



## Alexandra Bellow

August 30, 1935 - May 2, 2025

Alexandra Bellow, (née Bagdasar), 89, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Northwestern University, passed away peacefully at home in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood.

Alexandra was born in Bucharest to physician parents. She was proud of her parents' work and highlighted their passion and commitment to their patients. Her mother, Florica Bagdasar (née Ciumetti), was a pediatric psychiatrist, and the first woman with a cabinet level position in Romania, serving as Minister of Health. Her father, Dumitru Bagdasar, is considered Romania's father of neurosurgery. Alexandra continued with both their legacies of deep compassion and loving care.

Interested in mathematics since childhood, Alexandra earned her M.S. in mathematics from the University of Bucharest in 1957, and her PhD from Yale University in 1959. She spent most of her career at Northwestern University until her retirement in 1996. Even in this male-dominated field, she was able to thrive. Alexandra's early work involved properties and consequences of mathematical lifting theory. She was lauded for her contributions to analysis, particularly ergodic theory, along with measure theory, and for exposition resulting in practical value for statisticians and other scientists.

Alexandra's mind was ever curious. Outside of her love of math, she also

spent her retirement years continuously learning, with tutoring and lessons in the Spanish language, bible study, and Don Quijote de la Mancha, as well as always keeping up to date with world events. Learning was a way of life for her.

When others spoke, Alexandra always listened closely, taking great care to understand, and always had investigative or philosophical questions to pose. She made sure that you felt heard, understood, and respected. She was a woman of few words, but when she had something to say, her words carried weight and wisdom. She was intelligent, yet the picture of humility with such a warm personality. She was independent, sharply funny, and had an unmatched playful and unique style. Alexandra enjoyed the company of artists and of interesting people. She loved treating visitors to The Art Institute of Chicago for lunch on the terrace and to see the latest exhibit.

Dear cousin and dear friend Ileana Costea; cousin Katerina Kapitsakis; great-aunt and beloved godmother of Aristotelis (Deborah) Zournas; great-aunt of George (Chryssa) Zournas; and great-great-aunt of Thomas, Victoria, and Konstantinos Zournas.

Loving stepmother of Daniel Bellow, Adam Bellow, Gregory Bellow, Mary Jo Calderón, Pablo (Eliana Levy-Spira) Calderon; step-grandmother of Miguel Levy, Eduardo and Alberto Calderon. Sister-in-law of Calixto Calderón (Jaqueline Crane).

Alexandra was preceded in death by beloved husband Alberto P. Calderón. She was also preceded in death by her partner, Leonard Linsky, as well as former spouses Cassius Ionescu-Tulcea and Saul Bellow.

She also leaves behind her dear friends Joanna Pinsky, Ellen Wright, Gabi Husz, Rodica Coroiu, Anouca Andrescault, Radu Nicolescuand, and reunites

with dear friend Vivian Missner.

Anyone who had the joy of having Alexandra in their life will never forget what unconditional love and kindness are.

Alexandra's ashes will be scattered in her final resting place in Lake Michigan. Her home of the last 57 years overlooked the lake. She loved taking in its beauty, always remarking on how the lake was never the same, changing everyday.

Friends and family are gathering at 11am (service begins 11:15am) on Saturday, May 17, outside the niche of Alexandra's beloved husband Alberto P. Calderón at Memorial Park Cemetery Mausoleum, 9900 Gross Point Rd., Skokie, 60076. Please enter off Skokie Blvd. Livestream the event here: <https://www.asimplestreaming.com/abellow/>

Reception to immediately follow at the Bellow residence on Sheridan Road.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in her name to Art Encounter (<https://www.artencounter.org/>).

