimed not to remember why he went there on that particular day. On 3rd November 1955, they had a very quick marriage in the Wandsworth registry office. Lusia's wedding ring was a slice of lead piping covered in the gold foil from a sweet wrapper.

They decided to adopt children, and Sophie and Johnny were born in 1960 and '63 respectively. Even when their marriage ended in 1977, and Stan had a second family in France, Lusia and he continued to be great friends, and she was very fond of his children Marysia and Tomek.

The whole family suffered a terrible tragedy in 1991 when Johnny died of AIDS when only 28. Lusia was at Johnny's bedside at his passing, together with Sophie and Ewa Gordon, a very close family friend adopted informally by the Ejsmonds in the mid-fifties. Eva had a special bond with Johnny.

Lusia worked for over thirty years for the Polish Trustee Association in the Polish centre in Hammersmith. She was second in command to the formidable Ewa Starzynska, whom she admired hugely, and then to Grażyna Seydlitz whom she also adored working with. Their work involved drawing up wills and being the executors of wills, and she continued until she was 81.

Her own grand-children came along in 1986, '88 and '92, and soon became the focus of her life apart from Johnny's beloved dog Bobi. On her retirement from work, Lusia moved into the basement flat of the house Sophie shared with her second husband David and Robin, Toby and Alicia. They lived happily together for 14 years.

The last 6 months of her life were challenging for everyone, as vascular dementia took a toll on Lusia's previously very sharp mind, but they got the chance to pay back just a little, for the decades of unconditional love and support which Lusia gave them.

My name is Andrea Prodanou and I am Lusia's sister Anna's grand-daughter, I am reading this testament on behalf of Lusia's daughter Sophie.

You may have noticed some of the themes in today's readings and Gospel. I chose these because they made me think of some of Lusia's wonderful qualities.

The reading from Corinthians talks about the beautiful qualities of Faith, Hope and Love. Lusia was a woman of Faith and although she had her doubts as most of us do, she brought us up in the Catholic faith and was a regular church-goer all her life. You could say she had a hard life in many ways: surviving not just the war and divorce, but the loss of a child – which must be the hardest blow anyone can suffer. But she was a naturally positive person and never complained.

Above all, Lusia had the greatest gift of all, the ability to Love. She always said that once the children came along, she could focus only on us. This was eventually to the detriment of her marriage, but Johnny and I were blessed with a mother whose unconditional love knew no bounds. She was not a great disciplinarian, and we were somewhat spoilt, but we knew at a visceral level that Mama would never abandon us. And for this we loved her unconditionally in return.

There is another passage in the Gospel of John which I would have chosen if I could have had two! It includes the words 'My father's house has many rooms' and it reminds me of Mama's generosity of spirit and inclusiveness. It was not just her children and grand-children she loved; she adopted both of my husbands and my step-children and their families without hesitation, and took a great interest in their lives, trials and joys. This same curiosity, which was emphatically not nosiness, was

a quality which meant that some of my friends from school and university would pop in and see her even when I was not there. Some of these friends, and even friends of her grand-children, and their parents, are here today. We received many lovely cards and messages from those who had heard of our loss but are unable to be here today. The number of friends and admirers she had from different generations, bears testament to her disarming friendliness, and to her charm, wit and humour. She had many fans.

There were two other qualities which characterise Mama for me, and which will always inspire me to challenge my own behaviour. The first of these was a deep honesty and integrity. As anyone who knew her would acknowledge, Mama was incapable of dissimulation of any kind; what you saw was what you got. She would never flatter without genuine feeling. She always – politely - spoke her mind whether the message was one the listener wanted to hear or not. She took pride in being 'my greatest critic' which I sometimes found hard to bear, but which caused me to pause and think more carefully about my attitudes and decisions, and for this I am grateful. I will continue to ask her advice even though she is now in the next world.

