



**MARIA ANTONIA JOANNA DASCHYNYTSCH-KULCZYCKY**  
**1945 – 2018**

My family and I regret to inform you of the death of our beloved Maria. She passed away peacefully at home on June 11, after a long, undisclosed illness. Maria lived a rewarding life devoted to family and friends, community service, intellectual interests, career, the arts, and adventure.

Maria was born in Marienbad, Czechoslovakia, during the waning days of World War II, as her parents separately left Ukraine. Eventually, they reunited in a postwar refugee camp in the American zone. They lived in several such camps for seven years. She loved to tell the story of someone a few years ago asking if she had ever heard of the International Relief Organization. "Heard of it," she exclaimed, "I still have one of its blankets!" She also remembered an episode in one of the strict German camp hospitals when she required minor surgery. Her mother was only permitted to see her through a glass partition, but she did arrange for the delivery of a cheese cake. It remained Maria's favorite desert.

In 1952, the Kulczycky family, by then including Maria's sister Daria, received permission to immigrate to the United States. After a stormy winter voyage across the Atlantic, the family landed and lived in New York City. In 1954, her father's brother enticed the family to move to Chicago's bustling Ukrainian Village.

Maria was a strong intellect and had a prodigious memory. She began school in the refugee camps, continued her studies at St. George Ukrainian Catholic School in New York, and completed her elementary education at St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School in Chicago. For high school, she chose Immaculata. She wanted to go to the prestigious St. Ignatius College Prep, but at the time girls were not allowed to enroll – a sore point with her to the end.

Immaculata nuns urged Maria to attend a Catholic university, but she wanted a secular education and chose Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, where she received undergraduate and graduate degrees. She was especially fond of her time as a counselor at NW's prestigious National High School Institute for promising high school students, the Cherubs.

Upon graduation, Maria accepted a job with the United States Savings and Loan League, one of the nation's premier national trade associations – with one stipulation. She wanted to work that summer for the Associated Press to cover the soon-to-be-infamous 1968 Democratic Convention.

At the U. S. League, she worked on the organization's highly-regarded publication, *Savings and Loan News*. She covered stories that ranged from mundane member activities to ground-breaking coverage of newly-created mortgage backed securities. Apart from her mainline professional assignments, one of her specialties was the organization's annual convention "Dining Guide." A certified "foodie" before the term was popular, many members and staff relished Maria's recommendations each year.

She was known at the League for her opinions about the role of women in workplaces dominated by men. She gained acceptance of pant suits for women, quietly lobbied for equal pay for equal work for men and women, and argued for women's acceptance in the annual, men-only golf outing.

Maria and I married in 1978, juggling our careers, embracing Catherine, Nancy and Richard, and Philip in our family, welcoming Nina, and all the while maintaining our robust lives. All the children still talk about our week each summer at Fernandina Beach in Florida. Similarly, Maria formed strong bonds with our grandchildren – Nicholas, Oliver, Rebecca and Owen, and with other additions to the family, Richard and Olivier.

During the 1990s, Maria's mother, Maria, Nina and I moved to Washington, DC, in my work-related move, and Maria found a job with the Fannie Mae Foundation. We remained in Washington for eight years, before returning to Chicago.

Life with Maria was always an adventure, whether camping, skiing, biking, visiting museums, traveling or walking in the park. Over the course of her all-too-brief life, we visited over 40 countries, including China, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand, Tanzania, Iceland, Peru, Argentina, Chile, and many European countries, including Ukraine. As recently as March, we were hiking in Patagonia.

Family was central to Maria, whether her family or mine. She loved her Ukrainian heritage and family roots. They included Yuri-Frans Kulczycky who was hero of the Siege of Vienna in 1683 and credited with establishing the first coffee house in the city (now Nina and Olivier's home). Maria corresponded for a few years with her mother's father, a priest who had been imprisoned by the Soviets in Siberia. Also, she embraced my family and heritage, learning Southern customs and encouraging my genealogical explorations on both sides of my family.

Community service was natural for Maria, too. She was active over the years in the Ukrainian scouting group, Plast. She worked with Ukrainian community organizations. She was involved with professional groups in Washington and Chicago that focused on Ukrainian issues. She devoted considerable time in strengthening St. Nicholas Cathedral School and was working diligently in her last days to encourage the revitalization of her eparchy and parish, helping organize and raise money for major repairs to its magnificent, historic Cathedral.

She loved the arts, Chicago arts in particular – symphony, opera, theater, ballet and museums. A summer evening on the lawn at the Grant Park Summer Festival was essential.

Maria's was an extraordinary life, well-lived. Family, friends, community and I will miss her enormously. Вічна Пам'ять.

Lamar Brantley  
June 2018