

**June ‘Cookie’ Bourbeau**  
**(June 4, 1935 - February 6, 1991)**

June “Cookie” G. (Rynski) Bourbeau passed away in 1991 at the Good Samaritan Hospital in West Palm Beach. She had had a long battle with cancer. A mass celebrating her life was held at St. Joseph’s Church in Stuart.



Cookie was born in Memck, N.Y. She attended schools in Florida and received a Master's Degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She lived in Turners Falls for several years and for eight years in Maseru in the southern African county of Lesotho. She returned to the United States in 1990, settling in Stuart.



Cookie joined the CIE in the early 70s as the first administrator and she came to be regarded as the anchor and “glue” that held the CIE together from the early ‘70’s to the late ‘80’s. While she was at the CIE that Cookie completed her Master’s Degree. She also served as a CIE member on the Basic and Non-Formal Education Systems (BANFES) Project in Lesotho.

Fredi Munger and Anna Donovan were honored to be able to represent the Center and the BANFES Project at her funeral. She was remembered by many CIE members for her real affection for all center members, her administrative capability, her common sense, and as “a voice of sanity.” One CIE member fondly described her as *“the glue that held the place together; ...so much the heart of the place during my time; ...always there, providing a voice of sanity”*. The 1990-1991 issue of *Bricolage*, the CIE Newsletter, was dedicated to Cookie.

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## **Messages & Remembrances**

From the early days, "Cookie" Bourbeau anchored the center, serving in name as secretary but her real value was her common sense, her real affection for all center members, and her capability – toward the end of her career there, she served the center on a project in Africa. Cookie died soon after she left the center and I have missed her all these years, as I am sure all of the early CIE members do. **John Bing**

I've been reading all of the comments about CIE in anticipation of the upcoming 1,000th meeting and, out of the blue, suddenly had a memory of people from the past flash through my mind. While I miss the professors and my cohorts in the program and the collegiality we shared in our weekly meetings, most of all I miss Cookie. Cookie was like the glue that held the place together. No matter how weird UMASS got, and it did get pretty weird at times, no matter how involved I got in other parts of the school or university, no matter how miserable the weather, Cookie was always there, keeping us from screaming at each other and, in general, providing a voice of sanity in a place that occasionally went insane. At the upcoming 1,000th meeting, I request that everyone present raise a glass in her memory. She is much missed... **Mikey Patrick Hagerty**

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## **Selected Recollections of “Cookie” in Bricolage: Annual Newsletter of the Center for International Education, 1990-91**

Cookie had just started work with the Center when I first met her. She was with Michael Haviland in Montague House and they were attempting to rearrange the furniture. When you first meet someone with a name like Cookie you take notice, but once you got to know her she became part of your life - always.

Cookie had a certain radiance about her that will never be forgotten. When she was in a room with you it was a special time. Her love of people, her open and beautiful smile, her zest for life and learning were always with her. There was a special glow that made you want to be in her company and to share time with her. So often there are things I still want to share with her - work and pleasure and travel and time spent locating places in an atlas. I will continue to share these things with Cookie. She will be with me. I am privileged. I know her. **(George E. Urch)**

Before ever I saw her face, Cookie was synonymous with CIE as its cable address. After I did meet her and got to know her, she was synonymous with CIE as its cheering spirit, practical guide and friend to all.

Her life was a remarkable odyssey. She moved from bookkeeping to keeping a program together, from completing college as an adult to becoming a doctoral candidate as a moonlighter. When she finally left Hills South it was to move from Turners Falls to Africa, from building stone walls to scaling bureaucracies, from classified staff to international consultant. She lives on in the hearts of those who knew her, and on our letterhead for those who did not. Nevertheless, I miss her upbeat soul. **(David Kinsey)**

Those CIE members who were at CIE during our first ten years or so have indelible images of Cookie etched in their mind: Cookie unraveling a spaghetti-like bureaucratic tangle with the administration, Cookie taking time to talk with a new graduate student about housing, Cookie handling seven tasks simultaneously while smiling at the person in front of her desk asking her to do something additional. Some of her “problem solutions” are still with us today as part of our basic structure-the training account, the trust fund, and the rules for handling the Center Development Fund.

Cookie inspired others by her stamina and her unwavering optimism. Starting with a high school diploma she taught herself the skills she needed, found ways to take courses, wrote several publications, and finally managed to get her Masters degree. She pulled herself up from an entry level classified staff position to a professional staff appointment. She was strong, courageous and gutsy. She fought the cancer in her to the very end. When others would have retired on medical disability, she signed up to go to Lesotho for a full-time job, ultimately giving six years of service there despite increasingly severe medical setbacks. She was as loved there as she was here. CIE can be proud of Cookie as an example for all of us to emulate. We hope we can keep her spirit alive in our hearts and at CIE. **(David R. Evans)**

Five plus years ago I joined the CIE community as the Fiscal Administrator assuming the role June "Cookie" Bourbeau had headed for close to 15 years. Those first 8 months or so I was continually being introduced as the "new Cookie." I was slightly apprehensive about my new legacy. But after several such introductions, I could see the warmth of friendly recognition that comes when two people realize they have a mutual friend in common. Cookie's name held a special power. Private jokes remembered. Heartfelt fondness surfaced. Faces relaxed. Cookie, without even knowing, started me out on the right foot with many relationships. I doubt if she minded.

Cookie and I probably shared fewer than 200 spoken words. Maybe 1000 written words. But I will miss her. Thank you, Cookie. **(Barbara Gravin Wilbur)**

I knew Cookie Bourbeau as Financial Advisor to a National Teachers College. She was the epitome of good development assistance. Always cheerful, always optimistic, always supportive, always understanding, always empowering - even though some of the day to day challenges and problems would make a strong person want to cry. She constantly looked for new ways to be of help even though her own work was more than demanding enough. In addition to her work with the administration, one could find Cookie working with local colleagues in the cafeteria, in the library, on the college farm, in the book store, in the dormitories and around the grounds. She constantly developed plans and proposals for the college and significantly lifted the entire institution by force of her irrepressible spirit. And this was not enough. In "her spare time" Cookie helped several other institutions. She was an inspiration. **(Donovan Russell)**

I am truly sorry to learn that we have lost Cookie, a most remarkably efficient and gentle woman. Over the years, she faithfully supported the creation and growth of the Center, and later personified its aspirations in taking advantage of the opportunities the Center offers to full her own personal potential. I was tremendously pleased some years ago unexpectedly to run into Cookie out in Africa, consulting on a development project after having completed a Master's Degree from UMass. Cookie's relationship to all doctoral students and graduates, especially myself, is no mystery--no secret. She cared for us and was deeply committed to the development work for which the Center was created. We shall all sadly miss her. I send my deepest sympathy to her family. **(Cynthia Shepard Perry)**