Words of Remembrance for Janet A. Mattei

AAVSO Members, Observers, Colleagues, and Friends

Tahiti, Uruguay, Pakistan, South Africa, the United States, Australia, Russia, Turkey, the Netherlands, Italy, England, Belgium, India—these are just a few of the places from which people sent messages in remembrance of Janet. Over 200 messages poured into AAVSO Headquarters at the time of Janet's death—we share some of them with you here.

Janet was not only a strong and impressive leader of the AAVSO for many years, but also a very friendly person who had the ability to communicate in the most optimum way with different types of astronomers and particularly between amateur and professional astronomers. She also played a very important role model for women in astronomy and was one of my important personal mentors. I will miss her very much; she will stay in my mind forever and I am sure I speak on behalf of many of us. I would like to ask those of you who organise a meeting with variable star astronomers in the coming months to start their meeting with a one-minute-silence in honour of Janet. *—Conny Aerts, President, IAU Commission 27 on Variable Stars*

We would like to thank you for all the support you gave our sister, Janet, over the past seven months. It meant a lot to her. We especially appreciated the beautiful flower arrangements you sent. Janet would have loved them. We know you will miss her as much as we will. *—Yusef and Mary Akyüz*

Shocking and so painful news...so sad that she could not stay with us. Her enthusiasm, hard work, passion for the subject and much needed help will be always be cherished and deeply missed. My deepest deepest condolences to her family, AAVSO members-staff, and all the pro-amateur astronomers. May God bless you always, Janet. *—Umair Asim (Pakistan)*

We are very sad to hear of the death of our friend and colleague Dr. Janet Akyüz Mattei. Not only was she a good leader of your organization but she was also doing an excellent job in the interface of amateur and professional astronomy. She has been a good friend of Turkish astronomers, many of whom knew her personally. She attended several professional meetings in Turkey, visited her friends at our universities. We will miss her very much. On behalf of the National Observatory of Turkey. *—Zeki Aslan, Director, TUBITAK National Observatory (TUG)*

I am completely crushed. I was so fortunate to count her as a friend and a mentor. Her wisdom went far beyond her knowledge. The world is colder and we are all much poorer tonight. *—Jim Bedient*

I grieve with you and all of Janet's friends and colleagues across the country and around the world. She did so much to brighten out lives. She did so much for the AAVSO and for all of variable-star astronomy. She endured her illness and fought it so bravely and realistically. How she had enjoyed her time at home before finally having to give in. *—Emilia (Lee) Belserene, former Director, Maria Mitchell Observatory*

On behalf of myself and the Vereniging Voor Sterrenkunde, Werkgroep Veranderlijke Sterren, I would like to express our deepest condolences to Mike and Janet's family. Personally, I was privileged to meet Janet on several occasions. I met Janet for the first time in August 1994, together with a few friends from the VVS WVS. Janet invited us to The Hague, The Netherlands, where she attended the IAU General Assembly. Many Belgian observers had the opportunity to meet Janet at the AAVSO meeting hosted by the VVS in Brussels in 1990 and more recently during the AFOEV meeting in Bourbon-Lancy, France, in August 2002. On all occasions, we experienced Janet as an enthusiastic, friendly, warm, and very special person, and she will be sorely missed by all. *—Eric Broens (Belgium)*

Astronomy, and particularly the study of variable stars, has suffered a great loss with the untimely death of Janet Mattei. Janet has played a major role in the development of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO), and in fostering collaboration between amateur and professional astronomers. Her work on digitizing the AAVSO archival data has created an invaluable database for the study of long-term stellar variability, of a nature that will be almost impossible to match with professional observations. Her wonderful personality and enthusiasm have been an inspiration to all of us. I have had the pleasure of interacting with Janet in Commission 27 of the IAU. However, my most memorable experience with her, and one of the most memorable experiences in my career, was at a very successful NATO Advanced Study Institute organized by Professor Cafer Ibanoglu at Cesme, close to Izmir and near Janet's birthplace. Needless to say, Janet played a very prominent role in both the scientific and social activities of the meeting. Her talk on the AAVSO results on red-giant variables indicated that there might be a relation between semi-regular variables and the solar and solar-like oscillations, both being excited stochastically by convection. This led to our, unfortunately only, joint publication (ApJ 562, L141). Together with the rest of the astronomical community I shall always treasure and honour the memory of Janet Mattei and her contributions to our science. Surely the best way to do so is to maintain our enjoyment and awe at the starry sky, and continue our activities, amateurs and professionals together, on uncovering the secrets of stars and stellar variability. *—Joergen Christensen-Dalsgaard, President, Division V (Variable Stars), International Astronomical Union*

Our sympathies...Janet is in our hearts also. *—Wayne and Nancy Clark*

The NOAA National Geophysical Data Center (NGDC) were saddened to hear of the loss of Dr. Janet Mattei. She was a very vital force in AAVSO and will be a tough act to follow. I remember her at several International Astronomical Union meetings, always a bundle of energy. She was positive and very outgoing, with a mission of advancing the status of the AAVSO, and astronomy in general, in the international community.... As a leader, Janet endorsed and embraced the many changes in upgrading computer methods, using the new presentation capabilities to produce useful and powerful educational packages for schools and for non-scientists who have an interest in learning and contributing to the worldwide

scientific investigation of our local and astrophysical environment. She was a great role model for young women, moving in international circles with ease. A capable scientist, mentor and kind friend, she will be missed by many. We extend our deepest sympathies on the untimely loss of your Director. *—Helen Coffey, NOAA NGDC*