Arrangements by Inclusive Funeral Care, 773-318-1305 or [www.InclusiveFuneralCare.com](http://www.InclusiveFuneralCare.com).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Gathering

MAY 17. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Memorial Park Cemetery  
9900 Gross Point Road  
Skokie, IL 60076

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/funeral-homes/illinois/skokie/memorial-park-cemetery/0238>

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# Tribute Wall



“ *Inclusive Funeral Care created a Webcast in memory of Alexandra Bellow* ”



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**Team Inclusive Funeral Care** - May 12, 2025 at 11:08 PM

SL

“ *Congratulate prof. Stoddart in space wherever "entropy" takes you!* ”

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**Stephen Larente** - January 13 at 08:46 PM

SL

*There's a glass of sauvignon blanc de Mme Montalcini aswell! 🍷*

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**Stephen Larente** - January 13 at 08:51 PM

RW

“ I loved Alexandra and am so glad to have shared many lovely lunches and dinners and excursions in Chicago. Her companion Leonard Linsky was my partner Bill Tait's colleague and friend, and they were the founders, along with another colleague and friend Howard Stein, of the Old Fogies group which invited me and Alexandra and some few others to join their ranks for wonderful convivial dinners. Alexandra also regularly came to our Thanksgiving gatherings. They are all gone now but never forgotten. Alexandra was a great lady, a generous, kind, warm, brilliant person whom I will miss forever. My deepest sympathies to her family. The world is a darker place without her luminous inner and outer beauty. Farewell, carissima amica.

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**Rebecca West** - June 13, 2025 at 11:16 PM

BL

“ We are so reassured to find that Alexandra was surrounded by friends and family in her last days. Over the years a visit with Alexandra was part of our twice a year visits to Chicago, originally for my father's birthday in November and in June, to visit with my brother and see Hyde Park again. A regular part of each occasion was a dinner with the Old Fogies, distinguished retired professors, some of whom went back to her graduate years at Yale. Betty and I were adopted as junior members of this very august academy. On occasion we brought our three daughters and even one infant grandchild to join as yet another branch of Alexandra's extended adopted family. Wherever we went for our dinner, Alexandra was greeted by the patron as an old friend, and spent a wonderful dinner with her soft and warm conversation about whatever came up at the table. Often that would include updates on her reading of Don Quixote as she learned from generations of graduate students who worked their way through that masterpiece. We always got news of the doings of her friends in Chicago and occasional reunions with relatives and friends in Paris, and always an update on her connection with the Calderon family. We will miss her enormously, but take some solace in seeing how many share our memories and feelings for Alexandra. Betty Millar and our daughters Andrea, Ruth and Jean have asked me to forward their warm memories of Alexandra, and offer our condolences to her family and our many fellow friends.

*Bernard Linsky*

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**Bernard Linsky** - May 27, 2025 at 01:20 PM

EW

“ Alexandra was a very interesting woman who led such a full life -- and was also one of the sweetest, kindest people I've ever known. -  
*Emily Wright*

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**Emily Wright** - May 17, 2025 at 08:16 PM

MI

“ *STREAMING LINK*  
*<https://www.asimplestreaming.com/abellow/>*

Miguel - May 17, 2025 at 11:13 AM

RZ

“ *Our deepest condolences for the loss of Alexandra from Marina and Radu Zaharopol*

Radu Zaharopol - May 17, 2025 at 09:56 AM

SZ

“ *Wonderful memories of Alexandra as a dear friend. She will be greatly missed.*



Shufen Zhao - May 16, 2025 at 11:00 PM

RN

“ Dear Gugu, you were always part of our family, even when distances kept us far apart. Your bright memory will remain alive in our souls and hearts, as long as we live.

*I am attaching a family photo from October 2010, Gugu visiting my mother, Florica Nicolescu/Stafiescu, who had just turned 100. My mother was a close friend and collaborator of her mother, Florica Bagdasar, and Gugu was my godmother.*

*Radu and Letitia Nicolescu*



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Radu Nicolescu - May 16, 2025 at 05:00 PM

IP

“ We met Alexandra in Jerusalem, the city she loved . Together with two other wonderful friends we spent unforgettable evenings with stories and memories.

*Alexandra is a friend we will remember with affection, humor, intelligence and generosity.*

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Isabela Pitish - May 15, 2025 at 02:24 AM

SZ

*I met Alexandra when I was living in the same condo building as neighbors. She was sincere, intelligent and loving. Our friendship lasted a long time and we enjoyed so much getting together and spent time having a good time. There are so many loving memories of her and she will be greatly missed.*

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Shufen Zhao - May 16, 2025 at 10:51 PM

AN

“ This is the last photo I made of Gugu on January 1st 2024



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Anouca - May 14, 2025 at 08:26 PM

AN

“ Gugu . She was for me a very precious friend. She was also as an older sister as we said each other from time to time. Brilliant, very humane and very generous. Long ago, after the death of my mother, she invited me in Chicago and we spent a quiet time recalling memories from our life in Romania, from our parents, from our mothers who were very good friends, from our life later : she in the USA, me in France.

