Newspapers.com by Ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/234103055

Women's friends shocked by deaths

Continued from Page A1

for clues. The results of autopsies on the women were not complete late last week, and FBI Special Agent James Watters said he did not expect conclusive results from that medical work until later this week.

Friends of the two women say they can't believe what has happened, that Ms. Dowski's and Ms. Thomas' lives and habits could not have been in starker contrast to the way they died.

Cathleen M. Thomas

Lt. Frank Thorp last saw former Lt. Cathleen M. Thomas two weeks ago at their homecoming for the Naval Academy Class of 1981.

"She was enjoying herself, seeing all her friends," recalled Thorp, who is stationed at the Norfolk Naval Base. "Cathy's a popular individual, so she had a lot of friends there."

"She was quite happy with herself, which made the whole thing more of a shock to me."

Thorp, like all of Ms. Thomas' friends interviewed, was shocked to learn that she'd been found with her throat cut ear to ear.

Ms. Thomas had left the Navy earlier this year after an outstanding career and joined a Norfolk stockbrokerage company in June. She was earning commissions of about $4,000 a month at Brokers Securities Inc. and was on her way to the top, said company president Roger "Buddy" West III. "She was doing excellent, real well for herself," said West.

His enthusiasm for her work was shared by Ms. Thomas.

"She was really excited about her company," said Lt. Janet Rustchak, a friend from the Navy. "She thought it was a good one."

Lt. Rustchak, as U.S. Atlantic Command protocol officer, supervised Ms. Thomas until she left the Navy.

It was a happy separation, Lt. Rustchak said.

"She left loving the Navy, and with the Navy loving her. We regretted that we ever lost her."

Her last assignment as an assistant protocol officer was a prestigious and high-pressure position, Lt. Rustchak said.

"It's one of the jobs in the Navy that you're hand-picked for," said Lt. Rustchak, explaining that protocol officers shepherd high-ranking visitors such as naval chiefs from allied countries.

Then-Lt. Thomas handled the job with grace, shining particularly in coping with the last-minute snafus that give protocol officers gray hairs, Lt. Rustchak said.

Ms. Thomas had carefully weighed her decision to leave the Navy, she said.

"Women are still restricted on the number of ships they can be assigned to, and therefore the jobs are limited," explained Lt. Rustchak — especially for Ms. Thomas, one of the first women in the U.S. Navy to achieve surface warfare designation.

Ms. Thomas came to believe that the limits inherent in being a woman surface warfare officer would not allow her to reach the command levels she aimed for, said Lt. Rustchak. By resigning and becoming a stockbroker, Ms. Thomas was reaching for new challenges.

"She thought that was something she'd just really enjoy doing," she said.

Reaching for new challenges was characteristic of Ms. Thomas, said Thorpe, who met her in a chemistry class during their plebe year at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

In coming to the academy Ms. Thomas, a native of Lowell, Mass., followed in the footsteps of her father, Frederick Joseph Thomas, Class of '53, and her brother, Richard Joseph Thomas, Class of '75 and now a Navy doctor stationed in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

She was in only the second graduating class of women at what had been a male stronghold for more than 120 years.

"She was a pioneer, but more so than just being a pioneer, she was incredibly enthusiastic and incredibly friendly," recalled Thorp, who spoke Friday morning at a memorial service for Ms. Thomas at the Norfolk Naval Station.

Thorp recalled that he was sent to Japan after graduation, while Ms. Thomas came to the Norfolk-based submarine tender U.S.S. L.Y. Spears after the 20-week surface officers training course at Newport, R.I.

She had already moved into the protocol office when Thorp was transferred back to Norfolk in November 1984, more than three years after graduation. Not knowing of her assignment, he walked into her office one day.

"She looked at me and said, 'Frank Thorpe, Class of '81, chemistry class,'" he recalled.

"That meant a lot to me when she said that."

Cathleen Thomas
. . . stockbroker

"She was a pioneer, but more so than just being a pioneer, she was incredibly enthusiastic and incredibly friendly."

Lt. Frank Thorp

Perhaps it was that friendliness that made Ms. Thomas so successful as a novice stockbroker.

"She was a pleasure to work with, to tell you the truth, because she took her work seriously and did a good job," said Mark Owsiejco, a more experienced stockbroker who worked side-by-side with Ms. Thomas after she joined Brokers Securities.

Owsiejco said he had been assigned responsibilities for Ms. Thomas' accounts, which numbered about 75 by the time of her death, a very good total for a broker so new.

"Many times she was probably one of the last people to leave the office," Owsiejco recalled.

During the week before her death, Owsiejco said he took several telephone messages for his colleague from Ms. Dowski. He said he didn't talk to the younger woman long and Ms. Thomas had said she had friends in Williamsburg that she visited.