This morning I was greatly saddened by the news that our friend Janet Mattei has passed away on March 22. I was shocked to hear about this, also because we heard good news about her recovery. I first met Janet at an AAVSO meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1978. She also attended a meeting of the Dutch Variable Star Section in Leiden in the year 1987 and the AFOEV meeting in Bourbon-Lancy in 2002. I will remember Janet as a good friend with a warm personality, always encouraging the observers of variable stars. I want to express my sympathy with Mike, her family and the staff of the AAVSO. Let us continue to observe the variable stars in memory of this wonderful woman Janet Akyüz Mattei!

The council and all members of the Dutch Variable Star Section of the Royal Dutch Association of Meteorology and Astronomy (KNVVWS, WVS) want to express their condolences to Mike Mattei, their families, and all the AAVSO staff. We all have lost a wonderful friend! Janet will for always be in our minds.
—Georg Comello (CMG), Groningen, The Netherlands

What sad news! She was such a special person! We all can feel blessed that we have been touched by Janet. We each have our own wonderful memories of her presence in the astronomical world. May God bless Mike and her family.

Clear Skies Janet! We Love you! *—Keith and Sylvia Danskin*

I write to express the large amount of sadness that I wish to pass along for the friends and family of Janet from her friends among the members of the Great Lakes Planetarium Association. While these few words cannot begin to make up for her loss, please know that over her time with the AAVSO she made many friends here in our organization. Dr. Jeanne Bishop, past-president of our group, told me how she met Janet in Washington DC and they had over the years and at various meetings exchanged thoughts and even astronomical jewelry.... Those that met and knew her in our group were truly touched by her dedication to astronomy and the AAVSO. She will be missed by many, please pass along our organization's deepest sympathy. *—Joseph DeRocher, President GLPA*

Sincere condolences to each AAVSO staff member, and family of Janet Mattei. I only recently learned of her passing, being grieved since I was so hopeful for Janet's recovery. —Elise Donaghy (DEH)

On behalf of the President, Officers and Fellows of The Royal Astronomical Society, please accept our condolences. Although I did not have the pleasure of knowing Janet personally, colleagues in the RAS who did assure me that her loss will be a great one to the community. With renewed expressions of regret.
—David Elliot, Executive Secretary, RAS

We were so sorry to hear of the death of Dr. Janet Mattei. We never had the pleasure of meeting her but we know from conversations with our members and from AAVSO publications how central she was in the life of AAVSO, and we can only guess at how sadly you must be feeling. Over the years we have got the impression of Janet as a wise, funny, and supportive woman. There will be other precious attributes that you will miss. Please know that we are thinking of you and hoping that this bereavement becomes less painful soon. *—Gerd-Uwe Flechsig, President BAV, Germany*

My condolences to family and friends. I'm so very downcast because of that. Now, every time, when I look toward the sky I'll know that Janet's Star lives there. Clear skies for you Janet. *—Frota (Brazil)*

What a sad day! I'm just arriving home and just reading the message. It's very difficult to me to express my feelings at this moment. Janet was a marvelous friend for long time. It was great to work with her. It's incredible to think that she will never be there.... My deepest sympathies and more sincere condolences to Mike and Janet's family. *—Jaime Garcia (Argentina)*

Dr. Janet Mattei was a longtime friend of the Astronomical League, and she was a strong voice for amateur astronomers everywhere. It is with great sadness that I forward this message. She will be greatly missed. *—Robert L. Gent, President, Astronomical League*

I wish to extend my condolences to Dr. Mattei's family, friends, and colleagues in the aftermath of her untimely passing. *—Derek R. Gregg*

On behalf of the members of Stony Ridge Observatory, I extend our condolences and sympathy to you upon the death of Janet Mattei.

She worked with us on a number of occasions and was a perfectionist in all that she did in astronomy and with variable stars. I was also impressed with the efforts that she had been making on behalf of astronomy education for the public and for school students. She made a substantial contribution to such education with the publication of *Hands-On Astrophysics*. Through workshops in the Boston area, I was privileged to know Janet on a personal basis...Janet was such a loving and caring person. Please express our sympathy to her family and friends. *—Tony Heinzman, Past President, Stony Ridge Observatory; Past President, Western Amateur Astronomers*

Dr. Janet Akyüz Mattei: First of all, she was a wonderful person—a taking-care-of human being—a very good friend who wanted to help everybody and an extraordinary scientist who created a vision and life style for the next generation of astronomers. She was our leader and a corner stone of Turkish Astronomers. I was a young astronomy student at Ankara University, Science Faculty. Our teachers used to mention to us about Dr. Janet proudly, she was our hero. I used to hope to meet her one day. I do not remember what the year was, I think it was in 1992 or 1993, I went to Antalya to join a meeting. I saw a lady taking pictures of the flowers at Turkish National Observatory. She was asking the people in Turkish around

her what the name was of the pinky flower. I wondered who she was, she was talking Turkish and I had never met her before. I asked her name and from which University. And she answered kindly I am Dr. Janet. I was shocked, I did not know she was participating in the meeting. I was really excited. I introduced myself and we talked almost half an hour. Finally, I asked her if she likes taking wild flower pictures, and she told me flowers are like human beings, they need attention. I was very impressed by her vision of life. I never forget that day. In 1997, I went to the US to get my Ph.D. She helped me so many times. She had a wonderful heart and she was my hero. I will follow her ideas till the end of my life. I am ready to work under any kind of project to realize her dream to "bring the amateur and the professional astronomers together." *—Dr. Mustafa Helvaci, Faculty, Dept. of Astronomy and Space Science, Science Faculty of Ankara University, Turkey*

