



AMERICAN SWISS FOUNDATION

Ambassador Faith Whittlesey (1939 – 2018)

It is with deep sadness that we must announce that our esteemed and beloved Ambassador Faith Whittlesey passed away on May 21, 2018 at her home in Washington, DC. She was at peace, surrounded by family.

At her request, a small service for family and friends will be held in Washington next week. Condolences and remembrances may be addressed to: friendsoffaithwhittlesey@gmail.com.

Ambassador Whittlesey was the Grande Dame of American -Swiss relations for almost four decades. She served as U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland for nearly five years in two tours (1981-1983; 1985-1988) during the administration of President Ronald Reagan. She also served on the White House Senior Staff (1983-1985) as Director of the Office of Public Liaison.

Upon her return from Switzerland, she was invited to serve as Chairman and President of the American Swiss Foundation. She initiated the annual Young Leaders Conference in 1990. Over the ensuing 28 years, she guided the conference planning and recruitment process of U.S. Young Leaders and attended every Young Leaders Conference. The conference program bore the unmistakable stamp of her knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. As Chairman and, later Chairman Emeritus, she touched the lives of 1,200 conference alumni in Switzerland and the US in a deeply personal way. She formed and fostered friendships with Foundation board members, as well as with members of the extended community of business, media, and educational leaders and public servants mindful of the importance of American-Swiss relations.

A book about her life and career, *Backwards in High Heels: Faith Whittlesey, Reagan's Madam Ambassador in Switzerland and the West Wing*, by Professor Thomas Carty, was published in 2012.

Those blessed to have enjoyed her friendship can speak of her quickness to return calls (and, more recently, texts) and especially her joyful readiness to help others, particularly in difficult times. The exemplary attentiveness she devoted to personal friendships was abundantly expressed in her decades-long work nurturing American-Swiss friendship. She understood (and tirelessly explained) that a relationship founded on shared values nonetheless requires constancy of attention. She never took personal friendships for granted; she never took international friendships for granted. She cared for, made time for, and put heart and soul into all she held dear.

A graduate of Wells College, Ambassador Whittlesey earned a JD from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. She was the recipient of four honorary degrees and a Ford Foundation grant to attend the Academy of International Law in The Hague, Netherlands. Among other awards, she received the Reagan Revolution Medal of Honor, the Congress of Racial Equality Public Service Award, the Christian Freedom International Freedom Award, the Stratton Prize, and the William Tell Award.

Faith Whittlesey was a devout Catholic and a patriot who cherished the privilege of representing her country abroad. She took great joy in music and loved to play the piano. Those who had the good fortune to be invited to sing along will never forget her animated piano playing on occasions great and small.

Her greatest joy was her family. Widowed at an early age, she took great pride in her three children, Henry (now deceased), Amy, and William, and her 10 grandchildren.

Our thoughts are with her family.

Respectfully,

Patricia Schramm, President, American Swiss Foundation
Robert J. Giuffra, Jr., Chairman, American Swiss Foundation
Markus U. Diethelm, Chairman, Swiss Advisory Council of the ASF