

Documentarian pays tribute to his late sister, comedienne Judy Toll

- By: BONNIE SQUIRES

- Apr 10, 2007

By BONNIE SQUIRES

Judy Toll: The Funniest Woman You Never Heard Of, one of the documentaries featured in the Philadelphia Film Festival, is Havertown native Gary Toll's tribute to his late sister, actress/comedienne Judy Toll. You will laugh very hard at the unique comedy talent that was Judy Toll and wish you had had a chance to spend an evening with this engaging woman.

Gary Toll moved his family from suburban Philadelphia to Los Angeles, enrolled in film school, and spent years going through home movies, television clips, videotapes, and photos of his talented sister in order to create this film.

It all hangs together seamlessly: interviews with Judy Toll's friends, fellow comedians, boyfriends, mother and siblings; clips of Toll's hilarious comedy routines and crazy characters. When she becomes the female version of Andrew Dice Clay, "Andrea Dice Clay," she is so completely immersed in her black-leather-jacket-and-chains persona that even Regis Philbin cannot coax her to "be herself" on his talk show.

My favorite clip is Judy Toll as Sheila Naselstein, fanning herself with a piece of matzah - which instantly cracks in half. With a withering look, she tells the audience, "You all

saw that. I'm going to return this!" That's the kind of offbeat humor she brought to every project.

With her blonde good looks, a combination of Judy Holliday and Gilda Radner, it's hard to believe that Judy Toll just missed being a comedy icon in our society. She wrote for the TV show *Sex and the City*, and she and a partner created *Casual Sex?*, a vehicle they co-starred in at the Groundlings Improv Club in L.A. When Hollywood cast *Casual Sex* for a motion picture in 1988, they passed over Toll, a snub she never got over.

Her zest for life led her to marry even as she was terminally ill with melanoma. Her motto was "Always leave them laughing." And that's what this film does.