

# SPONGE NEAR

in December 1998. A year later, an X-ray taken at another hospital revealed that the surgeon had left the surgical sponge inside him.

The star tackled the situation with his trademark wry humor. "My doctor said that even under strong sedation, I could talk intravenously. But it would have been better if I could have said a few words before the closure.

"An X-ray later showed that a surgical sponge was inside me, but at my age, it was too dangerous to try and remove it — so, if we ever meet, don't hug me as it could cause a laundry problem!"

In late February 2003, the great humorist suffered his paralyzing stroke. Almost a year later, on January 27, he passed away peacefully in his sleep at age 85.

At his side were his beloved wife Miriam and daughter Randy.

"Jack was not a religious man, and he chose in advance to be cremated," Miriam told *The ENQUIRER*. "We had a small, private ceremony, with just the immediate family, to celebrate his life."

Paar left television in 1965 after hosting his third season of "The Jack Paar Program" — which gave him lots of quality time with his loving family.

"Jack retired relatively young, so we had many years to enjoy his retirement," said Miriam. "We had already traveled the world for his work, so we mostly just stayed home and relaxed. Jack loved his Connecticut property and home; he took great pride in his surroundings.

"Our daughter Randy, her husband Stephen and our 19-year-old grandson Andrew live nearby, so he was able to enjoy the love of his family."

While Paar could unleash a sharp tongue and sometimes demonstrated a short fuse, he is remembered fondly by the many performers he

## ENQUIRER EXCLUSIVE!



**JACK & MIRIAM**, who treated her husband with "love, devotion and kindness to the end."

discovered and lent a helping hand.

"Jack was responsible for the first big push for my career," Diller told *The ENQUIRER*.

"He presented me on his show so many times, and did it in such a fun way, that he really got my career going. He gave me a name, and made me commercially viable.

"After that, Jack and I became very close friends. We would talk almost daily. Twice a week I'd send jokes to him and his wife Miriam to give them a laugh.

"They're dear, dear, people. I will miss Jack very much."

— **ROBIN MIZRAHI**  
and **REGINALD FITZ**