

We lost Jude Bienvenu last week to cancer. She was an amazing friend and leader, as well as a past president of TGEA. She walked this organization through challenging times and was vital in TGEA obtaining its exempt status, and in transforming TGEA into what it has become. But more importantly, she was a tremendous friend who supported so many of us through her generosity and extraordinary culinary skills. Knowing there was a place to celebrate Thanksgiving (1st and 2nd Thanksgiving each year) with friends is a memory I will always treasure. She and Susan welcomed us into their lives, and into their home, where we knew we could always find fellowship, support and food.

~ Randi Johnson

Jude was a wonderful hostess and loved to cook for people. She often had social times for the express purpose of gathering those who had no family to be with on holidays. Their custom designed home was made for meals for building community. There were always good aromas to greet you in Susan and Jude's home. Their adored fur babies, the Dachshund crew, were there to greet as well. Jude loved opening their home. Within the context of social activism, she also was a dedicated and methodical doer in TGEA. When we had need to get something vital done, and Jude took it on, the project manager arrived and delivered. Her work to bring about the tax-exempt status for TGEA in the recent decade ago has been the most important milestone of the organization, second only to its founding nearly 40 years ago. As president, she navigated some difficult issues for the organization as we tried to meet needs of an ever-changing demographic in an evolving social landscape.

~ Roxanne Edwards

OBITUARY

On Thursday, September 19, 2019, Judith "Jude" Miquela Bienvenu, loving spouse and parent of two children, passed away at age 64 in Baltimore, MD after a long illness.

Jude was born on November 12, 1954 in Opelousas, LA to Patrick X. and Irene M. (nee Frachebois) Bienvenu. Her father was an Air Force Colonel, and the family moved often. Jude became accustomed to experiencing new things, places, and people, and developed a love of learning about different cultures. She received her PhD in Electrical Engineering from Rice University in Houston, TX in 1981, and worked as an engineer with SPARTA and later the MITRE Corporation for most of her career, with a short time as a Professor of Systems Engineering at George Mason University.

Jude loved her family, work, cooking, hosting parties, bicycling, hiking, dachshunds, things she could take apart and reassemble, and travel. If presented with a problem, often Jude could build a solution. If shown an interesting item with lots of moving parts, she would stop in her tracks to figure it out. Jude loved King Crimson, Pink Floyd, Queen, Warren Zevon, They Might Be Giants, ambient music (nature sounds), and absolutely could not sit through opera. Her cooking was much admired and enjoyed by friends and family, and she would share a recipe or cooking tip in an instant. Alton Brown was a frequent source of inspiration, much to the delight of her wife, Susan.

Of the many qualities noted by friends and family of Jude, the most frequently mentioned are these: her kind heart, forgiving spirit, and love of puns. Creativity is key with puns, and since creativity was how she worked and enjoyed life, puns were never far from the current action. Jude's laughter was infectious, as was her humor.

Jude advocated for the LGBT community and drove a successful effort to establish a Pride Council at MITRE, assisted in the creation of Human Resources policies at MITRE for the LGBT community, and was an officer for the Transgender Education Association for several years.

Jude was preceded in death by her father Patrick and her mother Irene. Jude had no siblings but enjoyed the company of her cousins immensely. She is survived by her wife of 17 years, Susan Jean Bienvenu (nee Deets); children from a previous marriage, Katherine Elizabeth Bienvenu and Thomas Patrick Bienvenu; several cousins including Claudia Horaist (Dennis) Gallion; Ann Horaist Henkle (Phillip); Connie Bienvenu (Jim Haas); and Minette Horaist Langlinais (Larry).

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made in Jude's memory to Doctors Without Borders, Dachshund Rescue of North America, or your local SPCA.

A funeral is not planned. A memorial service will be held on November 9, 2019 at the Metropolitan Community Church of Northern Virginia, (MCC NoVA) 10383 Democracy Ln, Fairfax, VA 22030 at 11:00 a.m.

Refreshments will be served.

Please write bienvenusj@gmail.com if possible to RSVP so we can plan provisions.