She was a person of great generosity, both in the material sense and in spirit. She had only a modest income and lived a simple life, but she loved nothing more than to buy presents for her children, grand-children and step grand-children, her nephews and nieces and their children.

Her generosity of spirit however, was the quality which I admired most in her. An example of this, and her compassion, made a huge impression on me in my mid-thirties: I remember getting into a lather when a Polish workman who had done some jobs for me, refused to give back the keys to my house. He would do so only if I sponsored his wife to come to England and gave her a job (this was before Poland joined the EU, and Poles did not have easy access to England). I was living alone with three children; I felt very threatened and was preparing to call the police. Mama intervened and offered to meet him with me instead, to discuss the situation.

Uncharacteristically, she took charge. And to my surprise, instead of accusing him of blackmail and menacing her daughter, she spoke to him gently and quietly and asked him why he was acting in this way. It became clear he was having a nervous breakdown and she gently counselled him to go back to his family in Poland, get better, and then see what was the best course of action. It was one of those moments when you know that arrogant youth has a lot to learn from the wisdom of the older generations. I have never forgotten the lesson that I learned that day and the need to understand before you judge.

Our last few months together, though very hard in many ways, were also a blessing for me; a time when I could show her how much I loved her, and give back just a tiny bit of the immense love and support she had given me throughout my life. I will miss her so much.

Baba eulogy

On behalf of Robin, Ali and myself.

(Toby)

Despite working for the Polish community in London, round the corner on King Street, into her eighties, Baba was a large, influential and unchanging part of our childhoods.

We all share memories of being spoilt at her flat:

- The Brambles, where we used to watch Famous Five and make a legowisko (Den)
- Allowing us to drink ribena with lemonade and having frosties for breakfast. something we were never allowed at home.
- For her part, she always had bread and cheese for breakfast, and said that if she could eat one thing for the rest of her life it would be bread and cheese.

She got around in a little grey Daihatsu (which needed cushions on the driver's seat)

- I always hoped to see baba's car coming to pick me up from school, as she always had a hidden fun-size mars bar for me
- she only had a couple of choice cassettes, which we would listen to: John Lennon or a group that looked and sounded like a Polish Abba
- Also the scene of the only time she lost her temper at me because I wasn't paying attention map-reading, with a car full of my friends and we got totally lost

She was a fantastic companion

- Playing football with us in the garden at Combemartin – at 70! And coming to watch Chelsea matches with us
- Walking Robin to the station to meet Gordon when he was coming home from work and holding his hand walking around the park
- Playing doctors and nurses with Ali and helping her to write lesson plans for her class of 25 teddy bears.

Through our School years, as we approached Baba's height and acquired some social skills, she liked nothing more than to show us off to her friends:

- She'd take Ali to work at Posk and set her typewriter up for her to be secretary.
- she loved to treat us to great lunches in POSK and introduce us to her friends and colleagues - we imagined, like the head of some great Polish mafia family

- Unfortunately none of us spoke Polish, but I could understand enough to know when she would roll out her favourite story about me crying after my first day of school – placalam, instead of placalem

She found new excuses to spoil and support us in other ways:

- The reward for exceeding her in stature was a sick new bike. So we'd measure ourselves against her everyday. Mine came with full suspension. and was stolen in about a week.
- She put many hours into Ali's costumes for dress up day at school.
- She looked after us through our sporting injuries and bandaged us up when we'd been in the wars
- When Ali had mumps she looked after her all night and even called the ambulance when she was having a panic attack, being in such a panic herself that she provided the wrong name, address and phone number to emergency services.
- Always generous, She had a pragmatic approach to present buying - usually asking us to buy for ourselves and finding a niche such as buying mine and Robin's shoes; a tradition I've already asked Sophie to take on!
- Often, she would be more direct - offering us a zastryk (an injection, of cash), even though Robin still owes her money for her investment in the rugby ball business he was involved in at school
- Though she was a reluctant cook, her signature Zrazy (Polish meatballs) were a real crowd-pleaser