Rebecca Ann Dowski

Friday Oct. 10 was the beginning of a five-day fall break from classes for Rebecca Ann Dowski and the other students at W&M. Ms. Dowski told her family in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., she'd be leaving Williamsburg then, but might not arrive until Sunday.

First she planned to visit friends at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., where she'd spent her first two years of college. On Oct. 4 she'd called Sharon Spitale, her roommate during her sophomore year at Dickinson, to say she'd arrive about 8:30 p.m. Friday.

When Ms. Dowski didn't arrive that night, Ms. Spitale and other friends awaiting the reunion became worried. When there was still no word the next morning "we were pretty upset" and called police in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Those calls yielded no information, but increased the waiting friends' anxiety. "It was really uncharacteristic of Becky not to call. It wouldn't be like Becky at all to do that. We were very close," said Ms. Spitale, who learned of her friend's death Monday.

Since they'd last been together Aug. 28, phone calls and a letter indicated Ms. Dowski was "very happy (at W&M) academically...much happier than at Dickinson," where the liberal arts program did not allow her to develop the business expertise she coveted.

Though the social life at W&M was not what she'd hoped for, a recent letter indicated Ms. Dowski was pleased because she'd found older friends to join in off-campus activities. There were also friends a short drive away in Washington, D.C., and at the Naval Academy, Ms. Spitale said.

Ms. Dowski made friends at W&M too, but several of them have declined to talk to reporters. Two left the campus after discovering of her death and students who shared the Chandler Hall dormitory with her decided last week not to allow reporters inside to do interviews.

Ms. Dowski's roommate was instructed by the FBI not to talk to reporters.

At Dickinson, Ms. Dowski was one of a circle of about eight students who became close friends. All had extensive travel experiences here and abroad that had given them a more mature outlook. They weren't as interested in the normal drinking and partying college lifestyle of their peers as they were in going out to nice restaurants for a meal and enjoying each others' company and conversation.

Serious, but not somber, Ms. Dowski enjoyed more lighthearted activities too. She sometimes played harmless practical jokes on friends and her wit often brought relief from studies during exams.

Ms. Spitale and other friends said Ms. Dowski's private conversations included a sadness and difficulty in understanding the separation of her parents while she was at Dickinson. The youngest of five children, Ms. Dowski was still troubled by the separation when she died, Ms. Spitale said.

Ms. Dowski dated several men at home and at W&M but "she just didn't want to commit to anybody. She just didn't want to get too close to anybody, any males" who suggested marriage.

Though raised in Poughkeepsie, Ms. Dowski had spent the last two years of high school in Paris with her family while her father worked there for IBM. "She admired her father a lot, his position with IBM" and the European lifestyle and business atmosphere, said Ms. Spitale.

Shortly after starting at W&M last January she received a low grade in her English composition class. Most students would have complained, but Ms. Dowski's attitude was "what can I do to improve," said her instructor, Emily Pease.

During one-on-one teaching sessions, Mrs. Pease said she and her pupil developed a friendship that continued after their formal academic relationship was over. They saw each other on campus almost daily to say hello and once a week usually had long talks though Ms. Dowski had a demanding schedule.

Rebecca Dowski
. . . W&M senior

"I was never worried about them (YWCA children) being with her out on the road. She was so responsible" and able to handle herself. "And the children adored her."

Sherry Daniels, YWCA camp director

She was in a tough business curriculum, had a B-plus grade average and worked mornings in the English department office and afternoons at Garden of Children day-care center near the campus.

Yet she was always ready to help a friend. The Tuesday before her death, Ms. Dowski answered a last-minute plea to watch Mrs. Pease's two young daughters. Mrs. Pease and her husband returned home and found Ms. Dowski bright-eyed and cheerful. She'd put the children to bed "and washed all the dishes. And she didn't want to be paid."

Ms. Dowski worked the past three summers and last fall at a YWCA in her hometown. Last summer she was head summer camp counselor and supervised field trip programs for groups of about eight boys and girls ages 13 through 15. They went horseback riding, swimming, canoeing and also to museums and other cultural spots in urban and rural New York.

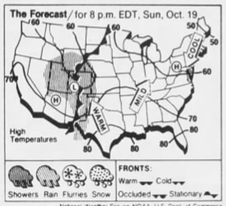
"I was never worried about them being with her out on the road. She was so responsible" and able to handle herself. "And the children adored her," just as younger ones had in previous summers at the camp, said Sherry Daniels, the camp director.

Ms. Dowski was "a pied-piper type person with our children," and they not only followed and obeyed her, but also dried many a tear on her comforting shoulder.