*Every time, during our meetings in Europe, or in the USA, in presence or on the phone, we had very many things to tell each other, to relate, to recount and to laugh about.*

*Thanks to Gugu and her memories we could have a better understanding of the traumatic events our families lived through.*

*Quite often the red thread of our conversation was. FREEDOM and the LACK of FREEDOM; the life of human beings in these two situations.*

*And we both liked to ask questions, to inquire to reach an understanding. How important and how beautiful.! it is so sad to imagine the future without these marvelous moments .*

*Anouca Andrescault*

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Anouca - May 14, 2025 at 08:25 PM

EL

“ *Four friends at a university event.  
We three, Gerry Szymanski, Ellen Wright, and Joanna Pinsky,  
regularly had lunch with Alexandra — for two decades.*

*She was brilliant, intellectually curious, articulate, witty, imaginative,  
sweet, generous, compassionate.*

*A total joy to be with.*

*I so miss talking with her.*

*Ellen*



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**Ellen** - May 13, 2025 at 07:32 PM

JP

“Gugu was a dear, dear friend of mine for many years. She was sensitive, caring, elegant, gentle and intelligent. Conversations with her were always stimulating. She would present an idea with questions that were carefully considered before they were stated. Perhaps that was her mathematician’s process at work, but Alexandra had a great range of interests, especially politics, especially now in these dark times that recalled her family trials in Romania. Alexandra was always supportive of my art, including my paintings and Art Encounter, the art education organization I co-founded. She cared deeply about her friends and family, and when visitors came from out of town, she made sure they would have interesting experiences at special exhibitions. I was profoundly touched by Gugu’s thoughtfulness when after my mother died, she gave me a silk scarf that belonged to her late mother. Alexandra, Ellen Wright, Gerry Szymanski and I have been getting together, monthly, for lunch for over 20 years. These three and a half hour gatherings have been a highlight for us all. And Alexandra will sorely be missed. Joanna Pinsky

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Joanna Pinsky - May 12, 2025 at 08:49 PM

DF

“ My deepest condolences for the family. Alexandra was extraordinary and she will be missed every day.

*I was one of her last Don Quixote tutors. We became friends over years of reading together. When I got my doctorate, she asked if she could come to my dissertation defense. She was proud of me and it was a great honor to have her there. She later told me defenses in Math were very different, “not as nice.” I’ll cherish this memory forever.*

*Thank you, querida amiga. Te quiero!*



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**Daniela Gutierrez Flores** - May 09, 2025 at 12:05 PM

LA

“ Here some of Gugu's own writings

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RQUWBLD7GuuBW7EWXiv1sSE5q0EdQgiO/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RQUWBLD7GuuBW7EWXiv1sSE5q0EdQgiO/view?usp=drive_link)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/17O279028aH0XIDFcjUbPABCPJjJCv4QE/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17O279028aH0XIDFcjUbPABCPJjJCv4QE/view?usp=drive_link)

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**Lalo** - May 08, 2025 at 08:47 PM

JR

“ In the late 1980s, Alexandra came to Ohio State University to give a talk. We went to lunch together at the Jai Lai restaurant on Olentangy Blvd. She described some work she was doing with Roger Jones. This led to our first paper together – *Convergence for Moving Averages* by Alexandra Bellow, Roger Jones, and Joseph Rosenblatt. After that, for the next seven years, Alexandra, Roger, and I continued to work together on various aspects of ergodic theory. Indeed, Roger Jones and I worked together, often with Mate Wierdl, until the early 2000s. In those years, with every new discovery, we would share the work with Alexandra and look forward to having her tell us what she thought of what we had done.

