

Liberty Park matriarch Ethel Pesin, 98

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If Morris Pesin was the "Father of Liberty State Park," then Ethel Pesin, his wife of 54 years, surely was the matriarch of the great state treasure.

Hailed yesterday as a lover of people, a devoted mother, and an unwavering supporter of Morris in his quest to establish the great Jersey City park, Ethel Pesin died Friday at her home in Jersey City. She was 98.

"She was a loving, kind, strong, and independent person," Ethel's son, Sam Pesin, said last night. "She was an energetic, wise, and loving person and a blessing to my family and to all that knew her."

Sam Pesin is the president of the Friends of Liberty State

Park, the volunteer organization dedicated to protecting and improving the waterfront park. Morris Pesin died in 1992 and is the longtime civic leader credited with getting elected officials to set aside the land and open the park in 1976.

Born to Latvian refugees Louis and Dora Pliskin on Jan. 16, 1915, Ethel Pesin moved to Jersey City in 1923.

She graduated from Schools 3 and 9, and then Dickinson High School in 1931. She was inducted into the Dickinson Hall of Fame in 2008, making her and Morris the only husband and wife duo in the school's Hall of Fame.

After receiving her degree in public school music education from Syracuse University, she returned to Jersey City to work as a music teacher at Snyder

Junior High School and Lincoln High School before becoming a private piano teacher.

In 1938, she married Morris. During their marriage of 54 years, they had two children, Sam and Judy.

Ethel and Morris Pesin and her parents co-owned Pesin's, a popular clothing shop for children from infants through preteens at Jersey City's McGinley Square from 1947 to 1974. When Morris Pesin became busy with his City Council work and his Liberty State Park efforts, Ethel ran the store.

"She loved being with people and being outdoors by the waterfront," Sam Pesin said last night. "She loved seeing the sun setting with the golden windows of the New York City skyline while being in the beautiful park sitting. She was a



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really great person and she'll be greatly missed."

Ethel Pesin's funeral was held yesterday at Temple Beth-El on Kennedy Boulevard in Jersey City.