

Gabriele Sieg

1918-2013

German School Librarian



German School 1989 Yearbook dedication to Mrs. Gabriele Sieg, Librarian.

Gabriele Sieg knew a thing or two about aging gracefully. She lived the adage of the American actress, Lucille Ball, who once advised: Stand straight, eat sparingly, and lie about your age. Gabriele did not have to hide her age, since no one even suspected that she was in her eighties, when she retired in the year 2001 as head librarian of the German School. Gabriele was an amazing woman.

She kept her good looks well into the later years. In her youth she must have been a great classic German beauty in the style of Marlene Dietrich: tall, blond, blue eyed with great features and a smoky voice that betrayed her roots in Baden-Württemberg. She was always impeccably dressed in silk blouses, well cut jackets and skirts--and high heels. Most of the time, a single black pearl on a simple gold chain adorned her neckline.

Gabriele Sieg was not just blessed with good looks but also possessed a sharp intellect, a mischievous sense of humor, and broad knowledge that she displayed with charm and incisiveness. You could always count on her to analyze the latest political event, give an opinion on a recently published book, or catch you at some inaccuracy. She did not hesitate to tell you what she believed, but she always voiced her convictions in a calm, non-confrontational way; her distinctive laughter making a point wittily. Gabriele was a woman of substance.

Gabriele Margarethe Lutz was born in Freiburg, Germany, and immigrated to the United States in 1958, becoming a U.S. citizen in 1963. She was a cataloguer and classifier with the Byzantine Studies program at the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in Georgetown.

From 1976 to 2001, she worked with dedication in the German School library, where she advised countless students--and what might not be as well known, was the discreet confidante of principals--catalogued a myriad of books, and arranged innumerable exhibits for visiting scholars, politicians, and government officials. For many years she was elected president of the American Goethe Society of Washington, D.C., which contributed immensely to the cultural life of the local German community. In the 1990s the

government of the Federal Republic honored her contributions to German-American cultural understanding with the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* (Order of Merit). Gabriele was a woman with an impressive mind.

She played a prominent role in the cultural life of the German School and the German society of Washington, D.C. at large. She expanded this position and was a remarkable hostess in her well-appointed home and garden in Potomac, Maryland. There she entertained a continuous stream of guests alongside her husband, Helmut, her perfect foil and partner over many years. Great conversation and great food, served in a relaxed atmosphere, were the hallmarks of her generous and notable

hospitality. Helmut passed away in 2011 after 63 years of marriage.

Gabriele Sieg was 95 years old when she died in Boston, Massachusetts, on Saturday, January 12, 2013, after a fall in December from which she did not recover. After her retirement in Santa Barbara, California, she had moved back to her beloved East Coast to be close to her daughter, Alexandra Pierce.

She was a loyal friend to me, and I will miss those telephone conversations with her. Gabriele was a woman to treasure and to remember.

Ingrid Wrausmann



German-American Day Display