*It was wonderful to work with Alexandra. She loved discovering new mathematics, and figuring out how to write up the results with all the required details: definitions, lemmas, propositions, theorems, and corollaries. For research mathematicians like Alexandra and her many collaborators, there are few things in life that can give such a sense of achievement. This is how I remember my time with Alexandra: hours and days of research in mathematics (with many difficulties to deal with), spread over many years, and the happiness of creative accomplishment that was woven into it all.*

*Joseph Rosenblatt  
Fithian, Illinois*

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Joseph Rosenblatt - May 05, 2025 at 10:49 AM

MH

“ Our condolences to the family. Gugu was a dear friend of ours, whom we lost touch with, on account of much relocating. We remember her as a brilliant mind, lovely personality, good sense of humor, and such a pleasure to be in her company. May she rest in peace!



*Mirella Huss and late husband Jan Hugo Huss  
along with our daughter Nicole Unnasch*

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**Mirella Huss** - May 04, 2025 at 08:58 PM

DZ

“ We have so many wonderful memories with our beloved Alexandra, or Gugu, as we fondly called her. We are sharing a lovely memory here. Gugu, we will always love you. Aristotelis, Deborah, and Thomas Zournas.

*Picture taken in December 2006, from left Thomas Zournas (father of Aristotelis), Aristotelis Zournas, Deborah Zournas, Thomas Zournas (son of Aristotelis and Deborah), Alexandra Bellow, and Leonard Linsky.*



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**Deborah Zournas** - May 04, 2025 at 05:39 PM

RS

“ I have so many memories of time spent with Alexandra. I remember that after the great time we all had in Stockholm after the Nobel prize event, she and Uncle Saul came back to London and stayed for a time. It was my 16th birthday and we had a small party at our London house. Alexandra gave me a beautiful silk scarf that I loved. I had never received such a grown-up elegant gift and I was really touched to be considered an adult.

I also have many memories of summers we spent in the Knox house in Vermont. We enjoyed so many fine breakfasts and amazing meals together. We often went berry picking and then we would make jam. I had never done that before and thought it was very cool. One day Alexandra said she was going to make a blueberry tart and she did! It was really yummy!

I remember her always being so elegantly dressed, even in Vermont. And appreciated that she was both a brilliant mathematician as well as a beautiful woman. She was an important role model for me, showing me that being smart didn't mean you had to be a nerd or dowdy. She really was an amazing kind woman and I loved her very much. I will miss her. I know she is at peace now and is but suffering. That gives me great peace of mind. We will always love you, Alexandra. Xxx Love Rachel Greengus Schultz

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**Rachel Schultz** - May 04, 2025 at 12:29 PM

MF

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Maria Foster** - May 03, 2025 at 10:57 AM

SU

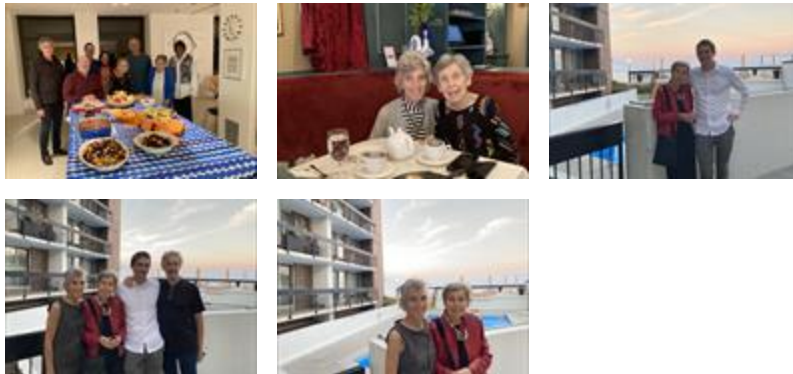
“ 2 files added to the album Alexandra



Susan - May 03, 2025 at 08:46 AM

SU

“ 5 files added to the album Alexandra



Susan - May 03, 2025 at 02:08 AM

SF

“ 6 files added to the album Alexandra



Samantha Fitzpatrick - May 02, 2025 at 08:55 PM

MJ

*When I hear the quote "A beautiful soul is never forgotten." I instantly think of Alexandra. To have beauty and brains is great. To have a big heart is wonderful. To possess all three, now that's a rarity! Our family has truly been so blessed to have had Alexandra in our lives. She will forever be loved and forever be missed.*

*~ Maria Foster, Todd Foster, Jesse Foster & Samantha Fitzpatrick(Foster)*

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**Maria Foster, Samantha, Todd and Jesse** - May 02, 2025 at 10:17 PM