



Penelope Skaff Corbin

February 20, 1951 - February 15, 2021

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Penelope Skaff Corbin died in her sleep in her Houston home early Monday morning, February 15, 2021, five days shy of her 70th birthday. She was born in Beaumont, Texas on February 20, 1951, to the V. Rev. Thomas Skaff and Elaine Khoury Skaff. Rev. Skaff was serving the historic Beaumont parish of St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church, the second oldest Antiochian Orthodox church in North America.

She is survived by her two daughters, Michele Christian Corbin and her husband, Paul Buescher, and Desiree Dawn Corbin and her husband, Bryan Robbins; her beloved granddaughter, Lilah Grace Corbin-Railey; and her three siblings, Ruth Ann Skaff, Thomas Joseph Skaff and his wife, Toni T. Skaff, and Melanie Skaff Wood, all in the Houston area. She is also survived by many nieces, nephews, and their children: U.S. Army Captain Chrissa Elaine Wood; their children, Sophia, Elijah, and Micah; Trevor Wood and his wife, Jessica; children, Tristan and Ethan; Jordan Matthew Wood; Anna-Leigh Skaff Copeland and her husband, Kevin; their children, Dalton and Chloe; and

T.J. Skaff.

The Skaff family, after serving parishes in Spring Valley, Illinois, and Cleveland, Ohio, settled in Houston in 1959. Penny, her nickname since childhood, graduated from Lamar High School, and began her career in retail, originally at Evans-Monical, Inc. She possessed a very good eye for design and tailored her honest evaluation to each customer, earning the loyalty and gratitude of her subsequent Nordstrom and Macy's clients. For the past 10 years Penny had dedicated her time, energy, and compassion to helping disabled veterans and rescue dogs. She was a driving force in the development and expansion of nonprofit Give Us Paws' free service dogs training program for disabled veterans. She energetically raised funds and worked events to benefit GUPs clients. She made countless connections with veterans and had empathy for everyone seeking assistance. Penny spent hours on the phone carefully listening to each veteran's story and guiding them to available resources.

A bona fide native Texan, Penny also embraced the Syrian-Lebanese heritage of her immigrant grandparents. An active member of the Southern Federation of Syrian Lebanese American Clubs, she chaired the Scholarship Committee from 2008-2011. The Scholarship Committee is regarded by many as the Federation's "crown jewel" for the scores of annual scholarships it awards to high school seniors. She previously served as Federation Mailing Secretary. Penny was recognized as 2006 Federation Woman of the Year, an honor she cherished. In 2002, she shared the President's Choice Award with Norma Hanna. Locally, she was the first president of the Middle Eastern Heritage Club, a merger of two Houston clubs - the Middle Eastern Descendants Club

and The Heritage Club. She enjoyed many years consorting with the Federation's two incomparable Roses: her "Aunt" Rose Nunu and Rose Zwan.

Penny, her sister Ruth Ann, and their maternal uncle Jack Khoury were part of the 1999 Arab American delegation organized by ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital for the Board and supporters to visit Lebanon. The Board, the St. Jude Hospital Medical Director, and the ALSAC CEO led the delegation touring Lebanon extensively, plus visiting and vetting numerous hospitals, seeking an affinity institution in Lebanon which would treat Lebanese children with cancer and catastrophic illnesses using St. Jude protocols and standards, as part of the dream of Founder Danny Thomas, who himself was the son of Lebanese immigrants.

Visiting their ancestral village of Fiaa in the Koura region from which Samuel Isaac Khoury had emigrated at the tender age of eleven or fourteen, was a powerful, unforgettable experience. Profoundly moving moments were entering St. Simeon Church, and then finding the ancestral house and an elderly distant relative, who confirmed much of the emigration story. Uncle Jack declared, with tears in his eyes, "This is the happiest day of my life."

On May 5, 2005, Penny, her nephew Jordan Wood, maternal cousin Susan Khoury, and sister Ruth Ann had front row seats at the official dedication and grand opening of the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. AANM has rapidly become internationally acclaimed, achieved Smithsonian

Affiliate status, and notched many milestones documenting the history and contributions of Arab Americans to our nation. Penny and her family felt an extra sense of pride when viewing artifacts they had donated to the Museum's inaugural collection: a set of Rev. Skaff's clerical vestments, Mrs. Skaff's cookbooks, photographs, and the family's collection of Arabic LPs of Fairuz and other vocalists.

For many years Penny thoroughly relished being a Girl Scout co-leader for her cherished granddaughter's Girl Scout troop. She could always be found at the troop meetings, outings, cookie sales, leader trainings and countless activities and crafts. If something needed to be done for the troop, she could undoubtedly be counted on to take care of it. She was happiest on or near the water and had an adventuresome spirit for travel. An imminent trip had been planned to visit her longtime best friend Jennifer Bell in South Carolina.

Penny was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Michael Anthony Corbin.

Honored to serve as pallbearers are Tommy Skaff, Trevor Wood, Jordan Wood, Bryan Robbins, Mark Sellers, and Richard Hatch. Honorary pallbearers are Paul Buescher and Charles Nunu.

A private visitation, Trisagion prayers, and funeral service will be at St. George

Antiochian Orthodox Church, Houston, Texas, on Wednesday, February 24, 2021. Trisagion and funeral service will be streamed live at 11:00 a.m., CST, w ww.stgeorgehouston.com Burial will follow at Hollywood Cemetery beside her parents.

Donations in Penny's memory may be made to:

Southern Federation Foundation Scholarship Program

Online donations may be made HERE or at: https://www.sfslac.org/content.aspx?page_id=305&club_id=702500&item_id=7753

Checks may be mailed to:

Ms. Sharon Benson

1906 Lantern Lane

Missouri City, TX 77459

If making a donation to the Scholarship Program, please note "Penelope Corbin" for the funds to be earmarked for her scholarship.

Give Us Paws

501(c)(3), Federally tax-exempt organization.

All donations are tax-deductible. Tax ID# 46-3527671

Online:

tinyurl.com/49x76f3z or

<https://giveuspaws.org/donate.asp>

Checks may be mailed to:

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10402 Raritan Dr.

Houston, TX 77043

Or a charity of your choice.