



Jane Sullivan Duquette

1940 - 2015

Jane Austin (Sullivan) Duquette "The Artist" died peacefully on Sunday May 10, 2015 surrounded by loved ones. The eldest daughter of the late James J. and Margaret Austin Sullivan, Jane was a lifelong resident of Springfield, MA as well as a devoted communicant of Holy Cross Church. After graduating from Cathedral High school she attended the University of Massachusetts and Newton College of the Sacred Heart. Jane's first job after college was at WWLP-TV22 where she was known as "Miss Jane" the host of the popular children's show Romper Room. But Jane's true love and life would be painting. Her style was impressionistic and she was one of very few women chosen to study with renowned artist Robert Brackman who then sent Jane to study with his protégé William Schultz with whom she remained close friends until his death in 2006. Jane worked mainly in pastels and oil. She painted portraits, still lifes, and landscapes. Her works are owned by a number of area corporations, such as Mass Mutual, the Bank of Boston, and the Baystate Medical Center. Her paintings of Springfield scenes and people continue to hang in public spaces throughout greater Springfield. Scores of private collectors from around the world own Jane Duquette originals. Though Jane's paintings were shown and sold by Galleries on New York's Madison Avenue and Newbury Street in Boston, the best way to get a Jane Duquette original was to knock on her door where the experience of shopping for paintings or sitting for portraits launched many lifelong friendships. Though she tried to enforce a three painting maximum for any single buyer, several very loyal customers who were savvy enough to bring Jane coffee or baked goods may have managed to sneak in a fourth or fifth. These offerings became even more important with the closings of Lederer's and Gus & Paul's bakeries in Jane's East Forest Park neighborhood. The loss of Lederer's chocolate-covered doughnuts was tough, but the more recent loss of Gus & Paul's lemon Danish was even tougher. For Jane there were three food groups, coffee, baked goods, and cigarettes. Though passionate about her own work, Jane was also keenly interested in the welfare of her fellow artists. In 1977, she founded the first non-profit art gallery in Western Massachusetts. Jane and her dear friend Avis Neigher Gareffa founded the Avis Neigher Gallery, Inc. The gallery gave artists from around the Pioneer Valley a downtown venue to show and sell their work with no middlemen to eat up the profits. Knowing that most artists had little money for frames, Jane enlisted a local framer to set up shop in the gallery and to offer his services at reasonable rates in exchange for a steady stream of customers. The Avis Neigher Gallery has served hundreds, if not thousands, of artists over the years and remains open for business to this day; an enduring tribute to women with vision who wouldn't take no for an answer. Jane was also very much involved with her neighborhood and her city of Springfield. The daughter of a one-time mayoral candidate and a longtime Superintendent of Streets & Engineering in Springfield, Jane proudly participated in local politics. Whether it was

-serving on local committees or commissions, or helping her close friend Kateri Walsh campaign for elective office, Jane was an active citizen. WGBY-TV, the local PBS affiliate, was near and dear to Jane's heart. She volunteered for and contributed to the Annual Channel 57 Auction every year in the 1970s and 80s. With four growing children Jane took on another role to help pay the bills in the 1980s. She became an art consultant. She was the Art Consultant for Bay Bank Valley, Third National Bank, and for the Bank of Boston. She commissioned, purchased, framed, hung, installed, and cataloged the Bank of Boston's entire Western Mass Collection. It took two years to finish and she loved every minute of it. She took particular joy in recounting how she personally directed the crane operator as he placed the large sculpture of an eagle that still sits in front of the building in downtown Springfield. In 1999, Holy Cross Parish celebrated its 50th Anniversary and Jane, a parishioner since the church's founding, was very pleased to contribute to the Church's restoration prior to the celebration. She painted the Stations of the Cross, dedicating the work to her father. Though less active in recent years, Jane was very pleased to paint and donate a large painting to the recently opened YWCA shelter for women in East Forest Park. The painting, which is on display in the lobby of the Agency headquarters building on Clough Street in Springfield, depicts a large tea party at Forest Park. Jane recruited more than 150 local women from all walks of life and assembled them at the park for several mass sittings. It was a labor of love that not only helped a good cause, but also gave Jane an opportunity to put dozens of her Springfield area friends and admirers on canvas. These sittings were often more like circuses than sittings and Jane was the happy ring master. Through it all "The Artist" was also a mother whose four children never wanted for encouragement or care. She was fiercely proud and protective of her children and taught them the value of loyalty and determination, and to never take no for an answer, unless it was from her. Dubbed "Nana" by her first grandchild, Jane spent the last eighteen years of her life enjoying and entertaining her grandchildren while gently (not really) instructing her sons and daughters-in-law in the art of parenting, but her biggest preoccupation was trying to marry off her cherished only daughter "Baby Lauren." Jane was pre-deceased by her eldest son James Jay Duquette and is survived by her first husband William G. Duquette of Springfield; two sons, Jonathan Duquette and his wife Stacy of Port Washington, NY, and Jerold Duquette and his wife Kara of Longmeadow, MA; A daughter Lauren Duquette and her partner Ken Demers of Holyoke, MA; Two sisters Nancy Flanagan and her husband Robert of Springfield and Connie Boland and her husband Thomas of Geneva IL; Three sisters-in-law, Mary Duquette of Belchertown, Helen Duquette of East Longmeadow, and Patricia Duquette and her Husband Robert of Longmeadow; Seven cherished grandchildren Austin, Deirdre, James, Jerold, Bridget, Francis, and Sasha; and fourteen nieces and nephews. Visiting hours for Jane will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2015 from 4 to 7pm at Sampson's, Chapel of the Acres funeral Home, 21 Tinkham Road, Springfield. Her funeral will be Thursday, May 21, 2015 at 8:30am at Sampson's followed by the Liturgy of Christian Burial at 10am at Holy Cross Church, 219 Plumtree Road, Springfield. Rites of Committal and Interment will follow at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery, 421 Tinkham Road, Springfield. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions in Jane's memory may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105-1942 and to WGBY, 44 Hampden Street, Springfield, MA 01103.