Oh no, what terrible news.... My condolences to all of you HQ staff. As Janet's assistant for a couple of years, in a very different era [the 1970s], I learned well what she was like—the patience, the effort, the tremendous sense of responsibility to science, to the observers, to the membership. She was an unbelievable mentor, one who saw the best that everybody had to offer. This email from Dr. Motta came as a tremendous shock. Astronomy has really lost somebody special. I should add that my wife was as shocked as I was, even though she only met Janet once years ago when Janet and Mike were visiting Maryland, and we all went to dinner. Even in that short time, and simply by being herself, Janet made a lasting impression. *—Bob Hill, NASA GSFC*

This is a very, very sad day. She helped me in my entry to professional astronomy and was a dear friend, as is Mike. Our prayers go with Mike and the AAVSO. *—Rik Hill*

"In one of the stars I shall be living, in one of them I shall be laughing, and so it will be as if all the stars were laughing when you look at the sky at night." (*The Little Princ*e, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry). We will all miss her greatly. *—Al Holm*

Professional astronomers have lost one of their best. Amateur astronomers have lost a great mentor, supporter and friend. The world has lost a wonderful person. My sincerest sympathies to Mike, Janet's family, and the AAVSO staff. *—Dave Hurdis*

I only met Janet once, at last year's Tucson conference, but I seem to have known her all my life. She was an inspiration to me through the years and I'm sure to the entire amateur community. What impressed me most was that she made me feel like a part of "the family." At our first meeting, she already knew everything about me. She cared about us all that way. It was always her business to know us well. Her kind smile and friendly words, and the excitement she had at meeting all of her friends and observers I will never forget. Such a loss! My estimates may be a bit poor for a while, since the stars will be seen through a few tears. My sincere condolences to Mike and family and to the staff and friends at the AAVSO. *—Richard Huziak*

We are very saddened and shocked to learn of Janet's passing. Her last missive to us seemed so positive that she was going to make as full a recovery as possible. Suddenly, we received the news that she was no longer among the astronomical fraternity. This will be our loss as she was the epitome of the caring professional who was always interested in what the amateur community was doing. No variable star estimate or any work done in the field of public education, by any of use, was ever taken lightly. All efforts were given equal value. All input was regarded as a sincere task and desire to know the glorious universe about us. No work or submission was ever held in vain. In an age when most specialists are focussed almost exclusively on their own narrow fields, she was the outstanding exemplar of fostering amateur/professional activity and cooperation. Encouraging of all amateur efforts and eager to coordinate these with professional research, she remains the most enduring example of the bridge that bonds the two groups together. She will be missed by both for a very long time. *—Michael Jefferson, for the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers*

Although I had never met Janet Mattei, I wish to express my deepest sympathies to her friends and family. *—Richard Jepeal*

It was truly a shock to me when I got word...of Janet's passing away.... She was so friendly, intelligent and leaderful that she will be long remembered, and be a part of astronomical history's highlights. It is a privilege to be able to say, "I knew Janet Mattei!" *—Gus Johnson (JOG)*

Folks: You never think about it until it happens. You always think you'll have the time. And then, you're proven wrong. I first became aware of the AAVSO during graduate school. Two of my classmates were members, one of them worked there, as a matter of fact. I was aware of what they did, and to be honest, all through grad school it was in the back of my mind to join the organization because I could both see the good that it did and what I could do in it. It never quite happened until a month ago, however.

I became aware of Janet a few years ago through her writings. One of my graduate projects was an inclusive report on Pro-Am efforts in the Astronomical community and, of course, the AAVSO was writ large in that report. In fact, that report will form the basis of the lecture I'll be giving at Feurtes Observatory at Cornell on April 30th. Even back then I was aware that variable star data gathering was the AAVSO, and the AAVSO was Janet.

When I finally got off my butt a month ago and joined the AAVSO I learned that Janet was in the hospital battling a bout of leukemia. The battle was going well and I honestly thought, "Big deal. Beth, my foster sister, had leukemia and she's fine." You get to the point where you think nearly any disease is just treatable.

I started talking with Aaron at the AAVSO and we recognized we'd been classmates in graduate school together. He's been a factor in my current drive to try to do something with my degree. I remember him saying, "You'll have to meet Janet. She knows everyone. She not only knows everyone, she knows everyone's kids and the names of all their pets!"

I don't remember a single conversation I had with any of the staff at the

AAVSO where Janet's name didn't come up. It was obvious that these people—and more—thought of this woman as the staff of the West Wing thinks of President Bartlett. Toby's comment to the President—"There's no one in this room who wouldn't rather die than let you down"—seemed to apply to the people who knew and worked for Janet. I really looked forward to meeting her.

