

Anne Stein-Schneider
A Life of Giving

Out of Auvergne: Nestled in a quiet valley in the southeastern corner of the Puy-de-Dome Department in eastern Auvergne is Ambert. The small town became famous in the 14th century for its paper manufacturing, and today is well known for producing arguably the finest blue cheese in France, the Fourme d'Ambert. It is here that Anne Stein-Schneider was born and raised, in the same house her own mother was born and raised. She will tell you that Ambert's round Mairie and the Moulin à papier Richard de Bas Museum her father helped found, are also points of pride among the Ambertois.

Coming to America: Before finding her way to the United States in 1962, Anne lived in England, Spain, and Italy, where she worked as a young governess while pursuing her studies. In 1959, during a tour of the Santa Sabina Basilica in Rome, she met her future husband, Pasteur Herbert Stein-Schneider. He was the pastor of the French Protestant Church of Washington, DC (1950 to 1990), whose congregation met every Sunday at St. John's Church (The Church of the Presidents) on Lafayette Square, across from the White House. It was only a coincidence that the Marquis de Lafayette, after whom the square is named, and another Auvergnat, was a distant cousin. In October of 1962, Anne married Herbert at St. John's. They eventually had 3 children and 2 grandchildren.

The wife of a Pastor: It has now been exactly 60 years that Anne has served the French community in Washington DC with dedication, distinction, and unmatched enthusiasm. For the first 28 years, at the side of her husband, Anne and Herbert attended to their fellow compatriots and Francophiles throughout the Washington, DC region. After Herbert's sudden death in March of 1990 from a heart attack, Anne continued to help the community she loves.

Déjeuners du Mercredi: Beginning in 1970, in the basement lunchroom area of St. John's Church, Anne and Herbert held weekly lunches for members of the French Church and lovers of all things French. The meal would consist of a main course, a glass of wine, and a delicious desert at a very reasonable price. Also included was a short presentation towards the end of the meal by someone from the congregation, or an important French visitor, covering varied topics such as history, art, music, politics, cuisine, travels, and numerous other subjects always related to France. Anne's quiche Lorraine, boeuf Bourguignon, hachis parmentier, and langue de boeuf surreptitiously hidden in a rich béchamel sauce (for the squeamish palettes), became famous within the French community throughout the years for their quality, deliciousness, and economical price. Between 30 to 40 people attended on a consistent basis weekly, with occasional participation as high as 80 diners. After Herbert's passing in 1990, Anne continued helping incoming pastors maintain the luncheons, albeit in a new bring-your-own-sandwich-and-salad format. For her part, until February of 2020, Anne brought cookies, French magazines, made coffee and tea, all the while warmly greeting and welcoming the guests.

French Culture for the Schools: Local high schools would frequently send their French classes to the Stein-Schneider home, where Anne would make everyone lunch, teaching the students

about French culture. Afterwards, Herbert would present a slideshow of France and its rich history.

American University Classes: For many years, the American University enlisted Anne and Herbert to introduce high-level executives from numerous American companies to French culture. The managers would first attend a class taught by Herbert on the campus of the university, and then later, be received at the Stein-Schneider residence for a gourmet meal cooked by Anne. Throughout the evening, these very important guests were given a hands-on class covering what to expect when they arrived at their new assignments in France. Thanks to what they learned, international incidents by an etiquette faux pas, were certainly mitigated and avoided.

Le Cercle Français: This was the cultural arm of the French Protestant church, which provided not only members of the church, but Francophiles everywhere, the latest information on French cultural events happening throughout the Washington, DC region. Anne frequently handwrote over 1,000 addresses on envelopes yearly for circulars that went out to all members of the social group.

The American Bicentennial: For several days before, and on the 4th of July, 1976, Herbert and Anne hosted a French table in a prominent location on the Washington, DC Mall for 5 days, serving thousands of people. Anne made quiche Lorraine, madeleines, paté de campagne and paté de foie sandwiches, plus many other French items were offered to celebrate 200 years of American independence. After all, without France, the Bicentennial never would have happened.

Club d'Amitié Franco-Internationale: A member since 1965, Member of the Board in 1990, and then Vice President from 1995 to 2019, Anne helped organize lunches once a month for a group of 50 to 60, and sometimes as many as 100, women who convened to hear a French conference.

Vieilles Maisons Françaises: For over 20 years Anne was a member of the Committee Vieilles Maisons Françaises, an organization created in 1958 by Anne de Amedio. Along with her husband Herbert, Anne helped organize receptions to raise money for the organization. The goal was to bring an awareness of French culture, through the preservation of important French architecture, and help establish funding for the restoration of historically significant French structures.

French Church Bazaars: From 1962 to 1989, every December, Anne and volunteers she coordinated, made 500 to 600 lunches. These were provided to American high school students, and the greater community, at the annual French Bazaar. Since 1990, Anne continued helping at the event, usually baking the night before. For decades, always smiling and reaching out, Anne has welcomed thousands of people to the bazaar with her charming demeanor and warm embrace.

Member of Washington Accueil: Since she did not already have enough to do, in 1990, Anne joined Washington Accueil, where she has been a member more than 32 years. For a time, the group retained a private room at the French Embassy where Anne would religiously go every week to welcome new French citizens who had just reached the shores of America. In 2015, when the room was no longer available at the Embassy, she volunteered to meet people at Starbucks in McLean to make sure the new French arrivals would feel welcomed and at home. She continued doing this twice a month until March of 2020.

Board Member of the French Protestant Church: For over 20 years, Anne has been an important and contributing member of the board, bringing her decades of experience and irreplaceable knowledge of the church, to the proceedings.

Decorated French Citizen: In 2010 France bestowed on Anne the decoration of “Chevalier dans l’ordre National du Mérite” (Herbert also received the “Chevalier dans l’ordre National du Mérite” in 1987).