



Cécile Marie Jeunet Spalding

September 16, 1924 - April 17, 2020

Cécile Marie (Jeunet) Spalding died Friday, April 17, 2020. She was born in Paris, France September 16, 1924 to André and Aimée Jeunet. Following in the footsteps of her architect father, she enrolled in the Ecole Municipal de Dessin et Art, graduating with honors in 1945. She attended this prominent Paris school throughout the Nazi occupation, during which she suffered greatly from hunger, cold winters and fear. Following graduation Cécile began working professionally, creating designs for fabric and wallpaper.

In the Spring of 1945, while visiting a friend in the vicinity of Versailles, she met Richard Spalding, a corporal in the U.S. [Army] Air Force stationed nearby. Their attraction to one another was immediate. After Richard was transferred to Germany, their relationship blossomed through letters—a correspondence that continued as he returned home and resumed studies at the University of Louisville School of Music.

Following his graduation in 1948, Richard returned to Paris, where the couple was married. In 1949 they set sail for America and initially took up residence with Spalding's parents in Louisville. Cécile soon learned English proficiently, though French remained the family language. In 1958 Cécile and Richard were happy to facilitate the immigration of her parents to Louisville.

Cécile was well received in Louisville. Almost immediately, she began taking on private students for tutoring in French—a vocation she developed and carried on for many years, earning the gratitude of many, some of whom became life long friends. During the early 1950s, she continued her design career through agents in New York. After beginning to raise a family (Steven, Cynthia, and later Richard J.) her professional work tapered off; however, Cecile's creative urge never ceased and her artistic talents were multidisciplinary. She found new outlets in pottery, and hand printing exquisite Christmas Cards that were eagerly awaited by friends everywhere. Her delicate pastels captured the mood of favorite vacation spots. And she became a masterful seamstress.

Cécile's deeply felt sense of French culture was a gift to us all. She was a marvelous

cook, recreating the classic dishes of her country. Her dinners for guests and family were much-awaited affairs, bringing quiche, escargots and even crêpes to Louisville before they were in vogue. She left her children and grandchildren with an intuitive understanding about food, and an appreciation of what it means to be together around the table. Cécile forever maintained her sense of being a Parisienne—even in her declining months she talked about her beloved city with detail and passion.

Cécile also was devoted to her family and friends: she spent happy hours corresponding with loved ones in France. She loved telling stories of her childhood and early youth, hiking with her father near their ancestral village in the French Jura. She also spent long hours writing in vivid detail about her experience of living in Paris during the Nazi occupation.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, Lucien. She is survived by her husband, her children Steven (Leslie); Cynthia; and Richard J. (Elizabeth); and her grandchildren Andrew, Claire, Virginia, Margot and Magdalena.

Her beauty, modesty and honesty will always be remembered by her family and friends. She appreciated all the arts, and especially loved attending Louisville's orchestra, ballet and opera. Arrangements for a celebration of Cécile's life will be announced at a future time. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy be made in the form of donations in her name to the Louisville Orchestra or to the Olmsted Parks Conservancy. Ratterman and Sons on Bardstown Road is caring for the family, and online condolences may be shared at <http://www.ratterman.com>.

Comments



“ Richard, Steven, Cynthia, and Richard Jr., I am just seeing this more than a year after her death, but wanted to leave a note saying what a great lady Cecile was. I always thoroughly enjoyed her company. I hope you are all well. Best wishes.

David Stairs

David Stairs - July 27, 2021 at 10:05 AM



“ Mr. Spalding,

My sister and I want to express our deepest sympathies to you and your family over the death of your wife Cécile. The story of your life together was a touching portrait of you both.

I know that it is impossible for you to remember the thousands of student you taught during your career. But we remember you. My sister and I were your students at Highland Junior High School during the early 1960s. I played French Horn in the band under Mr. Davis. My sister was in the Chorus a few years later. Each of us gratefully remember your outstanding musicology classes. You were one of the finest teachers we had during our school years.

I have wonderful memories of learning about the instruments of the orchestra, of struggling to tell the difference between the sound of the viola and the sound of the cello, of the voice lessons you patiently provided your students, and of listening to and learning about Eine kleine Nachtmusik. Best of all was studying the opera Carmen. It was an enriching and maturing experience that I've carried with me ever since. And I still remember your playing Spike Jones's version after we finished the real thing.

There are no words which can give solace to someone who has lost the love of their life and their lifetime companion. Still, we want to say “be comforted” because you deserve comfort for all that you did for Cécile, for your family, and for your students.

Deepest sympathy and gratitude,

John Crider and Pam Yeager

John Crider - June 02, 2020 at 09:54 AM



“ Mr. Spalding, I just heard about Cecile on the afternoon news. This is May 29th, and when I heard Richard and Cecile Spalding, I jumped to my feet and grabbed my iPad.

How many times I think of you and about how I admired you and missed you when I graduated! I did so want you to be proud of me. I m so sorry about Cecile and I remember her but didn't get to know her. Whenever I would drive by where you used to live on Taylorsville Road, I would look over at the house and think of you.

Time does fly...and now I'm 85 but healthy nd still driving. I have children and grandchildren in Louisville and Bardstown, where I live. I am so sorry about Cecile and I hope you will be doing allright. I would love to see you. You have meant so much to me.

Take care of yourself. MArtha DeSpain Gentry

martha despain gentry - May 29, 2020 at 05:50 PM



“ Words can not express my heart felt love and sympathy for you and your family. Cecile

was a special lady and will be missed. My sons sends their love. Mae Lathon

mae Lathon - April 21, 2020 at 04:39 PM



“ So sorry for the loss of your wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother. This must be so hard for you.

She was a wonderful person.

Joern Soltau - April 20, 2020 at 02:11 PM



“ Richard and family - The obituary was a wonderful tribute to your mother. She was a remarkable woman who led a full, loving, and giving life. I know you'll miss her tremendously, but are consoled by the fact that she leaves the world a much better place for having been such a large presence within your lives and in the lives of all those who knew her.

It must have been some of her generous spirit within you that led you to take a chance on me and help me get a new start after my big setback years ago. That hasn't been forgotten, and, in appreciation, I will donate \$50 to the Olmsted Parks Conservancy in her memory. God bless, Joe Greene

Joe Greene - April 19, 2020 at 05:40 PM



“ Richard and family, I am so sorry to hear of Cecile’s passing. I’m Nina Spalding Hudelson, daughter to cousin Jim and Jo Ann Spalding. I was walking with my sisters yesterday (April 18) on Frankfort Avenue. We stopped on Eastover Court and I told them you and Cecile had once lived there. Cecile was a beautiful woman in every way. You all will be in my thoughts and prayers.

Nina Hudelson - April 19, 2020 at 02:27 PM



“ I met her once and was intrigued...she is married to my Mom's first cousin, My Mom was Marjorie Mattingly Ballard...she and Richard were always curious about family and what we were all doing....they seemed to enjoy hearing about all of them because they didn't see them often....Bless her family and prayers being said...Richard take care of yourself...this is Beverly Ballard (ballardb@bbtel.com).

Beverly Ballard - April 19, 2020 at 01:41 PM