But that is not to be. Tonight the Net is alive with condolences coming in from all over the world: Japan, Brazil, Pakistan, Argentina, Guatemala, as well as the United States. Messages are also coming in from various organizations across the spectrum: the Astronomical League, the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers. And I sit here with tears in my eyes for a woman I never met...but wanted to.

My thoughts tonight go out to Aaron, Elizabeth, and the rest of the AAVSO staff, as well as Janet's husband, Mike. Every single conversation and email I've ever had with you folks is a testament to the high quality of the friend, teacher, mentor, boss, and woman the world has lost tonight. *Restu Pace Inter la Steloj*, JAM. Rest Peacefully Amongst the Stars. *—Richard Kinne*

Janet was so unbelievably kind to me and supportive, and even though I was a small part of her life, this leaves a big hole. My sincere condolences for her family and many, many friends. This is a hard day for the AAVSO and to human beings in general. God speed, Janet. *—Michael Koppelman*

We are greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Janet Mattei. In your message you very aptly put into words what loss her death means to all of us who have come to value her expertise and her vigor, and have enjoyed her friendship. We too are mourning for Janet. *—Peter Kroll and the entire Staff of Sonneberg Observatory*

I was truly shocked and greatly saddened to hear this news while on travel, especially since it appeared she was on the road to recovery. I was looking forward to meeting her again at this Spring's meeting. I believe she was the most influential personality in bridging the wide gap between amateur and professional astronomers, and the world will be at a great loss without her. My sincere condolences to her entire family. *—Mike Linnolt*

On behalf of the South African Astronomical Observatory, I would like to express our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Janet Mattei on the loss of a loved one, a friend, and a respected colleague. Those of us who met Janet at conferences will remember her warm, engaging personality and the manner in which she was a very articulate champion for the AAVSO and its programmes. She had a strong personal interest in supporting emerging astronomy groups, particularly in developing countries, and she was always willing to help in practical terms. I would like to reflect on some of Janet's contributions to the development of astronomy in Africa, which may not be widely known or appreciated. Janet encouraged and promoted the resurgence of the astronomy group at the (then) University of the Orange Free State in South Africa. This group now operates a refurbished 1.5-m reflector for research and education projects. Through her kind efforts, AAVSO

materials were introduced into Kenya, Zambia, and Ethiopia, where they now form part of the undergraduate astronomy teaching resources used in universities in those countries. Janet Mattei will be remembered and deeply missed by those who benefited from her friendship, encouragement and support. *—Peter Martinez, Acting Director, South African Astronomical Observatory*

This sad news which has come today by e-mail has affected me to the profundity of my soul and has plunged me in a deep shock. For a long time I silently sat in front of my PC display, cannot do anything. Unfortunately I could not meet with Mrs. Mattei, and our correspondence is limited only to several messages by e-mail in the 1990s. But I'll always consider Mrs. Mattei as my instructor and the teacher. In 1991 (the year that was vague for our country) due to assistance of Mrs. Mattei I became a member of the AAVSO and have finally passed to the camp of variable star observers. I am immensely grateful to Mrs. Mattei that she could understand me and become my inspirer. I'll not exaggerate if I'll tell that practically everything that I've achieved in my observing practice I've achieved with direct and indirect assistance of Mrs. Mattei. Moreover, all this time I felt her invisible presence, as if she was here, under the cold Moscow skies, and was helping me in my observations with a kind advice and huge experience. Now I have very sharp feeling of loss of the person very close and dear for me. My sincere condolences to everyone who knew and loved Mrs. Mattei, to her family and friends, to all members and friends of the AAVSO. *—Dmitry Matsnev (MAV), Pleione Association, Moscow, Russia*

Janet was one of my close friends, and a lifelong mentor. She did more to advance my career than any other scientist, and I will treasure her influence on my personal and professional life always.... I still continue to receive message from the TOPS teachers and colleagues who will miss her dearly. It is clear that she touched many lives, and I hope that she will continue to do so for many years through her legacy. *—Karen J. Meech, Institute for Astronomy, University of Hawaii*

We will miss her persistent wit, kindness, and optimism. *—Gerbs and Chija Bauer (TOPS Staff)*

It is greatly a sad news to hear about Dr. Janet Mattei. *—Jacob Lonno, Kosrae (TOPS Teacher)*

It causes a deep lump in my throat and sorrow. I am indeed thankful...to know Janet by way of TOPS. There were things that she had motivated me to want to do and I still have so much to learn. She was a patient teacher. I will miss her. *—Creighton Wilson (TOPS Teacher)*

We have all lost a brilliant person and a wonderful friend!! Auwe—a star has gone, but its brilliance still remains for us all. *—Alyce Ikeoka (TOPS Teacher)*

This is very sad news. I was a Maria Mitchell Student in 1971, when Dorrit Hoffleit was running the program. We heard lots of Janet stories, and I gave a talk at the AAVSO later that year. *—Esther Hu (IfA Astronomer)*

I'm devastated. My deep sympathies to Mike and her family. —*Gale Yamada (TOPS parent)*

