



# Katherine Elizabeth Fleming

BA Economics, PPE [Politics, Philosophy & Economics], MA Economics

Katherine Elizabeth Fleming was born, the fifth of six children to Doreen Anne [Covey] and George Kyte Fleming on 5 October, 1963 in Kitchener, Ontario.

Katie started school in Montreal; she was very anxious to join her siblings. Unfortunately for her, to start kindergarten in Quebec, children had to be 5 years old by October 1. Katie quickly made up for that by skipping Grade 3.

During high school Katie participated in the School Band, and was a very good Age-Group swimmer --- the peak of her swimming career was winning a Gold Medal at the Canadian Jr. Olympics in Halifax in 1977. Katie also rowed competitively with her sisters with Thunder Bay Rowing Club.

Katie was an excellent student and rather than taking 5 years [Grade 13 in Ontario], she decided to complete the requirements in 4 years so that she might start at St. Francis Xavier University.

## EDUCATION AND WORK

<p>1982 1985</p>		<p>Katie loved studying at St FX, where she formed close bonds with classmates and felt very fortunate to learn from such an accomplished faculty. It was at St FX that Katie learned of the work of the Coady Institute and that her interest and devotion to development economics began. She excelled in her studies, graduated with a BA in Economics and was awarded the Rhodes Scholarship in her application to Oxford University.</p>
<p>1985 1987</p>		<p>At Oxford University, Katie chose to study Politics, Philosophy and Economics [PPE] in order to develop her analytical skills in a wide range of areas. Though passionate and unswerving in her moral and political beliefs, she loved open debate and had a habit of winning over as friends those she could not win over as intellectual allies.</p>
<p>1987 1989</p>		<p>In New York City, Katie considered herself privileged to work as an assistant to Stephen Lewis while he was Canada's Ambassador at the United Nations. On 30 December 1989 at Our Lady or Pompeii Church in Manhattan, Katie married Johannes C. M. Zutt [John], a fellow Canadian, whom she met at Oxford while he was beginning his PhD [DPhil] in Philosophy.</p>
<p>1990</p>		<p>While Stephen Lewis was teaching at University College, U of T Katie worked as his research associate cataloguing Mr. Lewis's four years at the UN. The archive resides today at McMaster University. Stephen recalls "It took every ounce of Katie's energy and intellectual acumen. I don't know anyone else who could have done it in so organized and methodical a fashion". Katie also did research for a book on which Mr. Lewis was working.</p> <p>During this time, Katie also completed her MA at the University of Toronto where she took particular interest in her courses in development economics which she was later able to use effectively in her work in Africa. It was at this time that she developed a lifelong friendship with Professor Gerry Helleiner which led to later collaborative work in Uganda.</p>
<p>1991 1993</p>		<p>As an Education Programme Officer with UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office [ESARO] in Nairobi, Kenya, Katie plunged with enormous energy and enthusiasm into the world of children's rights, education and advocacy. She worked closely with NGOs, UN agencies and the governments of Eastern and Southern African countries to build their capacity to deliver services to women and children. It was during their time in Nairobi that Katie and John welcomed the arrival of Madeline Elizabeth Zutt in February 1992.</p>

1993  
1995



Katie returned to New York City to work as a Special Assistant to leading development economist Sir Richard Jolly, at the time a Deputy Executive Director at UNICEF. Katie was determined to learn as much as possible about UNICEF headquarters while she was there, and delighted in her colleagues Karin Sham Poo, Tessa Wardlaw and Leila Bisharat, to name a few, but her true passion was to do field work for children in Africa, and for girls' education especially. In June 1994, Katie and John's second child, Nicholas Covey Zutt, was born.

1995  
1998



In 1995, Katie was offered the job of Head of Programming at UNICEF's Western Africa Regional Office in Bamako, Mali. There she worked hard as one of UNICEF's representatives in the Education Sector Investment Program, a program started by the Mali government and the World Bank with a strong focus on improving teachers' training in Mali and expanding the educational infrastructure. Working closely with Louis-Georges Arsenault, she spearheaded UNICEF's efforts in Mali to translate the spirit of the UN Child Rights Conventions into tangible programming results. It was in Mali that Katie and John's third child, Alexander Emmanuel Zutt was born in December 1997.

1999



Katie was very happy to accept greater responsibility as Senior Programme Officer at UNICEF's Eastern Regional Office in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. On 11 May 1999, Katherine Elizabeth Fleming died in her sleep of undetermined causes.

# Memories From Katie's Colleagues

1985  
1987

## Steve Dunne

Oxford, England, Rhodes Scholar

Katie's life was full because her goals were clear, and she pursued those goals without delay, without distraction. As long as most of us have known her, Katie knew exactly what she wanted to do with her life: she wanted to work in development and try to improve the world around her; she wanted to marry someone wonderful; and she wanted to have kids and raise them, as she was raised, to do good in the world. Katie's life was such a happy one, such a meaningful one, because she never strayed from these dreams.

1990

## Gerry Helleiner

Professor of Economics, University of Toronto

Beginning as a bright and passionate student in my graduate development economics class, Katie quickly became a valued friend and colleague. Particularly memorable was our work together in East Africa. During her stint with UNICEF in Nairobi my knowledge of her unique capabilities and character led me to seek her out to join an important (Danish financed) economic advisory mission to the president of Uganda, who at that time sought a second opinion vis-à-vis Washington's advice. We requested, and got, a special leave for Katie from her main employer, UNICEF.