"I have children of my own," said Mrs. Daniels. "I would say I'd like to see them grow up into a Becky-type person."

Weather

The Forecast / for 8 p.m. EDT, Sun., Oct. 19



National Weather Service NOAA U.S. Dept. of Commerce

Partly sunny

Partly sunny and cool today with the high in the low 60s. Fair and cold tonight with the low near 30 inland and in the mid-40s near the shore. Mostly sunny Monday with the high in the mid-60s. Harbor winds will be northeasterly today and tonight around 10 mph becoming northerly around 10 mph Monday.

For the 24-hour period ending at 7 p.m. Saturday, the high was 59 (15 C) and the low was 42 (6 C). The temperature at 7 p.m. was 52 (11 C).

Tuesday through Thursday: Fair and cool through the period. Highs in the 60s and lows in the 40s except in the 50s near the coast.

National Weather Service broadcasts of forecasts and warnings for the Hampton Roads area can be heard 24 hours a day on VHF FM 162.55 MHz.

TIME AND TIDE

Sunrise 7:16 a.m. Sunset 6:23 p.m.

TIDES	AM High	AM Low	PM High	PM Low
Cape Charles	10:45	4:40	11:04	5:21
Cape Hatteras	9:05	2:33	9:24	3:14
Cape Henry	10:11	3:26	10:30	4:09
Fishermans Island	10:16	3:43	10:35	4:24
Jamestown Island	1:37	8:09	1:57	8:50
Little Creek	10:11	3:48	10:30	4:29
Lynnhaven Inlet	10:50	4:44	11:09	5:25
Menchville	11:57	5:53		5:25
Mobjack-E. River	10:37	4:35	10:56	5:16
Newport News	11:23	5:01	11:42	5:42
Nfk. Nav. Shipyard	11:19	4:58	11:38	5:39
Old Point Comft.	10:55	4:25	11:14	5:05
Oregon Inlet	9:46	3:45	10:05	4:26
Penniman Spit	11:40	5:22	11:59	6:03
Port Norfolk	11:16	5:02	11:35	5:43
Suffolk	12:16	6:08	12:36	6:49
Urbanna	1:24	7:42	1:44	8:23
Va. Beach	9:33	3:08	9:52	3:49
Yorktown	11:10	4:44	11:29	5:25

The weather elsewhere

By The Associated Press

Saturday	Hi	Lo	Prc	Otlk
Anchorage	38	30		cdy
Asheville	66	33		clr
Atlanta	71	48		clr
Atlantic City	57	49		clr
Baltimore	59	43		clr
Boston	51	41	.55	clr
Buffalo	52	34		cdy
Charleston,S.C.	68	55		clr
Charleston,W.Va.	59	35		clr
Charlotte,N.C.	66	47		clr
Chicago	59	34		clr
Cincinnati	60	38		clr
Dallas-Ft Worth	79	52		cdy
Denver	70	36		rn
Des Moines	61	38		cdy
Detroit	59	34		clr
Fairbanks	28	20	.04	cdy
Greensboro,N.C.	61	42		clr
Honolulu	91	74	.15	cdy
Houston	74	54		cdy
Kansas City	67	45		cdy
Las Vegas	72	50		clr
Los Angeles	74	55		clr
Louisville	65	42		clr
Memphis	78	50		clr
Miami Beach	82	73		cdy
Milwaukee	54	45		cdy
Min-St Paul	58	36		cdy
Nashville	72	43		clr
New Orleans	76	48		clr
New York City	58	46		clr
Norfolk	62	52		clr
Orlando	82	61		cdy
Philadelphia	60	48		clr
Phoenix	86	63		clr
Pittsburgh	55	35		clr
Portland,Ore.	62	47	.02	cdy
Providence	54	41		clr
Raleigh	63	41		clr
Richmond	61	41		clr
St Louis	67	44		clr
San Francisco	68	53		clr
Seattle	54	44		cdy
Shreveport	77	48		clr
Tulsa	79	52		cdy
Washington,D.C.	60	45		clr

Prc — Precipitation for 24 hours ending 8 a.m. Saturday.
Otlk — Sky conditions for today.

Virginia zone forecasts

By The Associated Press

Eastern Shore: Partly sunny today with the high in the low 60s. Fair tonight with the low in the 40s. Mostly sunny Monday with the high in the mid-60s.

Interior Southeast, Central Tidewater, Central Virginia, Southeastern, Northern and Southwestern Piedmont, Southern and Central Foothills, Foothills, Southern Shenandoah Valley, Southern Highlands: Mostly sunny today with the high in the 60s. Clear tonight with the low in the 30s. Sunny Monday with the high in the 60s.

