

IN MEMORY OF SHELLY WEISS

April 9, 2024

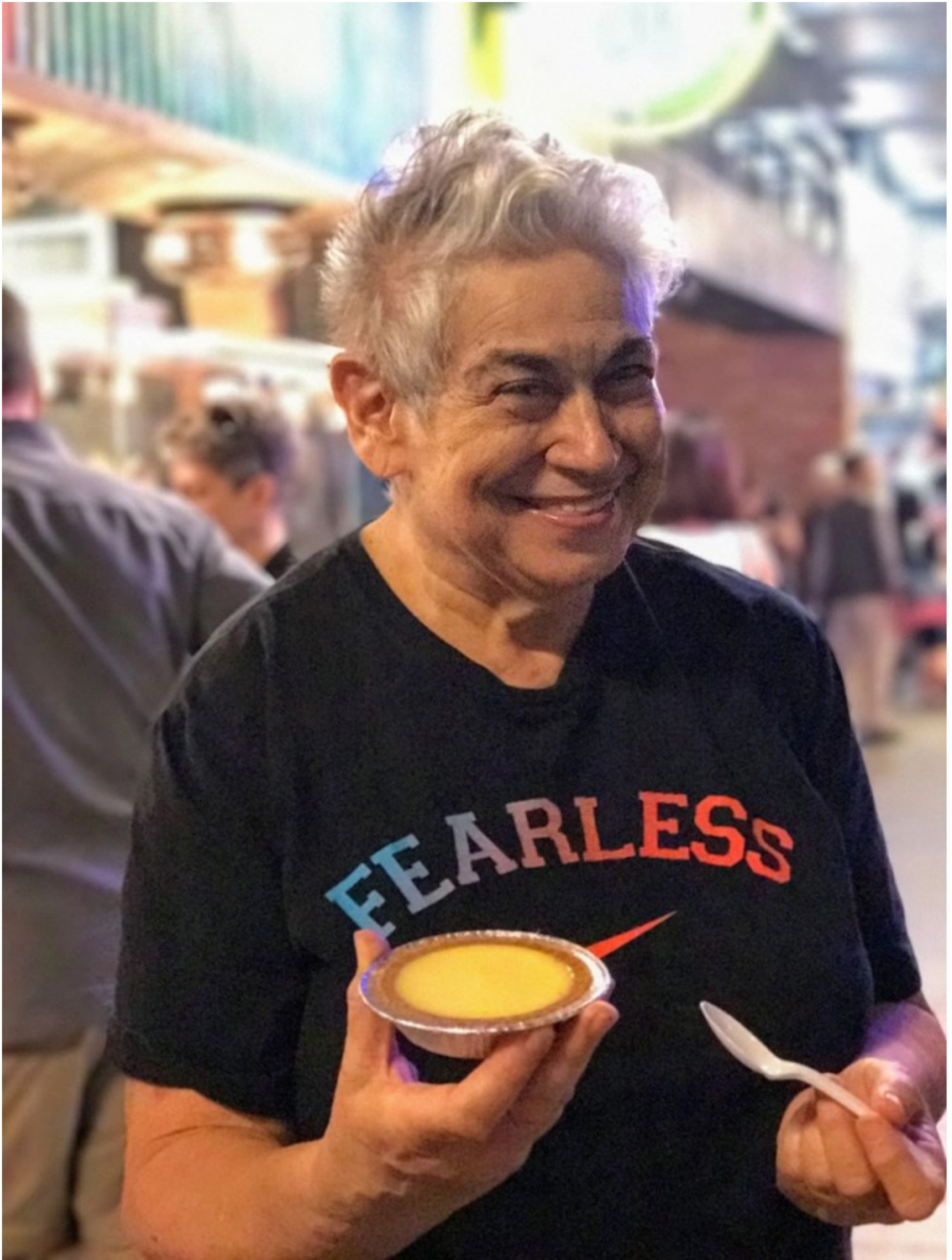


Photo courtesy of Noah Weiss

*By Thomas Rayfiel*

Shelly Weiss, an early member of the Coop, and, by all accounts, a force of nature at whatever she set her mind to, died February 22, 2024, of late-stage kidney disease. She was 77. Shelly joined the Coop in 1976. For many years she worked at the long-gone but fondly remembered cheese section, which she described in a *Linewaiters' Gazette* interview as:

*...more like a phenomenon back then. People hustled over to the cheese section and wrote their orders, which were custom cut to size and picked up as they headed to the checkout line. We would set out samples, which made cheese the place to be and highly interactive. I think Trader Joe's plugged into our model.*

Her motto, when putting out bits for people to try, was “ample samples.”

Shelly, considered by many to be the first “out” lesbian in Park Slope, had jobs as a social worker, couples sex therapist, health care administrator and elementary school teacher before finding her true calling when she started the non-profit OUTMedia, which specialized in booking LGBTQ acts at college campuses.

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*GENERAL MANAGER JOE HOLTZ*

“I realized that the arts were a prime vehicle to change consciousness,” Shelly explained in a 2015 interview with the Keshet Blog—a project of My Jewish Learning, a website with articles, videos and other resources to help navigate all aspects of Ju-

daism and Jewish life. In the piece, Shelly continued, “Forget people’s heads, reach their guts, their hearts. In this new way, I could really reach a new generation and frame thinking.”

Shelly was a coordinator for Jews For Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), an organization that describes itself as a movement to dismantle racism and economic exploitation. She was also a leader in JFREJ’S steering committee for New York Caring Majority, a statewide, multi-constituency movement that seeks higher wages for home care workers. Shelly also served on its Poor & Working Class caucus and Disability caucus.

She did all this as a single mother, raising her son, Noah, on three principles: “Try everything twice,” “Never go to bed angry,” and “There’s an unlimited budget for books.”

The Coop’s General Manager Joe Holtz remembers Shelly as “...one of the early members who understood how special the Coop was. She was dedicated to making the Coop work during a period when future success was something that had to be earned one week at a time. I will miss her and her can-do spirit.”

Shelly is survived by her son, Noah Desai Weiss, his wife Monica Desai Weiss and granddaughter Willow Desai Weiss; stepdaughter Rebecca Shaw and her wife, Jillian Sussman; her brother, Jerry Weiss, his wife Diane Weiss and their children and grandchildren.