Her subsequent contributions to the success of the mission – as general organizer, support person, secretary and advisor – were enormous, quite apart from her always scintillating company for all 6 members of the advisory group. [The mission's report was eventually endorsed by the president and, for a time, carried some influence]. The dedication, determination, good cheer and skill that Katie always brought to her work in Africa, both for children and, as in this case, more generally, were an inspiration to all who knew her.

1990  
1993

## Sally Burnheim

UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO)

I remember Katie very well. I worked in a different UNICEF office in Nairobi back in the 90s, but I knew her and John quite well on a personal level. Katie was incredibly kind and generous towards me when I first arrived in Nairobi as a 31-year-old single woman in need of a friend.

1990  
1993

## Tanja van de Linde

External relations/Communications Officer

UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO)

I worked with Kate for 2 years in Nairobi with UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), Nairobi as External relations/Communications Officer. Kate's work would have been related to: Coordinate with NGOs, UN agencies, support UNICEF country offices in the Eastern and Southern African region in their education activities. Organise regional training workshops, identify training needs, communication and advocacy strategies for World Summit for Children, Convention on the Rights of the Child. A Global NGO Summit in Kadoma, Zimbabwe in preparation for the World Summit was organized by ESARO.

1990  
1993

## Arleen Seed

Regional ICT Officer

UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO)

Kate was a programme officer in Nairobi she dealt with UNICEF's projects, the governments in Africa and the staff in the country offices in Eastern and Southern Africa. She was a huge supporter of advocacy programs, and building capacity of local governments to deliver services to women and children. Everyone admired Kate for her consistent good mood. She was always on top of her game, always cheerful and willing to help colleagues, whether it was with understanding a situation or planning action. I only have great memories of her.

1993  
1995

## Karin Sham Poo

UNICEF Headquarters New York City

Sometimes, one is fortunate to meet a person who in a short span of time connects with you as if you had known each other forever. Kate Fleming was for me such a person. We met for the first time in Nairobi late 1990. She had just joined UNICEF a few months earlier as a junior Programme and Planning Officer. While Kate enjoyed working at UNICEF HQ in New York, her passion was to work for children in Africa, and she was very happy when she got appointed to another position in UNICEF, this time in Bamako, Mali. We continued to keep in touch, and I continued to be impressed with what she was doing. For that reason, I was very happy when she, a couple of years later, was appointed as Senior Programme Officer in UNICEF in Tanzania.

1993  
1995

**Tessa Wardlaw**

UNICEF Headquarters New York  
Chief, Data and Analytics Section

Kate was an exceptionally talented young woman. From the moment I met her, I was deeply impressed by her extraordinary intelligence and her high level of competence. She was an unusually clear thinker and also a very capable writer. I was not only impressed by her talents, including being a Rhodes Scholar and an Olympic-level swimmer, but I also strongly admired the depth and commitment she demonstrated in her personal relationships, particularly in her marriage to John Zutt, and her devotion as a mother. One of the more vivid memories I have of Kate and John, was John regularly bringing Madeline and Nicholas to the office so that Kate could nurse her newborn.

1993  
1995

**Leila Bisharat**

UNICEF Headquarters New York

Kate did not talk about herself. Instead she focused on the next challenge and soon demonstrated that she had the stamina and teamwork ethic of a champion. She was straightforward with me from the outset about her goals. She intended to learn everything she could about UNICEF Headquarters and then find a way to a posting in Africa, preferably Francophone Africa. She had landed in the right spot at Headquarters to ferret out everything that might be useful to her, from programming through operations. UNICEF's Strategic Plan was this Office's responsibility, as was the initiation of the Management Excellence effort after the consultancy awarded to Booz Allen and Hamilton to conduct a wide-reaching management review.

1995  
1998

**Louis-Georges Arsenault**

Deputy Representative  
UNICEF Western Africa Regional Office Mali

With UNICEF-Mali, Kate was head of Education programme and I was the Deputy Representative and managing the overall program. Kate reported to me directly.

The one thing that first impressed me with Kate in office was her determination. I'm sure it will not be a surprise for those who knew her well. Mali official language is French and Kate French was so, so at best. In Kate's mind that translated into a challenge. And a challenge is meant to be taken heads on. She would simply refuse to speak a word of English in the office and she struggled for weeks on. Guess what! She became fluent in no time. That's our Kate!

In 1996 the Mali government with World Bank support, initiated an Education Sector Investment Programme (SIP) where UNICEF was to play a major role. This meant better coordination of majors' actors under government leadership with a strong focus on improving quality teacher training, children learning achievement with expanded and improved infrastructure. Kate was very young, 32 years old. Yet she was able secure a place at the policy table while engaging on substantive issues always with a smile. It was a joy watching her moving through the corridors and getting the job done.

It is also during that Period that UNICEF globally was developing its Right-Based Approach to Programming (RBAP) informed by the United Nations Child Rights Conventions (CRC) which provides a base line for Child Rights world-wide. In fact, this approach developed in Mali was ahead of its time and it took some time for the UNICEF to integrate the learning into its overall program planning. Kate was ahead of her time. She left us way too early but she will never be forgotten.