



Lorna Denise Schiff

June 22, 1932 - October 5, 2025

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Lorna Denise Schiff, known to all as Denise, passed away peacefully in San Antonio, Texas, with her son Brian at her side. She was 93 years old.

Born June 22, 1932, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, to Cecil Richards and Phyllis Nelsen Harvey Richards, Denise lived a life marked by creativity, determination, and an extraordinary gift for creating beautiful spaces.

In her early career, Denise was a pioneer in Canadian television, working with Calgary's new TV station CFCN, where she did whatever was required and eventually hosted her own program, "Fashion with Denise." Her son Brian fondly recalls being on set during the Calgary Stampede while she produced advertisements featuring Lorne Greene of Bonanza fame.

Denise married Alexander Hughes in 1952, and together they had two sons: Brian (married to Lissa) and Graeme (married to Marie Christine). After her divorce in 1963, she married Sioma Solomon Schiff in Calgary in 1964, beginning a devoted partnership that would span 35 years until his death in 1999.

With Sioma, Denise discovered her true calling as a builder and creator of homes. In Calgary, she helped build their first house and a beloved cottage in Bragg Creek. Following their move to London in 1972, she oversaw the construction of their apartment in Eaton Square. After which, she created her masterwork in Marbella, Spain—building La Dacha with magnificent gardens that won the Trophy for Best Rock Garden of the Costa del Sol in 1984. In 1988 they moved to Monaco. After Sioma's passing in 1999, she purchased and renovated La Bergerie in Mouans-Sartoux, north of Cannes—her final building project, and a happy vacation spot for Graeme's children.

Following a stroke in October 2012, Denise showed characteristic determination in rebuilding her life. In March 2015, she moved to San Antonio to be near Brian, residing first at Blue Skies West, then with Brian and Lissa during COVID, and finally at her residence in Castle Hills from 2021 until her passing.

Denise is survived by her sons Brian Hughes (Lissa Martinez) and Graeme Hughes (Marie Christine Niedergang); her grandchildren Richard Hughes, Neil Hughes, Christopher Hughes, and Rachel Hughes; and the lives she touched with her warmth, creativity, and indomitable spirit.

We thank the women who cared for her over the last year: Joana, Maira, Nicola, Patty, and Wendy, as well as those from hospice who helped ease her passing.

She will be taken to England to join her parents, where we will hold a private memorial.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Sioma and Denise Schiff Fund (3545200) at MIT in memory of Denise Schiff. This fund supports undergraduates at MIT. Credit card gifts may be made using the following link:

<https://giving.mit.edu/denise-schiff>. Checks may be made payable to MIT and mailed to: MIT, P.O. Box 412926, Boston, MA 02241-2926, Attn: Memorial Gifts Office. Please include the fund name in the memo line or cover note.

Tribute Wall

GR

“ My condolences to Brian and Graeme families. I'm so sorry to hear about Denise passing. Pam and I had the pleasure of visiting Denise (2006) in her beautiful setting near Cannes/Nice. We had such a beautiful experience, getting to listen about her life there, but more importantly getting to know Denise better. Our visit to Fondation Maeght, and our afternoon lunch with Brian and Graeme and families were a perfect end to our visit. Her love of family shone throughout our visit.

My father and Sioma Schiff became friends and business partners in Calgary. Denise and Sioma, in Rostoker children's eyes were so elegant, fashionable, and stylish, and yet down to earth. When Denise commented on a subject, I would become very attentive, as I knew that she was a woman of few, but meaningful words. I guess the word "wisdom" comes to mind when I think of Denise. There is so much I didn't know about Denise, especially during her early life. A big thank you for mentioning them. I will always remember Denise fondly. Her generosity was sincere, and I retain a great friendship with her children for which I am grateful for. Gerard/ Jerry Rostoker

Gerard/Jerry Rostoker - November 05, 2025 at 12:30 PM

BH

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Brian Hughes - October 07, 2025 at 06:52 PM