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BUILDING COMMUNITY, INSPIRING CONNECTIONS

JANE SULZBERGER LEAVES ENDURING LEGACY AT CNU'S LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETY.

by [Kelley McGee](#) | February 4, 2025*Above: Jane Sulzberger**Read time: about 2 min*

The Christopher Newport community is deeply saddened by the loss of Jane Sulzberger, the beloved director of CNU's LifeLong Learning Society (LLS), who passed away at the age of 86. Sulzberger was a passionate education advocate who dedicated decades of her life to developing the University's program for adult learners.

"LLS grew and thrived during Jane's more than 30 years at the helm, thanks to her joyful, welcoming spirit of curiosity and her remarkable organizational skills. She enriched the lives of thousands of adult learners and made the University and the community we cherish a better place," said President Bill Kelly.

CNU's LifeLong Learning Society began in the late 1980s as a small initiative designed to provide learning opportunities for adults who were no longer in the workforce, but who were still eager to learn, explore new interests and connect with others. Under Sulzberger's leadership, LLS steadily expanded in scope and popularity. Today, the organization, operating out of the CNU-owned Yoder Barn, a few miles from campus, has more than 600 members and is a cornerstone of Christopher Newport's outreach and community engagement. Sulzberger was an energetic force and tireless



Jane speaking at LLS 30th Anniversary Celebration
in Fall of 2019

advocate for the program, helping to create an engaging, unique community for growth-minded retirees interested in exploring new interests and deepening their knowledge.

“Jane was a caring friend and great leader to all members of LLS, and devoted her whole being to the betterment of our wonderful organization,” said LLS member Carolyn Webb.

Former LLS President Evelyn Knox praised Sulzberger’s steady leadership during Covid, when the focus turned to developing strategies to support keeping members engaged through virtual learning.

“LLS became a bigger lifeline to our members than ever anticipated. We have, in large part, Jane to thank for that. My respect and admiration for her expanded so greatly during that time. She was a great mentor to me and support for all of us and I am so grateful that she was a part of my life,” Knox said.

Sulzberger spent decades ensuring that LLS offered members interesting programs and opportunities that would encourage them to learn and stay connected with the wider world. She became director of LLS in 1996 and worked well past retirement age into her 80s, always focused on creating a welcoming community where members could explore a variety of opportunities, such as learning a new language, taking tai chi, studying opera history, or sharpening their computer or creative writing skills. Sulzberger directed her boundless energy and organizational skills to continually expanding course offerings and to helping members feel connected to their community and each other. It’s an important legacy her staff intends to honor and uphold.

“Our hearts break for losing a truly wonderful leader, mentor, and dear friend,” said LLS Interim Director Mackenzie Byrd. “Her unwavering dedication to the LifeLong Learning Society has been a true inspiration. It is because of her passion and commitment that our dedicated CNU staff is motivated to carry on her legacy. Together, we will continue to plan and execute the programs and activities that Jane worked so hard to create, honoring her memory and impact on LLS.”

In 2014, on the 25th anniversary of LLS, Sulzberger was recognized by the Christopher Newport Alumni Society with the Honorary Alumnus Award.



Jane Sulzberger, Eleanor "Penny" Taylor (former LLS employee) and Mackenzie Byrd, LLS Interim Director.

President Kelly expressed heartfelt condolences to her family, including her son, Robert Sulzberger, an adjunct professor in the Department of Psychology at CNU; her daughter, Jennifer Sulzberger, who resides in Charlottesville; her beloved extended family of nieces, nephews, grandchildren, great-grandchildren; and her brother, Robert Bigham.

“Jane was an inspiration, an excellent leader, my first mentor, and truly one of my best friends. I miss her more than words can say,” said Byrd. “She taught me what it means to have a purpose and a passion in life. A career did not have to be just work, it could be so much more. Jane is truly irreplaceable. Her vision will forever be the heart and soul of our organization.”