



Susan Hovanec

March 31, 1941 - October 10, 2013

Susan Crais Hovanec, a retired Foreign Service officer with more than 30 years experience, died at her home in Oxford, MD, on October 10 following a heroic battle with lung cancer. She was seventy-two.

Mother, stepmother, artist, teacher, diplomat, gourmand, a force to be reckoned with, Ms. Hovanec was a native of New Orleans. She graduated from Mississippi State College for Women and later earned a Masters of Public Administration from George Washington University.

Ms. Hovanec joined the U.S. Information Agency and served in Zaire, Mexico, Serbia, Lebanon, Kenya, and Croatia. She was public affairs advisor during the 1992-95 Yugoslav wars, and also served at the U.S. embassy in wartime Beirut.

At the State Department in Washington, Ms. Hovanec was senior advisor for press and public diplomacy in the Office of Women's issues and in the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. Throughout her career overseas and in the United States, she connected with women from all walks of life. Ms. Hovanec worked with Afghan women journalists who contributed to a documentary, "Afghanistan Unveiled," an oral history that was nominated for a 2005 Emmy. The film documented life under the Taliban as told by eye witnesses and survivors.

She also helped initiate the International Women of Courage Awards, given annually by the U.S. Secretary of State to women who, often at the risk of their own lives, work for human rights in their countries. She received the Secretary of State's 2005 Award for Public Outreach for raising the profile of the Office of International Women's Issues and for deepening public understanding of U.S. foreign policy.

A longtime resident of Washington DC, Ms. Hovanec retired to Oxford, MD, and later served as an instructor in media and communications at the Washington Internship Institute.

Her marriages to Joseph Kirkby and Vincent Hovanec ended in divorce. Survivors include two daughters, Stephanie Kirkby- Cockey of Alexandria, VA, and Leslie Caroline Kirkby of Pitman, NJ; and four grandchildren.

Services are planned for Oxford, Maryland, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

Previous Events

Funeral Liturgy

OCT **19**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church Easton
7906 Ocean Gateway
Easton, MD 21601

Tribute Wall



“ *Susan Hovanec*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Susan Hovanec*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Susan Hovanec*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *May Susan's love keep all your family together. Hang on to all those good times. I saw Susan last year at a gathering. We chatted like we had seen each other days before. We talked on and on about the grandchildren. She was a proud grandma and nice person. Miss seeing you all.*

Darlene Jones - October 18, 2013 at 04:45 PM



“ *My deepest sympathies to the family. My thoughts and prayers are with Stephanie, Leslie, and their loved ones during this difficult time. May you be surrounded with loving light, and know that there are people holding you in their hearts. ~Jenna*

Jenna Stewart - October 16, 2013 at 10:11 PM

MO

“ I have known Susan and worked with her many times over the years. I will never forget her warm, deep laugh. I offer my deepest sympathy her family.

Sincerely,

Monica O'Keefe, retired Foreign Service Officer

Monica O'Keefe - October 16, 2013 at 01:22 AM

CP

“ Susan and I worked very closely together at the State Department in the office of international women's issues. She was always very smart, energetic, funny and fun! She was my first "coach" on how to deliver a speech or give an interview and I couldn't have asked for a better one. She loved her work with a passion but her daughters and grandchildren always came first in her heart. She will live on in the memories of her friends, colleagues, and the countless people (especially the women) around the world who directly benefited from all her endeavors!

Charlotte (Charlie) Ponticelli

Charlotte (Charlie) Ponticelli - October 14, 2013 at 01:10 PM

MQ

I was lucky enough to be touched by Susan's magical diplomacy and warm spirit. Her tireless work for Afghan women and children especially will live on through eternity. We worked as counter parts when I was working with the Afghan Embassy. She was remembered as well as honored before a large audience last night at a charity event for Afghan orphans in Carlsbad, California. A fund was also named in her honor for students of International Orphan Care. Susan will always be in my heart. Maryam Qudrat

maryam qudrat - October 14, 2013 at 08:02 PM