The Janet Mattei Gravesite

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Janet Hannula Akyüz Mattei's final resting place is 11000 C-47 Willow Pond Knoll (Pond Road), Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. Mount Auburn Cemetery was chosen by Janet's husband, Michael Mattei, for a number of reasons, including that it was a favorite place of Janet's to visit, and, as a cemetery in which many world-known leaders, scientists, and humanitarians of all faiths are buried, it was an eminently appropriate place.

Mount Auburn Cemetery was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the founder of American landscape architecture, as the first garden cemetery in the United States, and was consecrated in 1831 as a non-denominational site of burial and memorial. The appeal of Mount Auburn to the public as a place for remembrance, reflection, and spiritual and physical renewal—combining as it did a burying ground with landscaped open space—was so great that it fostered the garden cemetery movement in the United States and led to the development of the public park system in American cities.

Mount Auburn is a place of extraordinary beauty and tranquility. An arboretum, over six hundred varieties of trees are found there, and nearly two hundred varieties

Figure 1. Gravesite of Janet Mattei, Willow Pond Knoll (Pond Road), Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts; headstone marks the double plot of Janet and Michael Mattei.

of blooming trees and flowers gild its winding paths and hillsides from March to November. The varied shades of white, grey, pink, and brown of the headstones, memorial statues, chapels, and crypts and the many types of rock and metal used add to the palette of colors and textures. Particularly in the late spring and fall, when the fragrances and the colors of blossoms or leaves are at their height and many of the over two hundred species of birds seen in the cemetery are in attendance, it can be truly breathtaking.

Janet loved to visit Mount Auburn, driving around or walking, taking flower or tree photos, reading the memorials, listening to the birds, thinking. To those of us who know how much she loved flowers, gardens, and all kinds of natural beauty, it is easy to understand what attracted her. She often took visitors there, and if they thought the idea of visiting a cemetery odd when Janet suggested it, they soon changed their minds as they drove through the gates and were immersed in its exquisite beauty.

As a strongly spiritual person who respected and appreciated all cultures and peoples, Janet also very much liked that Mount Auburn is a cemetery in which faith or nationality makes no difference. As an example, within a few yards of Janet's grave are the graves of a man born in Greece and an Armenian family who experienced the genocides of the early 20th century: in this one small corner Turkey, Greece, and Armenia—and Jew, Orthodox Christian, and Catholic—are at peace together.

Mount Auburn is the final resting place of people from every walk of life. Among them are many individuals famous for their contributions to government,

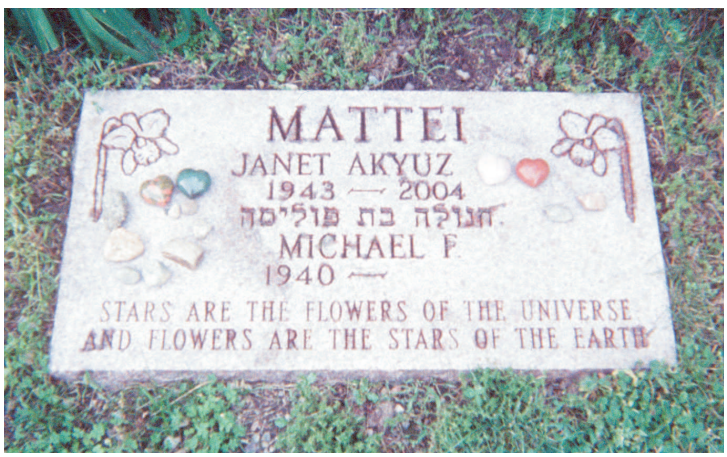

Figure 2. Close-up of headstone. Inscription in Hebrew reads, "Hannula daughter of Bulisa." The small stones have been placed on the headstone by visitors to Janet's grave, according to the Jewish custom of leaving a small stone as a symbol of memorial and as a reminder that we come from the earth and will return to it.

the military, the arts, and the sciences, including such astronomers, physicists, mathematicians, and instrument makers as Solon Bailey, William Bond, Nathaniel Bowditch, Seth Chandler, Alvan Clark and his sons Alvan and George, Williamina Fleming, Benjamin Gould, Edward King, Carl Lundin, Edward Pickering, Fred Whipple, and now Janet Mattei.

The location of Janet's grave on Willow Pond Knoll is uphill from a beautiful pond framed by weeping willows, flowering bushes, and fragrant flowers. At the top of the knoll is a tall memorial sculpture in copper-colored metal and shaped like a stylized flame. Janet's grave, which is in a double plot so that Mike and Janet can be together, is next to the road and is at the foot of three large Canadian hemlock trees and a bed of vibrant yellow day lilies (see Figure 1). Across the road is Poppy Path, a small walking path with a particularly appropriate name, as poppies were one of Janet's favorite flowers. The gravestone (see Figure 2), which will bear both Janet's and Mike's dates, is polished pink granite. Mike designed the engraving, which includes text in English and Hebrew, orchids, and the thought that Janet loved: "Stars are the Flowers of the Universe, and Flowers are the Stars of the Earth."

On the weekend of Janet's memorial service—October 29–30, 2004—her grave was decorated with a large floral star made of blue hydrangeas and small yellow blossoms, and with numerous bouquets brought by family, AAVSO members, and friends. All year round, elegant tribute is paid to Janet by Nature herself in the unique setting that is Mount Auburn.