

## A TRIBUTE TO SUSANNA DOYLE



West Side Montessori School mourns the passing of Susanna Doyle on September 4, 2023. A founding member of WSMS, Susanna's foresight, boldness, and innovative ideas forever changed the landscape of early childhood education. As Susanna's background in education infused her work throughout her life, it was also integral to her key role in

the creation of our school.\* When, in the 1960s, she and her husband and their close friends realized there was a significant lack of early childhood options on the Upper West Side, she committed to addressing that need.

The Doyles worked with four other couples to find an experienced Montessori teacher and opened WSMS. Susanna became the school's director for its first ten years, working with Elizabeth Hopkins, the first Montessori teacher, to hire additional teachers and move the school multiple times as it grew.

Susanna left WSMS to work for Citizens' Committee for Children as an education policy analyst and then went to

Advocates for Children of New York in the same role, all while raising her four daughters. She wrote speeches and papers for myriad civic organizations, and eventually for the Chancellor of the NYC Board of Education in the mid-1980s. In the 1990s she worked with investigative reporter Wayne Barrett at the *Village Voice*, and also wrote some pieces on a freelance basis. All the while, she served on a number of boards, doing important work for institutions such as Berkshire Farm Center and St. Luke's–Roosevelt Hospital.

We are so grateful to have been a beneficiary of Susanna's lifetime of professional accomplishments, which had a major impact on so many children and families in New York.

Susanna is survived by her husband, Boker, her four daughters Katharine, Nancy, Victoria, and Jessica, their husbands Tim, Gerard, Walied, and Joshua, and her six beautiful grandchildren.

*\*For more information on Susanna Doyle as well as her WSMS co-founders, please see the next page for "Where We Began," an article originally researched and published in 1993.*

We are grateful for the support from our community, current and alumni families, and friends, which is at the core of our continued success. When we all come together, we are greater than the sum of our parts, which truly embodies the **WSMS Gives** motto: **Give from your heart, give what you can.** Every contribution matters and makes a difference in the life of every WSMS child.

Donations made this year will be able to be "in honor of" or "in memory of" a founder, favorite teacher, head of school, parent, or student (present or past). Please help ensure the success of WSMS for another 60 years by making an unrestricted gift to the Annual Fund, or specifically to the Annual Fund—Founder's Fund for Financial Aid Program.



*If you have any fundraising questions, please reach out to Allison Kohrs, Director of Development, at [wsmsgives@wsmsnyc.org](mailto:wsmsgives@wsmsnyc.org).*