Our thoughts are with each of you at your time of need. Janet was one of a kind and she will be missed deeply and will never be forgotten. —*Haldun and Gamze Menali, Nejat, Sibel, and Onur Nurcan*

Keeping good thoughts and hopes for all of you. —*Randy Mulholland*

I was one of the fortunate ones who met Janet (AAVSO Spring meeting in Huntsville, Alabama, 2000, and again in Hawaii in 2002). She brought a warmth and love of people along with scientific integrity to what could easily be an impersonal hobby. She deserves all the respect shown her by all whose lives she's touched. I can only echo the sentiments expressed by all those who've already written; she was a truly great lady and we're all a little poorer for her passing. My deepest sympathies to Mike and Janet's family, along with all those in the AAVSO HQ. May God be with you and grant you the comfort you need in this time. —*David R. Nance*

I would like to send my deepest sympathies and most sincere condolences to Janet's family and close friends. It was a privilege and honor to have known Janet for so many years. She will be greatly missed. —*Michael Newberry*

In memory of Janet...sincere sympathy. —*John O'Neill (ONJ)*

Janet Mattei, rest in peace. God keeps a place for you in the endless space of stars. —*Oscar Osorio*

Sad news for all the world of Astronomy. My deepest condolences to Janet's family and all her friends. —*Sebastian Otero*

Many colleagues in Europe are very saddened by this news. Janet guided a very significant contribution to the Hipparcos project by the AAVSO. She was a very special person, and we join with her family and friends in their grief.
—*Michael Perryman, Hipparcos Project Scientist, European Space Agency*

I had the privilege of meeting Janet for the first time at the Spring meeting in Tucson last year. While our meeting was brief at Kitt Peak, she was very warm, friendly and sincere. During our conversation, I remember making a statement which she repeated a couple times to herself as we were talking, It was easy to tell that Janet was listening and making mental notes not only about the conversation but about all the people she was meeting at the conference. You could see in her eyes that she loved meeting new people and making new friends. I also had a great surprise one day when Janet personally phone me at work to pass on some information. Talk about a way to make my morning! It was refreshing to talk to her and made my steps lighter for the rest of the day. Her words of encouragement were always very special. Janet's warmth and kindness reminded me a lot of how a mother cares for her children. It's evident in all the lives of those she touched. I will always remember Janet as a caring friend and "mother of the AAVSO family."

I will surely miss her. My sincere condolences to Mike and family and to the staff and friends at the AAVSO. *—Vance Petriew (Canada)*

I've just returned home after a couple of days away celebrating the arrival of a new grandson to read the very sad news of Janet's death. I first met Janet around 1994 when I attended an informal gathering at Cambridge University to discuss amateur-professional collaboration in Variable Star astronomy. Although I had never met her before, she warmly welcomed me with what I later came to know as the "Janet hug"—a very warm and affectionate greeting. I next met her a couple or so years later, again in the UK, where she turned as I entered the room and immediately recognised me and gave me another hug. I was extremely impressed that she should have remembered me as we had not communicated at all in the interim. I was to meet Janet twice in 2002. The first was at the 2002 AAVSO Hawaii meeting after which we shared a flight from Hawaii to the main-land USA where, despite having run this exhausting Meeting, she still found the energy to discuss the analysis of variable star light curves! The second was at the AFOEV Meeting in Bourbon-Lancy, France, where, at the banquet at the end of the meeting, we discussed how international co-operation should proceed. Janet will be sorely missed by all. Please accept the condolences not just from the Variable Star Section, but from the whole of the British Astronomical Association. *—Roger Pickard, Director, BAA Variable Star Section (England)*

Janet's wisdom, warmth, and joy made such a difference to so many in astronomy. She has been a pioneer and we will all miss her so much. Few people have so many friends as Janet worldwide. *—Caty Pilechowski, Indiana University*

I am so very sorry to hear of Janet's passing. Elizabeth, you and the HQ staff are in my thoughts. *—Shelly Pope*

I can only speak of this from a very personal perspective. The tragedy is too vast to sum up in a few distanced words. This May will be my sixth anniversary at the AAVSO. During those years Janet helped to completely change my life. It is clear that without her I would not be the person I am today and I certainly would not have much of the good fortune that has found my way in that time.

I came to the AAVSO has a tired worker from the fast paced dotcom world. Working at the AAVSO is about as different from that as can be. I underwent serious culture shock. One gets to know your coworkers quite well in such a small environment. The relationships you have are unique and transcend the typical "friend at work" situation.

Janet trained an information technology worker to become an astronomer even though I don't have a Ph.D. She gave me professional freedom, independence, and opportunity. She always had time for my questions and never grew impatient. She went out of her way to show me how certain things worked when all she had to do was tell me to "do this" or "do that." There were times when she could have spent five minutes to do something, but instead spent two hours showing me how to do it. And she forgave all my mistakes. She was as perfect of a definition of mentor

as could be. If everyone in this world had a mentor like her then we would all love our jobs and the world would be a far better place.