(Robin)

Once we all left home, we made more effort to spend quality time with Baba whenever we were around, and each created new bonds with her:

- Being in the basement flat at Netherwood Road, she was always around and got to know all of our friends. Though she used to say that all Ali's friends looked the same which is why she could never remember their names.
- When we got in late and a little worse for wear, She'd appear in her dressing gown and offer tea or food, and crucially, no judgement.
- She even tolerated Ali occasionally sneaking into the basement flat and getting into bed with her.
- She certainly had a great reputation amongst our friends: described as a 'tour de force' and 'an epic person'
- I would join her for a brandy on flat visits and catch ups. Or watch Touch of Frost together (przymrosek) and go to the cinema to watch war films
- She was also a big tennis fan and we bonded over our love of Federer, whom she always said had a kind face. rather than anything to do with his ability.
- She and Toby used to share books with one another, especially about espionage and the war and then discuss her own experiences of it. We were endlessly fascinated by this living link to the past, and the world she grew up in compared to ours

- At Netherwood she was a domestic goddess and did all our washing and mending of clothes. She used to offer to wash up in return for Ali's baking. And they bonded over things like going to church and their love of Giles Coren the food critic.

She was very kind and supportive of everyone. Always open and not afraid to speak her mind:

- She took a huge amount of joy in our successes and always wanted to hear all our news; she was heartbroken when we were unhappy
- but it didn't stop her telling Toby off for breaking up with girlfriends that she liked. then she wouldn't talk to him for a few weeks.
- She looked after Gordon when he went through a rough patch and always treated him like a son
- Always concerned that we leave the house properly attired in the colder months, she often criticised Ali for wearing shorts and tights in the winter, which was a source of some tension.
- A great listener, who didn't usually express strong views, except she didn't particularly like Germans, but even worse were the Russians!
- Amazing energy, even once she stopped working: Baba didn't go anywhere without Poppy. she was still taking the dog on walks a month ago.
- She used to talk to Poppy while walking around the house and If she didn't know anyone was there, she'd also sing to herself, even though she always claimed she couldn't.
- She was partial to a glass of red wine, which David learnt to offer her in Polish
- A fantastic sense of humour, which became increasingly morbid toward the end – when found wandering aimlessly and asked what she was looking for, she'd respond 'I've lost my marbles'

I don't think I've ever gone for more than a few weeks without seeing Baba and I'm so grateful to have been able to see her very regularly while I've lived in London. It's very special to be able to see your grandmother once a week, often more, and even more so when you look forward to it. There was a peace that I could sometimes only find sitting downstairs in her armchair and keeping her company. Sometimes we would just sit in silence, thinking our thoughts and it was calming and grounding when life was hectic outside. While the last few months were difficult it brought us all closer to her and only reinforced that bond; she looked after all of us through difficult times and we were able to return the kindness. She was an incredible person and she'll never be far from our thoughts; I'll see her whenever I look at Sophie (or indeed Poppy) and I miss her

As children, we knew she was everything a grandmother should be - patient, kind and extremely generous. More recently, we came to know her as this incredible woman that had experienced so much in her 90-odd years, not least her part in the war. A hero who cut and infected herself so as not to have to help the German war effort, for which she was recently recognised with a

medal at the polish embassy. She was moved around Europe in various labour camps and unexpectedly received a cheque from the Germans by means of reparation!

She built a new life in London after the war, enduring her fair share of difficulties and tragedy. Her commitment to her family was absolute and unwavering, and she also dedicated herself to the Polish community in London. Two enviable traits were apparent - She had an incredible strength of character and a wicked sense of humour.

In recent months Baba could be quite difficult, but she was also the most loving she's ever been, telling us all the time how much she loved us. It's important to remember her as the independent, active and care-giving woman she was right into her nineties.

It was heartbreaking to see her decline, though one thing she never lost was a warm smile when she recognised her family and friends.

(8 mins running time roughly)