

Jocelyne Couture-Nowak



French Canadian, beloved mother, wife, and a member of the Blacksburg Community, in which she and her family have lived since 2001, passed away on April 16, 2007, while engaged in her passion, teaching Intermediate French at Virginia Tech. Jocelyne was born in Montreal, Canada and lived both in Quebec and Nova Scotia before moving to Blacksburg. Her family, friends, students and colleagues will remember her community spirit, her love of nature and her dedication to the preservation of her francophone heritage. She would approach anyone she heard speaking French to welcome them to the local francophone community.

Before she moved to Virginia, Ms. Couture-Nowak was instrumental in the development of the École Acadienne de Truro, Nova Scotia, to ensure access of francophone families to a safe school environment and French language education. The school opened in 1997. Her youngest daughter, Sylvie, was one of its first students. She met her future husband, Jerzy Nowak, while both were teaching at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro, in the 1990s. The couple left Truro after her husband was appointed as head of the Department of Horticulture at Virginia Tech.

Jocelyne's brutal death contrasts sharply against her peaceful life, filled with family hikes in the bucolic countryside of her homes in the forests of Nova Scotia and southwest Virginia, her flower-filled home gardens, her congenial gatherings with friends and students, and her cherished family. She died in the school setting that had been the touchstone of her life. Craig Brians, a political scientist and friend at Virginia Tech, captured her spirit with the statement: "She would light up a room when she entered it. Most of all, I miss the smile. . . . She always had something uplifting to say."

Mrs. Couture-Nowak leaves her husband, Jerzy Nowak, their daughter, Sylvie

(12), her daughter, Francine Dulong (23), step-daughter Magdalena Nowak-Batten (Martin Batten), and two grandchildren, Vanessa (5) and Victor (3).

A memorial service will be held in the Peggy Hahn Horticulture Pavilion on the Virginia Tech Campus, viewing between 1:00 and 2:30, followed by a service, Tuesday, April 24, 2007. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Jocelyne's memory can be made to the Jocelyne Couture-Nowak Scholarship for French majors, Virginia Tech Foundation, University Development, 902 Prices Fork Road, Blacksburg, VA 24061 or the Jocelyne Couture-Nowak Memorial Garden Fund, Virginia Tech Foundation, Dept. of Horticulture, 301 Saunders Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061.