

My name is Nadine Rabinovitch and I am Akka's best friend.

I just met a couple of women at my table who also claim to be Akka's best friend. Please allow me to represent.

I met Akka in 1983. We became instant friends. I had just moved to Toronto from Montreal and had an obnoxious habit of speaking French to Torontonians to test their ability to speak French. Most failed miserably. Akka was the first to respond seamlessly in kind and in French. Akka was smart. I looked up to her. She inspired me with her passion for living authentically.

In a world that is so full of bullshit Akka was real. Real vulnerable and real powerful. She would suggest a piece of music, a poem, a book, a movie, a ballet or a podcast interview.

In each case her suggestions were mind blowing. I looked up to her. I looked to her for direction in life. She was open to experiencing life and all its complexities. She was sensitive and brave. And humble. Her humility combined with her intelligence, charm and beauty was disarming. She excelled at whatever she took on. Through all the struggles and joys of raising her sons-now beautiful, poised young men, navigating her way to Perth, actualizing herself; she was always evolving. She was a shining light for me. And not just for me. I introduced Akka to my friend Fadul and we all spent a weekend at Fadul's brother's cottage. Akka preferred to stay alone in the boathouse than in the main cottage. She would return to the boathouse one more time and in her inimitable fashion re-arranged and tweaked the décor-much to the owner's delight.

During that same visit, so the story goes, Akka and Fadul canoed over to an island nearby that had a nice beach. When they paddled back Fadul realized he had forgotten his shoes on the island. He tells Ak he'll be back in 20 minutes and takes the motor boat to pick up his shoes. Ak begins preparing dinner. But Fadul's boat breaks down and he begins trying to row his way back to shore unsuccessfully against the wind until eventually he gets a tow from another boat. Now at this point it's been an hour and 20 minutes since he left and concerned that Ak will be upset with him and dinner will be burnt Fadul looks up only to see Akka onshore watching him, doubled over in laughter. She had a superb sense of humour.

There is a candle burning in Akka's memory in the boathouse.

I am very lucky to have known her.