

## Elizabeth Anne Prostic: Press Room: Eulogy

### Rabbi Amy Walk Katz

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Mount Carmel Cemetery

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It is both an unbearable burden and an unspeakable privilege to speak this afternoon about Elizabeth Anne Prostic. In these past few days I have met a woman with many sides.

Known to some of you as Lizzie, and others as Liz and still others as Elizabeth. Whatever you called her you would all agree that Lizzie was a consummate professional, a committed Republican, a good friend to many, from many walks of life, an exceptional daughter to Ed and Merry, a devoted granddaughter, a doting sister to Laura, an attentive little sister to Seth, an adoring aunt, a proud and loving mother to Harper and a soul-mate to Mike. Elizabeth was so young, so vibrant and had so much to offer the world.

Elizabeth leaves this world too young, and too soon. When I spoke with Ed on the phone on Friday he talked to me about Elizabeth's potential to change this world in profound ways. Upon Ed's recommendation, I did a google search of Elizabeth Prostic. It is truly remarkable to see how much Liz accomplished professionally in her tragically short life. Liz graduated Pembroke Hill, and the University of Pennsylvania and this year was a fourth year student at George Washington University Law School where she was a Thurgood Marshall scholar and Moot Court Board Member. Elizabeth's professional accomplishments were remarkable. She was a Managing Director of Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal, specializing in public law, political strategies, information security and internet enforcement. Prior to joining the law firm, Elizabeth served as Senior Policy Advisor to US Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans. The future was Elizabeth's to choose. She had the perfect resume.

Lizzie wasn't always a political being. As a little girl she loved to sing and dance. She loved to be on stage performing. She was serious about life – but Lizzie wasn't serious about politics until she went to college. And then Ed says there was a metamorphosis and Lizzie turned into a serious young woman with a passion for politics.

The adjectives which come to mind when I think of Lizzie are: articulate, persuasive, thoughtful, hardworking, determined, energetic, vivacious, strong, independent and powerful. To give you a sense of Liz's energy & talent consider the following: How many women before graduating law school are hired as a managing director of a major law firm? And how many women while working fulltime attend law school, and nurse a baby? Or imagine this – when Lizzie found out she was pregnant, she really tried to persuade her doctor to let her run a marathon – while pregnant!

In a sense that says it all about Elizabeth Anne Prostic. Nothing was too much for her. Lizzie's life truly proclaimed – “I am Lizzie – Hear me roar.”

I could go on to talk about Liz's professional accomplishments, but truthfully they pale in comparison to her personal relationships. Lizzie was a woman who touched the lives of those around her. And that was evident, not just from meeting with her family, but also by reading the Carepages that clearly sustained Mike and Liz during these last six months. The pages contain hundreds and hundreds of notes from friends, family and colleagues all of whom loved Liz, Elizabeth or Lizzie. As I read through the Carepages, I was struck by the number of people who felt compelled to connect with or lend support to Lizzie and Mike.

I would like to share with you a teaching that is attributed to Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, a great rabbinic sage. He sent his disciples to learn the true meaning and the essential characteristics of a good life. “Go out and seek,” said the rabbi to his students, “the best way in life that man must choose for himself, to which he must cleave.” They came back with various answers – **ayin tova** a good eye, **chaver tov** a good friend, **shachen tov**, a good neighbor, and **lev tov** a good heart.

How easily applicable to Elizabeth are these indispensable characteristics of a good life.

Ayin Tova – Lizzie was beautiful inside and out. She had a good eye – she appreciated the finer things in life – Jewelry, fine wine, nice clothes. But not only did Lizzie like nice things, she was always smiling and saw the best in all who surrounded. She assumed the best of her friends, colleagues, and family. The glass was always half full. Lizzie saw the good in the world. She taught her eyes to enjoy fine things and to see good in the world around her

Chaver tov – Lizzie was the kind of woman who was eager to be there for her family and friends. And her friends were there for her. The many many bridesmaids at Lizzie & Mike's wedding give one a sense of Liz. Friends from Pembroke, from college, summer experiences, relatives. In every place where Liz lived she made friends. And as her family said, she did so because she was always willing to give of herself.

Shachen tov – How many women who have been diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer take the time to vote? But that was Liz. In her personal being and in her professional commitments Elizabeth Prostic wanted to make this world a better place. Liz devoted years of her life to developing and advancing legislation resulting in sixteen public laws on science, technology, and space policy. Any woman who was so eager to serve her country was a good neighbor.

Lev tov – Lizzie had a good heart. She never came to Kansas City without making time to visit her MomMom Vera. She guided Laura through some of life's challenges and never dismissed her younger sister's problems or questions. Lizzie was there for her friends and family because she had a good, big heart. Lizzie often steered the conversation away from herself because she was eager to hear about others.

I would not be so presumptuous as to think that anything I could say about Lizzie would mitigate the piercing pain of this moment. But I hope you find comfort in reflecting upon what a remarkable life Elizabeth Anne Prostic created for herself. Whether being with her family or friends, playing Cranium or Pictionary, watching The Bachelorette or The Apprentice, working at the law firm, or with the Secretary of Commerce – Elizabeth Anne Prostic was truly remarkable.

And so Merry, Ed, Seth, Lisa, Laura, Vera, Karen, Lucy and Mike -- and to all of us here this afternoon – I turn to God and offer a simple prayer.

Avinu Malkeinu, I ask that you watch over Ed and Merry, they need your support in this their worst nightmare. They have cared for and loved Elizabeth her whole life. They had such dreams for their oldest daughter and have felt so helpless in these last few months. Give them, courage dear God to get through this so that they can have the strength and energy to give Harper the love, attention she needs and deserves.

Help Seth, Lisa and Laura. The Prostic kids loved each other and loved being around one another. Elizabeth has been more than a sister. She has been a friend, a role model, and they never thought of life without their Elizabeth. Help them Adonai as they grope in the dark to find their way. Help them give their parents the love they need. Help them to find ways to talk about Lizzie so that Harper will come to know her mom. And help them be there for one another. They will need each other to survive this moment.

And for Lizzie's grandmother – please dear God give Vera strength to look to the future. No grandma should know the pain Vera is feeling today. And for Lizzie's Uncle Paul and Aunt Bunni, for her in-laws Karen and Lucy and for all of us here this afternoon I pray that many good memories, beautiful pictures, and pride in Lizzie's remarkable life will be a source of strength and comfort. Help us to cherish Lizzie's memory so that she may live on through us.

Oh dear God – I have but one wish for Harper. Let her become the woman her mother was. And God please watch over Mike. Leaving him to raise Harper is an enormous burden. This should have been a beautiful year with a new baby. Mike should have been making a webpage for friends to see and admire Harper grow. But instead Mike has suffered so, as he watched his wife battle cancer. Dear God help Mike find his way. He needs your love, support and guidance now more than ever. Let the many memories of Lizzie bring a smile to his face and a twinkle to his eye. Oh God help Mike to nurture Harper and rear her to adulthood with a sense of what a wonderful woman her mother was. Help Mike teach Harper about Lizzie's razor sharp mind, passion for politics and insatiable curiosity. Lizzie wanted Harper to become a strong, independent, happy, fulfilled and powerful woman. Lizzie had great hopes for her precious daughter. Give Mike and all of us here today the strength to make Lizzie's ultimate dream a reality.

Finally, God I ask you to watch over Elizabeth Anne Prostic as she makes her way to eternal rest. She struggled mightily in the last months of her life. So please God grant her perfect peace in Your eternal embrace. May Lizzie's soul be bound up in the bond of life. May she rest in peace and let us say Amen.