

## Renata Laxova

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MADISON - Renata Laxova died after a brief illness on Nov. 30, 2020, at age 89. Her family was at her side and close by.

Renata was born in Brno, Czechoslovakia, where she spent a happy first eight years. In 1939, she was sent by her parents on one of Nicholas Winton's Kindertransports to England to live with a family during the Holocaust. She returned to her parents in Czechoslovakia in 1946. She earned her M.D. and later her Ph.D. at Masaryk University in Brno. Her specialties were pediatrics and medical genetics. Soon after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, she escaped for a second time back to England, this time with her husband and two daughters. While in England, she worked with Lionel S. Penrose at the Kennedy-Galton Centre in London, researching mental deficiency. In 1975, she moved to Madison, Wis., where she joined the faculty at the UW Medical School.

During her tenure, Renata made foundational contributions to the fields of medical genetics, human developmental disabilities, genetic counseling and prenatal diagnosis. She established the Statewide Genetic Services Network in Wisconsin, instituted the University of Wisconsin Master of Genetic Counselor Studies degree program, and advocated tirelessly for genetics services in Wisconsin and at the national level. She was a brilliant clinician and an educator who inspired her students to be more compassionate practitioners. She was devoted to her patients, her career, her colleagues, and her students.

She loved people and life itself; she wrote that she had "no regrets." Her passions included music, opera, books, walks with friends and dogs, and children. She was kind, gracious, compassionate, generous, like a mother or grandmother to many, and an amazing listener during tough times. She adored her grandson, Zander.

As a Holocaust survivor, Renata felt she owed her and her parents' lives to Sir Nicholas Winton. She felt strongly that it was her duty to educate about tolerance. She gave many talks to middle and high school students throughout the U.S. and Europe about her experiences with the Holocaust; her message was "let us never forget what happened."

She was preceded in death by her husband, Tibor Lax. She is survived by her daughter, Daniela Lax (Linda Snyder) of Tucson, Ariz.; her younger daughter, Anita Laxova of Madison, Wis.; and her grandson, Zander Steichen of Prescott, Ariz.

In lieu of flowers, please visit the link for Cress funeral home,  
<https://www.cressfuneralservice.com/obituary/Renata-Laxova>.