

Snejana (Sneja) Ianeva

Photo:



Date of Birth:

March 8 1952

IN MEMORIAM

SNEJANA (SNEJA) IANEVA

March 8, 1952 - December 26, 2019

It is hard to believe that the extraordinary, brave personality and the warm heart of such a remarkable woman is not with us anymore. Her life, full of personal and professional achievements was cut short during the Christmas Holidays after a few days stay at a Bulgarian hospital. Family and friends are still trying to find out the reasons for this sudden and profound loss.

She is gone....But Sneja left such a rich legacy as if she has lived two full lives. At age 67 she was the Director of the Information Resource Center at the US Embassy in Sofia, President of the Bulgarian Library Association and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Global Libraries Bulgaria Foundation. She was not even thinking of retirement yet. She made considerable contributions to the development of the relations between the governments and civil societies of Bulgaria and the United States, received multiple awards, but was more interested in accomplishing new projects, many initiated by her.

Born in Bulgaria in 1952 into the loving family of intellectuals, her parents surrounded their two girls with books, taught them to read at age four and told them that with hard work girls can reach to the stars and succeed. One of their daughters was recognized in the United States as a "person of extraordinary ability" and became professor at California State University, but Sneja was the second improved edition. She was a real talent, always the smartest, the best, a natural leader with broad knowledge of society and culture. Born on March 8th, the International Women's Day she felt destined to do great things and she did. Sneja finished high school at the top of her class at the English Language School in the city of Plovdiv. In the capital she graduated from Sofia State University in four years with two majors - Library Science and Information and English Language and Literature. She took courses in Japanese just for fun. She was intelligent, outgoing, honest, loving and compassionate, always with clear goals for what she wanted to do and how her endeavors would benefit as many people as possible.

Sheja started her professional career at the Library of Sofia State University. The fall of the Berlin Wall opened the world to her. She specialized at universities and libraries in the United States and Europe, learned from the best, became one of them and her expertise was recognized by a long list of international organizations.

Then she won the competition for a position at the US Embassy in Bulgaria. For most people a career as a Director at the Embassy would be enough, but Sneja also wanted to help Bulgaria in its transition to democracy by modernizing the public libraries, making them places of equal access to genuine information and technology to children, youth and adults. For 30 years her efforts were supported by librarians and information specialists all over the country, many of them became her friends. She accomplished this tremendous work by volunteering her time and expertise and inspiring others to do so.

She was elected President of the Bulgarian Library and Information Association. Now the modernized libraries in small and big Bulgarian cities are a testament for her leadership. She had the ability to work successfully with people from all walks of life—from the European Parliament, the Government and Parliament of Bulgaria on new legislation and implementation of the law, to colleagues in remote cities who needed help with books, computers or furniture. She promoted close cooperation with the American Library Association and made possible for a number of Bulgarian library professionals to visit and get inspired by the library practices in the US. Sneja's contributions can be seen everywhere - from the establishment of American centers at many libraries across Bulgaria to the "Make the Library Green" Campaign, to the promotion of new technologies, 3D printers and educational coding robots and so many more...

Sheja used her international contacts to secure funding for numerous projects. She initiated close cooperation with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to help establish in the last 30 years the large-scale Global Libraries Bulgaria Project, which brought technology and modernization to many Bulgarian libraries. She chaired the Board of Trustees of the Global Libraries Bulgaria Foundation.

Snejana Ianeva will live forever in spirit and through the results of her life's work. An American Ambassador used to call her a "national treasure". Her legacy touches the hearts and minds not only of Bulgarians, but of colleagues and friends in the United States and around the world. There are many people she trained, encouraged and inspired to accomplish great projects, to give to others selflessly, to love and cherish family and friends.

She will live in the memories of all, who experienced her care, compassion and goodness. Her family and close friends find solace in the expressions of love and respect of so many people from all corners of the globe, who felt blessed to have met and known Snejana Ianeva.

A celebration of her life on January 10th, 2020 filled to capacity the hall of the American Center in Sofia. Tributes were paid by her Excellency Herro Mustafa, the US Ambassador to Bulgaria, by members of the Bulgarian Government and the European Parliament, by colleagues, family and friends.

A star in her name is now in The Star Register and shines in heaven. She has reached the stars...

Media data:

Date of Death:

December 26 2019

Place of Birth:

Dimitrovgrad, Bulgaria

Place of Death:

Sofia, Bulgaria

Primary State of Residence:

Sofia, Bulgaria

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