But we didn't always agree. In fact, there were many times when we both wanted to pull our hair out because we did not see eye-to-eye. I mention these times because it is in those disagreements that lie an illustrated truth about Janet's nature. Every argument and disagreement we had ended with the same result: a hug. An honest to goodness hug! A point would always be reached when we would look at each other and just know that it was over and we would walk over and hug each other. Then we'd laugh about how we argued and another 15 minutes would be spent talking about something lighthearted or fun. This isn't hyberbole but the literal truth. How many of you can hug your boss after a disagreement? And the strangest part of it all was that it didn't seem strange at all! It wasn't until she got sick last fall that I realized how unique it was to have such a relationship with one's boss.

And don't forget she was part of a team with Mike. Beyond the mentorship there was a friendship with Mike and Janet. In my kitchen are furniture, mittens, books, and a fern that they donated to me. I once spent two months in vain trying to find a lawn chair that would lay flat to watch meteor showers. Janet brought in a purple one for me just in time for the Leonids. Mike gave me alignment tips for my LX-200 and taught me how to clean the optics. He has given me all sorts of observing and equipment advice along with wonderful stories about the history of the AAVSO and amateur astronomy in general over the last few decades. When you think of Janet, please remember Mike.

Today I felt much anger over this. But tonight that anger is filled with complete joy. I looked at those items in the kitchen and I saw how brilliantly colored they are to me. I saw how wonderful my life is now in so many ways. And I see how each of the great gifts I have in my life are somehow related to Janet. She gave me so much that I needed to grow as a human. Everything in my life has her spirit flowing through it. I know over time that spirit will fade somewhat. But the beauty of it is that it will never disappear because everything I will be will be able to be traced back to something I learned with or from her. This foundation will always exist and as such a piece of her will always exist with me, forever.

I know I am not unique, I am a drop in a vast ocean. One of hundreds or thousands of humans that Janet has touched in such a way. As a result of her existence, many lives are improved and the world is a better place. I can only speak from my own experience, seeing the Universe through my own telescope. But I have the comfort of knowing that as I look at that lonely star in the sky—that I am not alone. There are many other eyes looking at it. Such is the view of the world from anyone who has known Janet.

May the beauty of the universe comfort and bestow its gifts on Mike and the rest of her family. *—Aaron Price*

The Association Française des Observateurs d'Étoiles Variables (AFOEV) council, Michel Verdenet, President of the AFOEV, Emile Schweitzer, Joel Minois, Jean Gunther, Dominique Proust, and all the members of the AFOEV express their condolences to Mike, Janet's husband, their families, and all the AAVSO staff. A

bright star is dead. The death of Janet Mattei saddens us deeply. First of all because her dynamism and her enthusiasm have been cruelly interrupted by disease; then because she was one of the most outstanding characters of the AAVSO, by her extraordinary work achieved during the years, in particular by the establishment of the new HQ building and a center of analysis and data replacing the old offices on Concord Avenue in Cambridge. Lastly, she carried the science of variable stars to its highest, either in the international conferences or in the eyes of amateur astronomers. Her kindness and devotion were added to an effectiveness and competence, two traits difficult to be found in someone else. AFOEV had the privilege to have and honor her at the time of the international conference of Bourbon-Lancy in 2002. It was undoubtedly the last conference she attended before falling seriously sick. The astronomy of variable stars is in deep mourning, a big star has just gone off. *—Dr. Dominique Proust, Department of Cosmology, Paris-Meudon Observatory*

Janet was one of those rare people you are occasionally blessed to meet who had the ability to change the direction in people's lives for the better. She grew the AAVSO from a small organization with blue print based charts to one of the key players in variable star research. This was not a smooth and painless growth—growth never is. She was all the more remarkable for how she grew to embrace technology such as computers, CCDs, web sites, downloaded charts, discussion groups, and all the rapid changes the AAVSO has made in my brief (compared to many of you) association with it. Most importantly, Janet grew with her staff, and placed extraordinary confidence and discretion with them; something that did not come easy but was essential given the logarithmic growth of AAVSO observations and activities. The fruit of this growth is the seamless way that Elizabeth, Aaron, and all the staff have been able to function since Janet took ill. This is perhaps the most remarkable thing about her—she somehow was able to prepare her staff, and even us members, for the transition none of us ever wanted to see: the AAVSO without Janet. That time is now here. We will all get though it. Thank you, Janet, for all you did, were, and inspired in all of us. *—Chuck Pullen*

I am mourning for Janet Mattei! It is a big loss for the AAVSO and all members! I remember Janet Mattei as she was coming to Vienna.... She was a model for all of us and I am very sad about her leaving. *—Peter Reinhard (REP)*

I first met Janet at the Hawaii spring meeting, and though not a very significant observer from Australia she greeted me and knew me from the first moment. Everyone has commented on her warmth, her ability to bring out the best in everyone. Can I add what I saw, a steely determination to excel, and to help others to excel, and to love astronomy and the world in a productive way. Her determination never was in conflict with her warmth and caring, and that is an entirely remarkable thing. My wife Lyn joins in offering deepest condolences to Mike and family, and to the other family at AAVSO headquarters and the wider world. *—Tom Richards*

In sympathy to Mike Mattei and all the AAVSO staff. I was privileged to be in the AAVSO all the years she was in charge. Besides her amazing scientific and

organizational work, I remember her for keeping the human touch in a job that could have become simply efficient but impersonal. I recall an inquiry I made about something I should have figured out myself but she wrote me back a 2-page handwritten note of explanation! I will miss her so much. With deep sympathy. *—Hugh Rumball-Petre (RPH)*

