

IN MEMORY OF ANDREA "TRACI" O'KELLY

September 16, 2025



Illustration by Olexa Hewryk

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*By Thomas Rayfiel*

Andrea “Traci” O’Kelly, who joined the Coop in 1985, died on April 1 at her home in Brooklyn. She was 74 years old. Traci studied acting at the Afro-American Studio for Acting and Speech in Harlem. She performed a musical tribute to Billie Holiday at Danny’s Skylight Room and Don’t Tell Mama. Later, she settled in Park Slope and worked at several businesses, including Jumpin’ Julia, Tarzian West for Housewares and the Plaza Center for the Healing Arts.

At the Coop, Traci worked checkout and had a near-perfect attendance record. Her daughter Raine recalls that “the Coop was an essential space for my mother. She was very proud to be a member. She primarily worked at checkout because she loved talking to people and learning about all the items the Coop carried. She appreciated its affordability and organic food. My mother raised four young children as a single mother. Being able to provide us with artisanal, organic high-quality products was the reason she was grateful to be a member.”

Some of Traci’s favorite Coop items were chicken for roast chicken Sundays, kombucha, fresh corn, ramps, cantaloupe, and essential oils such as lemon, peppermint and lavender for sleep and meditation.

Membership Coordinator Jana Cunningham, who was often in charge of Traci’s shift, remembers: “Traci was always wearing a smile. She was one of those people who made the room brighter by just being present. Traci worked on the Shopping Squad, which could at times be very hectic and stressful, yet she remained pleasant, helpful, kind and...smiling.”

A great animal lover, Traci always had dogs and cats in her house. She was particularly fond of Irish setters, cocker spaniels and Maine coon cats.

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*RAINE, DAUGHTER*

Traci is survived by her daughters, Lani, Toi, Raine and Jurnee; her sisters, Donna and Frances, and her dog, Joey. Her mother, Helen, predeceased her in 2006. Her brother, Arnold, predeceased her in 2015. Her only son, Hunter, predeceased her in 2020.

*Coop member Thomas Rayfiel is the author of eight novels. He has also written “living obituaries” for VICE TV.*