

Mary Kathleen Huntington Obituary

10/24/1932 – 4/5/2024



Mary Kathleen Huntington died in her Washington, DC residence on April 5, 2024, after an extended illness. Through a long career with the U.S. Agency for International Development, she gave a lifetime of service to making the world a better place.

Mary was born in 1932 in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, the third of four children of Dr. Robert H. and Kathleen Butt Huntington. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Arkansas in 1954 and went on to earn a Masters in Advanced International Studies from Johns Hopkins University. In addition, Mary studied at the Sorbonne as a Fulbright scholar, and completed a fellowship at the Princeton School of

International and Public Affairs.

With her sharp mind and a desire for public service, Mary began her decades-long career with the US Foreign Service. She would eventually find her home with the newly established U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), instituted by the Kennedy administration in 1962. Born out of the post WWII Marshall Plan and various initiatives from Truman's Point Four Program, USAID's mission was to provide technical knowledge to improve social, economic, and political conditions in 'underdeveloped' nations.

Known for her administrative skill in a diplomatic world dominated by men, Mary garnered the respect and admiration of her peers. Over the course of her distinguished career, she served as USAID Director of Laos Affairs (1974), Program Officer in Damascus, Syria (1982), and Deputy Director in Swaziland (1991).

To her family and friends, Aunt Mary was at once both a formidable intellect and a quick-witted bon vivant with an infectious laugh and a talent for stimulating conversation. She had refined tastes in art and music and entertained with an epicurean flourish. She is remembered as a loyal and generous friend and a shining example of independence and achievement to her extended family. She was a treasure.

She is pre-deceased by her brother, Dr. F. K. Huntington, and sister, Lynn Premsehaar. She is survived by her brother Robert H. Huntington of Portland, OR and eight nieces and nephews. A private memorial celebration was held in Washington, DC on July 20, 2024. To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](#).

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