

SUQ

Denise Browning

Tribute to the Volunteers: Past and Present

Working as manager of the Suq all of these years, I have had the privilege of working with an amazing group of women. All of them strong, very intelligent, and well educated, independent yet gracious, and full of spunk and humor. They are a major part of the Suq, with most of them donating more than fifteen years of service.

Unfortunately, this year we had to say good-bye to Eleanor Swift, one of the most amazing women I have ever met. Eleanor was involved with the Suq almost since its inception in 1967, when it was nothing more than a small table with a few postcards — most of which were still around when I came ten years later. She loved working in the Suq, where she could handle 100 children at once with ease and understanding, while having the unique ability of being able to melt the most difficult of customers. She was also devoted to the students who worked in the Suq, making sure they had her extra tickets to the Lyric Opera or the Chicago Symphony, believing that an education in the arts outside of the university was also important.

We who had the pleasure of knowing Eleanor Swift will never forget her. I will miss her strength, her logic, her beauty, her humor, but most of all her laughter.

Working in the Suq on Mondays to restock the store beside Eleanor for years was Georgie Maynard. Add strong willed to the above characteristics and you have Georgie. As a young bride, she was off to teach English in Turkey during World War II. Her love of travel never subsided. After her husband's death she and Eleanor would trek off around the world together. They would not embark on elaborate cruises, but instead they took a mail boat up the coast of Iceland. Even just a few years ago, Georgie decided to take a tour of Central Asia. When they arrived, the guide decided to abandon the tour because he felt that the political climate at the time was unsafe for travel. Did that deter Georgie? No! She was in her eighties when she took off on the tour by herself. She was busy organizing the books in the Suq until she died.

Inger Kirsten was a particularly strong woman, yet she always thought to bring flowers from her garden to warm up the Suq. If it was Friday morning, that meant Peggy Kovacs and Leonard Byman. Peggy was always full of fun and must have had one of the best collections of jewelry from years of working in the Suq. Leonard Byman, one of the few men working in the Suq was not to be outdone. Among his many accomplishments was an incredible knowledge of playwrights.

Some of the women have moved away from Chicago or on to other interests. Tuesday mornings was the regular day for Rochelle Rossin and Charlotte Collier to work together ... what a perfect match! Charlotte with the patience of Job and a true woman of the world brought out the best in Rochelle. Rochelle would make sure that the customer purchased that perfect piece of jewelry to match her outfit.

Wednesday afternoons for years were filled with the laughter of Barbara Watson and Mary Schulman. Barbara, an accomplished artist and jewelry designer, spurred my love of beads by sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm. They both gave me an education in life.

The list continues ... What would the Suq have been without Diana Grodzins, Evelyn Dyba, Kay Ginther, Mardi Trosman, Carol Goldstein, Jane Hildebrand, Maria Ahlstrom, Agnethe Rattenborg, Barbara Frey and Ruth Hyman who have all given many dedicated years to the Suq?

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Some of those remarkable women continue to contribute to the Suq: Peggy Grant, Norma van der Meulen, Muriel Brauer, Florence Ovadia, Jane Thain, Patty Dunkel, and Jo Jackson.

What a remarkable group! Those listed, plus all of the others, have added their strengths and talents to make the Suq. Thank you!

With their help we will continue the tradition they have created for the Suq in meeting the challenges of the future. With the completion of the museum's renovations we will have a whole new public to introduce to the wonders of the Suq in very challenging economic times.
