

## REMEMBERING JOSEPHINE BROWN

When I first spoke with Josephine, it was part of the process of my wife being admitted to The Memory Center. What I saw was not only great competence and skill, but also that more allusive quality of authenticity: She really cared for the elderly who came to The Center. She could sense their feelings of being lost in a world that had once been familiar and comfortable for them, and she understood and respected their hurt (sometimes expressed as angry indignation) at the fact that others now did for them what they'd once been able to do for themselves.

I dealt with Josephine for about a decade, and I just can't remember from that whole period any time when I hadn't felt that she was both happy to be of help, and happy to know both myself and my wife. From those years, three memories still out as exemplifying Josephine's special qualities.

Once when I was seeing her at The Center, she had an especially broad smile, and she told me that that had been a good day for her: Her administrative responsibilities (and they were enormous!) had been a bit less oppressive, and, she said, "I could do my favorite thing, talk with clients": She had shared experiences with my wife about having cats in one's home. Just let me add, they both enjoyed that conversation.

She knew when she had to use her authority to be the guardian of the clients' best interests. And on the very rare times I expressed concerns, Josephine heard what I said, told me how she'd deal with it, and that problem then just ceased to be. She was able to help others by being at ease in her role as a leader.

And though her leaving was a big change for The Center, I am glad I now have memoirs of seeing Josephine on Seventh Avenue after her retirement, and she asked how my wife and I were doing, (and in fact Josephine remembered my wife very clearly). When she retired she had gone on to take care of herself, and I'm glad she did. She'd earned that time to pursue her own interests, but the caring and concern for others did not diminish.

The most lasting "memorial" to Josephine is how she provided leadership which enabled others to grow professionally, and to set an example on how take on responsibilities in ways that were always caring and sensitive.

With her death, we need to reflect on how her life's achievements go on—and this is surely what Josephine wanted.

George R. Schumacher