Please accept my sincere condolences on the Director's death. *—Seiichi Sakuma*

With great sorrow we have learnt the tragic news about the death of our dear friend and colleague Janet Mattei. She was a great person, clever, active, friendly, excellent Director, real scientist. The GCVS team was always so happy to have strong support from the AAVSO and its Director. Our personal contacts were always a great pleasure. I will never forget coming to Cambridge [Massachusetts], meeting with Janet in Europe. It is a great loss for AAVSO, for professional and amateur variable star researchers throughout the world, for friends. But the loss is the greatest for her relatives. Please forward my condolences to Mike and to other members of the family. I also wish to express our deepest sorrow on behalf of the Euro-Asian Astronomical Society representing professional astronomers of the former Soviet Union. *—Nikolai Samus, Vice-Chairperson, Euro-Asian Astronomical Society, and Editor, GCVS*

My sincere condolences to Janet' s family and all friends and colleagues. I hope that Janet continue to observe the Ciel and the Earth and with the help of God discover many mysteries of the Universe. *—Toni Scarmato (Italy)*

My deepest sympathy for the death of Janet. *—Richard Schmude, Executive Director, ALPO*

I would like to send my deepest sympathies and more sincere condolences to Janet's family and close friends. It was a privilege and honor for me to communicate with her during over twenty years and to meet her in Paris and, two years ago, in Bourbon-Lancy. She will be greatly missed. *L'AAVSO et toute la communauté internationale, professionnels et amateurs, ont perdu une Grande Dame et, pour beaucoup, une amie sincére et devoué. Je suis effondré et profondement peiné d'autant plus que les derniéres nouvelles permettaient de penser qu'elle était sûr le chemin du retour à la santé. Que le Ciel vous garde, Janet.* (The AAVSO and the entire international community, professional and amateur, have lost a Great Lady and, for many, a sincere and devoted friend. I am dismayed and deeply grieved all the more because the last news allowed one to think she was on the road to recovery. May Heaven protect you, Janet.) *—Emile Schweitzer, former president of the AFOEV*

For more than 30 years Janet has been a strong leader of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO), and a visionary who has brought the art of observing variable stars to the space age. Professional and amateur astronomers world wide have lost a great colleague, mentor, and friend. This is especially the case for the CfA, because of our long-term association with the AAVSO—since its founding—and because of the many fruitful collaborations and personal friendships

Janet had with CfA staff and students. *—Irwin Shapiro, former Director, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics*

Our beloved Janet is the epitome of a people person. I've never known anyone in her position who was admired, respected and loved all at the same time by so many people. When we met her for the first time in Hyannis, both my wife and I were impressed with how personable, warm and genuine she was. After she got up from our table, Gene Hanson commented, "wow, she just took an hour to get to know a new observer. Do you know how special that is?" Special, yes. Uncommon, by no means. No matter how busy she was, and she was always very busy, she made a point of taking the time to meet and get to know everyone she possibly could at these meetings.

I always felt she honestly cared about the people in the AAVSO, as if they were family. After hiking around a lava field in Hawaii, the tour guide indicated it was time to go. Janet clapped her hands together and said , "All right everybody, time to go. Watch your step, be careful!" I was suddenly a ten year old on a field trip and the teacher had just told us to get back on the bus! It wouldn't surprise me one bit to find out that she knew everyone's name in that group, and was personally taking a head count before leaving anyone behind.

She was accessible, smart, and charming. It is also well known that she was impossible to say no to because of this. Many members have joked on occasion about accruing "Mattei exclusion points" to get out of whatever it was she was going to ask of you next. But somehow no one ever really minded doing whatever it was she asked you to do. Personally, I always felt it was an honor to be asked, and letting her down was never an option. Her thanks, and she never forgot to say thank you, was always enough reward.

I last talked to Janet on Christmas day. It was the best present I got for Christmas this year, and I'm glad I was smart enough to tell her so. She had gotten wind of the fact that I was feeling overwhelmed with the weight of the chart team project, and called me at home to thank me for the job I was doing and to give me her support. She was in the hospital, in the fight of her life, and was calling me at home to see if I was all right!

That was Janet. I'll always remember her as a five foot something ball of energy who wore maybe a size 5 sneaker. But whoever inherits the unenviable task of filling her shoes is going to feel like they have just slipped on a pair of 32 triple E's.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to Mike, her family, the staff at the AAVSO, and all those who knew and loved her. We will all miss her dearly.
—Mike and Irene Simonsen

Folks, I feel quite sad as I just read the news about my friend Janet. She was one of the finest ladies I ever met. I will miss her! I send my sympathy to Mike and the entire HQ staff. I'd love to hug you all right now. My prayers are with you.
—Chris Stephan

Dear AAVSO Staff and Mike, You were Janet's family, it's hard to imagine what her loss must be to you. Janet was such a special person, a real friend as well

as a colleague in our pursuit of cataclysmic variables. She will always be a part of our observations. *—Paula Szkody, University of Washington*

I rolled in from spring break at 10:30. Turned on the computer and checked e-mails. I was shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of a truly great woman. She blazed a wide trail in astronomy. I wonder how many young women in astronomy today owe their career choice to Janet and her example. Janet encouraged me in presenting a paper last spring at the AAVSO convention. Without her support I'm not sure that I would not have cancelled my talk. I felt like a kindergartner in a college class and yet Janet gave me great encouragement to continue my presentation. My condolences to Mike and the family. May God ease your pain and bear you up in your hour of need. *—Paul Temple*

I was greatly shocked and saddened by the news of the demise of Janet. The news came as a total surprise to me, as she seemed to be recovering very well. As I started VSOing in 1984, I've never known the AAVSO without Janet. Janet and the AAVSO were synonyms to me. I had the privilege to meet Janet in person once, but that was already a long time ago. She was attending a meeting of the Dutch variable star association at Leiden Observatory, June 27, 1987.