Northern and Central Shenandoah Valley, West Central Highlands, Southwestern Mountains: Mostly sunny today with high from 55 to 60. Clear tonight with the low near 30. Sunny and pleasant Monday with the high in the 60s.

Daily Press / The Times-Herald
Established 1896
Publication Identification No. (USPS 144900)
Published Morning and Sunday by
THE DAILY PRESS, INC.
Second-Class Postage Paid
Newport News, Va. 23607

Offices	Telephone
Newport News	
7505 Warwick Blvd.	247-4600
Classified	247-4700
Circulation	247-4800
Hampton—137 N. King's Way	723-6021
Williamsburg—104 Bypass Road	229-3783
Gloucester—Main Street	693-2111
Smithfield	357-4137
Suffolk—Suffolk Plaza	539-2030

MAIN PLANT: 7505 Warwick Blvd.
Newport News, Virginia 23607

The Times-Herald
Established 1900
NATIONAL ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE
Sawyer-Ferguson-Walker Company
245 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017
MEMBER OF MAJOR NEWS SERVICES AND AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATION

Weekly Delivery Rates By Carrier and Motor Routes

Morning & Sunday	Morning Only	Sun. Only	Weekend
$1.80	95¢	85¢	$1.00

Mail subscriptions are payable in advance.
Mail subscriptions are not available in areas serviced by home delivery carriers.

MAIL SUBSCRIPTION RATES IN U.S.A.

	1 Year	6 Months	3 Months	1 Month
MORNING & SUNDAY	$117.30	$65.00	$35.70	$14.40
MORNING ONLY	$ 87.40	$48.70	$28.30	$10.20
WEEKEND	$ 73.70	$45.10	$23.55	$10.60
SUNDAY ONLY	$ 62.10	$37.00	$23.80	$9.00

STUDENTS and MILITARY PERSONNEL: Deduct 20% from above rates. (Mail subscriptions only).
SINGLE COPY RATES
WEEKDAYS 25¢ SUNDAY 75¢

CARD OF THANKS
The family of the late
BEATRICE (BEA) CRAWFORD
wishes to thank their friends and neighbors for the kind expressions of sympathy during the illness and death of our loved one.
May God bless each of you. The Family

St. Tammany Lodge No. 5
AF & AM
A stated communication will be held in the Masonic Temple, 1456 W. Queen St., Hpt. on Mon., Oct. 20, 1986 at 7:30 p.m. Regular business and observance of Founder's Day. Preceded by dinner at 6:30 p.m. Brethren and families fraternally invited to attend.
By order of William A. Saunders, W.M.
W. Roger Phelps, Secy

TODDY COON is 50!

Yorktown Lodge No. 205
AF & AM
A stated communication will be held in the Masonic Temple on Mon., Oct. 20, 1986 at 7:30 p.m. Celebration of Founder's Day with guest speaker. Covered dish dinner at 6:30 p.m. Lodge will furnish meat. Visiting brethern fraternally invited to attend.
By order of Hedrick Gilliam, W.M.
Jake G. Zalumas, Secy

Card of Thanks
The family of the late
Rose Bailey
wishes to express their deepest gratitude to friends and relatives for their support during the family's time of bereavement.

A Big Thank You to
Suburban Realty
(Rick West)
Greater York
(Charlie McDaniels)
for a Beautiful and Very Well Built Home
Your happy & satisfied customers!
Vicki and Johnnie Diggs

Card of Thanks
Words cannot express my appreciation to my family, friends, and neighbors for their many acts of kindness during the illness and death of my beloved husband,
Lloyd M. Hall.
With sincere gratitude I can only say, "Thank you."
Virginia B. Hall

Card of Thanks
The Family of
LARRY C. PRESSEY
wishes to thank our many friends, neighbors and co-workers for their prayers, cards, food, donations and all acts of kindness shown during the loss of our loved one.
Francina and Gregory Pressey & Family

In Loving Memory of
Pollether (Paula) Hampton
on her birthday
A light from our house is gone
The voice we love is still
A place is vacant in our hearts
That never can be filled.
We love you and miss you.
The Family

MATT & MARY
have been married 1 year today
Happy Anniversary

IN MEMORIAM
of our Husband, Father, Grandfather, and Brother
REVEREND WOODROW MARTIN BROWN, SR.
We know that it is only through death we can live forever. We wreathe garlands of flowers for your encomium to further affirm death cannot take away the love, the joy, and the rich virtues that are ours because of your wisdom and knowledge of GOD.
Therefore, we grieve but are confident that:
"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...They will rest from their labor for their deeds will follow them."
Edith P. Brown
and The Family...

Copyright © 2020 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.
Powered by Newspapers.com