



Patricia Lefevere

March 30, 2023

Patricia Lefevere, 79, of Englewood, died unexpectedly on March 30 from complications of cancer treatment and congestive heart failure. A passionate journalist and intrepid world traveler, she retained her trademark good humor to the end.

She is survived by her beloved daughter Katelijne Lefevere, son-in-law Damon Broglie and grandsons John and George Broglie, of Richardson, TX. She will be deeply missed by them and by her many relatives and friends around the world.

Born in Saint Cloud, MN to Helen Murray and Clarence Scharber in 1943, Patricia graduated from the Marquette University College of Journalism in 1965. She later did graduate work in England at the University of Essex, where she met Andre Lefevere. After their marriage they lived in Hong Kong, Belgium and Australia before moving to Austin, TX in 1983.

Patricia filed stories from 22 nations on six continents. A business and finance reporter in Hong Kong and Belgium, she switched to religion after reporting on the work of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland in 1976 as it and other religious organizations sought to deal with the huge resettlement issues of a quarter million refugees rendered homeless by the Vietnam War. She reported for many U.S. publications, but most regularly for the

independent National Catholic Reporter (NCR), where she was a significant contributor for more than 40 years.

Tom Fox, former NCR editor, recalled Patricia as “a tenacious researcher and reporter, one of the finest who contributed to NCR.” He said, “You could aim her at any subject and be assured she would return with a well thought out report. I feel honored and most grateful to have collaborated with her over many years.”

Tom Roberts, also a former NCR editor, called Patricia “an editor’s dream: impressively smart with a great sense of humor, always prepared, a self-starter with boundless energy and an engagement with the news worldwide that was remarkably detailed and nuanced.”

“She was inexhaustibly and intelligently curious, deeply read across disciplines and ready, it seemed, to go anywhere on a moment’s notice,” he said.

“In ways subtle and bold, she was fearless. I confess to using her occasionally as an example when working with young writers over the years. I would describe her as eager to talk to as many people as she could find that were connected to a story. “She staunchly guarded the integrity of the reporting craft and believed stories usually have more than two sides.

“Her interviewees included everyone from Nobel laureates to a death row prisoner. She won top awards from the Catholic Press Association for her interview with death row prisoner Thomas Andy Barefoot in Huntsville, Texas, on the eve of his execution in 1984 and for her cover story on the attack and destruction of the World Trade Center in New York on 9/11.

“Her understanding of the post-Vatican II church and contemporary theologians was on full display in an extensive appreciation she wrote for NCR following the death of controversial Swiss theologian Hans Kung, based in part on dozens of conversations and interviews she had with him over

decades.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/people/hans-k-ng-celebrated-and-controversial-swiss-theologian-has-died>

http://www.natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2004c/090304/090304l.php

“In 2019, Patricia spent an academic year as a participant in the University of Notre Dame’s Inspired Leadership Initiative ... Another participant, learning of Patricia’s death, sent a group email that said: ‘RIP Patricia ... Please send us an interview with God.’ One can only imagine the lengths she might go to in working on that assignment.”

<https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/guest-voices/patricia-lefevere-globe-spanning-ncr-contributor-more-40-years-dies>

Patricia lived in Tenafly during her marriage to the late Dr. Richard Gardner. She later moved to Englewood and married Joseph Weitekamp, who preceded her in death along with her parents and sister, Marie Elaine Scharber.

Funeral mass will be held April 4, noon, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Tenafly. Burial and graveside service to be held April 15, 10:30 a.m., at St. Martin Cemetery in Rogers, MN.

Funeral Mass will be livestreamed through Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church Facebook Page.

<https://www.facebook.com/olmctenafly>

In lieu of flowers, friends and family can donate to Catholic Relief Services and/or Jesuit Refugee Service.

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

APR 4. 12:00 PM (ET)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church
10 County Rd
Tenafly, NJ 07670
(201) 568-0545

Tribute Wall

TK

“ I met Patricia (Pat) when I was studying for a year in Belgium. We became instant friends . She was enormously generous and open and loving and I don't know how I would have made it through that year of intense study and painting (Fulbright year) without her we took yoga classes together and she invited me to dinner many timesLater, she stayed with us when she came to Boston , and we continued to communicate at least once a year (during the holidays) until I realized I hadn't heard from her the last two years...and googled her ...and alas, her brilliance and the generous love that she gave to all who were lucky enough to know her is eternal... miss you ...

Tamara Krendel - February 19 at 11:51 AM

CB

“ So very sorry to hear about Pat. She was such an accomplished woman. She was one of my classmates at St. Michael High School, Class of '61, and surely made her mark upon the world. At one of our class reunions, the main room had (loud) music playing and a lot of us crowded out into the hall instead so we could hear Pat tell about some of her adventures.

Her Bavarian Scharber ancestor and my Bavarian Ebner ancestor both "came over on the same boat" - the "Martha" in 1846.

Pat and her family will remain in my prayers.

Carole Beach - April 04, 2023 at 12:01 PM

AV

“ Patricia was a friend to everyone. She was an amazing women. She lived her life to the fullest . She was a high school classmate of mine. And she never forgot us. She made it to many of our class reunion parties. How we loved to hear her stories. Well done , Patricia.
We pray for your family, who she loved so much.

Alice V - April 03, 2023 at 08:14 PM

JH

*From John Haskins
Patricia, my neighbor and my favorite scribe. I will miss your energy and I will miss your stories. Rest in peace.*

JOHN HASKINS - April 04, 2023 at 11:50 AM

LG

Patricia was one of the most interesting and intelligent persons I have ever met. Over the past twenty years or so our friendship grew close and we spent many happy times together sharing stories about our families and discussing current events. She was an astute journalist and had a great sense of humor.

I can't believe that she is no longer here. I miss her company and companionship very much. She left a great legacy to her family, whom she loved dearly.

Linda Elaine Gould - May 12, 2023 at 03:34 PM

VG

“ Our deepest sympathy goes out to your family. I will miss her and our wonderful chats. I looked forward to her visits. She was an interesting and lovely human.
Veronica Day Gary

Veronica Day Gary - April 03, 2023 at 03:33 PM

RM

“ Sincerest condolences to Katelijne, Damon, and her two precious grandsons.

She was a wonderful, caring, thoughtful friend. She will be missed as will her “newsy” Christmas letters.

*Warmest thoughts to all,
Rona (Carolyn’s sister)*

Rona Matisoff - April 03, 2023 at 11:10 AM

HG

“ *I met Pat at my nephew's home, we immediately struck up a conversation. She was so warm and friendly. She led a very interesting life which she shared with such great gusto and warmth. I was saddened to hear of her passing. She will be missed at these gatherings. Condolences to her family and may she be resting in peace in the Lords arms.*

Hilda Gonzalez - April 03, 2023 at 09:58 AM

CR

“ *I cherish memories of my time together with Patricia at choir and in George McKenna’s unique faith sharing group. At times I would ask Patricia to talk about the famous people she had interviewed but she liked nothing better than to tell me about the extraordinary accomplishments of her beloved grandsons John and George. Wishing, dearest friend, that you are resting in peace and are able to hear the choir of angels without the need anymore of your imperfect hearing aids. Blessings, Carole Reiss*

Carole Reiss - April 02, 2023 at 12:12 PM