

Dilian Deal
Memorial Scholarship
August 7, 1954 – April 4, 2021



“Casablanca” watercolor by Dilian Deal

Dilian was the wife of Michael Deal, Retired Senior Foreign Service Officer, and the mother of Michael, Derick and Andrew. She was an artist who could capture a moment in her watercolors that told how our frantic activities melt away in time but the memory of a place or person stays with us. Di was a mother, wife and the quintessential Foreign Service spouse. There was a call to service and sacrifices made which are seldom acknowledged in the Foreign Service but the example of Di as the foundation of a family serving their country in a distant land is one that should be known and honored. A memorial scholarship in honor of Di is being awarded in August 2022 to a Latino youth enrolled in a healthcare higher education field. This scholarship will help a young person achieve their dream of a better future, strengthen local communities in the Northern Triangle and the United States, and serve as a memorial for sacrifices made and dreams fulfilled.

Who was Dilian Deal? The following narrative, provided by her family as part of her memorial service, describes the personality, determination and love embodied in a remarkable wife, mother and artist. A person concerned about others and convinced that everyone can be successful, fulfilled and blessed.

From Dilian Deal's Memorial Page

Source: <https://mkdeal.wixsite.com/dilian>



Di was a dancer, an artist and an optimist. She danced with presidents, represented her country as Miss Bolivia '74, drove fast cars, patroned the arts, painted watercolors and loved photography, practiced CrossFit, enjoyed being a flaneur in Paris, played tennis and golf, practiced prayer and meditation, and became a Feng Shui master and citizen activist. But above all, Dilian was a devoted wife and mother. Queen of the Deal household and her four men.

Di attended the Instituto Americano for primary and high school. She attended one year of high school on a Rotary exchange program in Middleburg, PA. Di was selected as “primera ballarina” in a folklore dance company that toured Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Miami, and France during her high school years. In 1974, she traveled to Tokyo as Miss Bolivia to compete in a beauty pageant. She enrolled in the Universidad Mayor de San Andres, where she studied dentistry.

Di and Mike were married in La Paz on March 22, 1980. They honeymooned in Rio de Janeiro and the beach town of Camboriu (near Itajai in the South of Brazil). Michael Keith was born in 1982 in La Paz. Derick Alexander and Andrew Ehren came along 6 and 8 years later, respectively, during the period the family lived in Quito, Ecuador.

Di was a tireless champion of her four boys. She stressed the importance of following their own paths, spending time developing their vision boards, and pursuing their dreams. She was convinced and never let them doubt they would become successful, productive, and happy men of service to others. (From my eulogy): For Dilian, success meant doing the best we can with what we have. Success is the doing, not the getting; in the trying, not the triumph.

Di was a fervent "Marine Mom", devoted to her son Mike and to his Marines, from sewing uniforms, to sending care packages, to gifting her art. Di founded a “Support Our Troops” ministry at St. Mark’s Catholic Church in Vienna. For 8 years, the SOT volunteers met monthly to fill up care packages to send to the troops. And for over 13 years, Di and Mike

volunteered at Walter Reed Hospital where they engaged with wounded soldiers and Marines and their families.

Di was a world traveler. As a Foreign Service spouse, she raised her family while living for 20 years in 6 countries: Guatemala, Ecuador, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia in addition to joining Mike as his wife in Bolivia. She visited over 30 countries (Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Canada, Belize, Mexico, Japan, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Croatia, Montenegro, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Russia, Sweden, Italy, Greece, Monaco, Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan).

Di and Mike enjoyed playing tennis and golf together and, whenever possible, with the boys. Di could give all the men in the family their money's worth. She and Mike worked out religiously 3 days a week. Two months before her passing, she achieved a personal best deadlifting 220 lbs. - twice her body weight. She was one tough Momma!

Dilian loved the theatre (especially musicals and the opera), going to the movies, and reading a good book. It was always a treat for her to have dinner with Mike before attending a function at the Kennedy Center, Broadway, the Walnut Theatre in Philly, or the National Theatre. She enjoyed a weekend trip to NYC once a year, to include a play, shopping in SOHO, a walk in Central Park, a stop in MOMA, and just being a "flaneur."

Di was a vibrant person who always lived life magically and to the fullest. She was beautiful, kind, caring, and passionate. Her positivity and determination were boundless. "Proceed as if success was inevitable" was her guiding principle. She brightened the day of those she came into contact with through random acts of kindness or just offering a compliment when none was expected. Di was well-organized, meticulous, and relentless in pursuing the well-being of her family.

Her final breath was Easter Sunday, April 4th, 2021.



A list of statements, beliefs and quotations that Di lived by can be found at <https://www.maxey.info/dilian-quotes>.