The last few months the AAVSO functioned well in Janet's absence. I am very confident the AAVSO will continue to function well after the death of Janet. But things will not be the same at AAVSO HQ. My thoughts are with Mike, the husband of Janet, Janet's family, the staff of the AAVSO and all her friends who knew her a lot better than I do. My condolences to you all. *—Erwin van Ballegoij (Netherlands)*

My deepest sympathies to all those who knew Janet and condolences to her family and friends. This is a very sad day. *—Brian Warner*

It was very sad to hear of Janet Mattei's illness and death. Janet was a close colleague and friend of my mother's, one of my first employers, and a warm presence in my life from my childhood on. When I was between ten and twelve years old, my mother, Lee Anne Willson, took me on a few trips to New England in conjunction with AAVSO meetings and other business. Visits to AAVSO were highlights of these East Coast travels: much of what I recall positively was how welcome I as a child felt at the meetings and AAVSO office. I remember variously "helping" to man the registration desk at the meetings and sitting in the back of the auditorium doodling cartoons inspired by the astronomical terminology in the talks. The people at AAVSO were always friendly, greeting me like old friends or relatives and (Lee Anne reports) asking after me for years as if I were really part of the organization, or part of the family. Janet was the center of this family, its matriarch.

During my first two years of undergraduate study at Harvard, I worked intermittently at the AAVSO office, doing data entry and sundry odd jobs. I was grateful to Janet for giving an inexperienced, disorganized freshman a chance to work with grown ups in an organization committed both to science and to people. I found AAVSO a warm, supportive environment with a family-like team of employees with different backgrounds and strengths. I was particularly impressed

by the respect shown for the diverse interests and skills of the staff and guests. AAVSO was a safe space for people with unusual twists in their background; everyone was accepted on his or her own terms and encouraged to do his or her best. I see this as an extension of the philosophy underlying AAVSO's mission to help amateur astronomers contribute to the scientific enterprise and to collaborate with professionals as colleagues. The professional, non-judgemental atmosphere of AAVSO radiated especially from Janet, the backbone of the organization.

Some years later, my brother also spent a few weeks volunteering at AAVSO, at a point in his life when he needed work experience and a chance to feel useful and to build his confidence. Again, Janet took in a young person in need of focus and helped him to become a responsible adult by taking him as one on faith. Janet was my family in Cambridge, more like an aunt than a boss. She invited me home for Thanksgiving, fed me Turkish food, bought me baskets of kumquats at holidays, lent me tapes, and took an interest in my life. I have always enjoyed telling people about AAVSO as a special organization and about the warm, energetic, Turkish woman at its core.

Janet Mattei was a very special person who has contributed to my life and, I am sure, to the lives of many others as a scientist, an administrator, a facilitator, a role model, and a friend. She will long be remembered and missed. *—Kendra Willson*

Janet—Like the Moon, we can no longer touch you, but you provide us with light and inspiration. *—Lee Anne Willson, Iowa State University*

A very difficult day, and very unexpected. Janet was a treasure to the astronomical community, the scientific community, and to many, many ordinary folks. She brought the wonderful excitement of astronomy and the satisfaction of astronomical friendships to so many; her influence was great, and she will be sorely missed and long remembered. My prayers are with her family and colleagues at the AAVSO office. A great loss! Her influence will live long through the excellent staff she brought to the AAVSO office; it is first rate, and they will bring us through this, I'm sure—they have already earned the respect and affection of all of us, and hold our every confidence. *—Bill Zeilstra*

I would also like to express my condolences to Dr. Mattei's family and friends.

I never had the pleasure of attending a meeting or meeting her in person, yet the news has left me very sad. Twenty years ago when I was a teenager just getting interested in the stars, I happened to glance up with binoculars and noticed that R Coronae Borealis had seemed to drop out of sight. I wrote a letter to the AAVSO to ask about it. I was expecting a form letter or nothing in reply. Imagine my surprise when a personally typed letter from the Director arrived within days, confirming that this star was active and congratulating me on a personal discovery. A year later I was a member. I wonder how many others were inspired by Janet to study the night sky. *—Paul Zeller*

The following poem was written by Janet's husband, Mike Mattei, while Janet was in the hospital. He read it at her funeral and requested that it be shared with all.

Our Companion

Standing next to me is my companion
Turn to them, look at them
Look into their face. Here is where you see their beauty,
Their happiness, sadness, joy and sorrow.
Look at their lips. Here is where you see their smile,
Hear their voice, share with them a kiss.
Now hold them close, share all of these things with them
and remember,
Never, never, never let them go.