

# Notables

*A weekly journal of Society, Charity & Service*



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# Palm Beach Social Diary

By Aime Dunstan

Starting tomorrow, many of us will resolve to drink less or eat right in 2009.

We'll vow to exercise more, be a more attentive spouse or parent, or reach a new career goal. We'll plan to pay off credit cards or do more charity work (or less, as the case may be), maybe take up a hobby or spend more time with family.

Me? I'm going to bake more cakes. I'm going to drink better wine, and I'm going wear my grandmother's pearls more often.

Basically, I am going to try and take the time to enjoy life.

Early this fall, I met a gal who in no uncertain terms made me want to become a better woman. I knew it then, but I wasn't about to go around broadcasting, "I have a girl crush on Jordan Evert McCracken." (OK, I did tell my husband, but only because he just laughs at my ever-changing obsessions without spilling the beans to the general public.)

But Jordan was the real deal. Funny, stylish, brilliant and so sincere, she made having a career and living the good life look easy.

At just 27 years old, she could try a court case, travel abroad, lead a Bible study, chair a fundraiser, mentor a troubled teen, host friends for tea and try another court case without missing a beat.

In everything she did, Jordan bubbled with enthusiasm in a very real "I love my life" kind of way that should have been annoying but instead inspired even a cynic like *moi*. At a committee meeting, she once said, "OK, guys, this may sound really dorky, but I really love being a lawyer!" Then she topped off my wine glass. How could I not adore her?

A trial attorney with Lytal, Reiter & Clark, Jordan was a member of the Florida Bar, the Palm Beach County Bar Association and served on the board of directors of the Young Lawyers Section of the Florida Justice Association. She was an active member of the Young Friends of the Norton Museum of Art's steering committee.

At the Junior League of the Palm Beaches, Jordan was a rising star, volunteering to chair the Worth Tasting on Worth Avenue food and wine festival during her first year on the *Worth Tasting* cookbook committee. As co-chairwoman of the committee and previous chairwoman of the event, I walked

Jordan through the mania that is volunteering to plan a fundraiser for 200 people in one short month when you have a husband, a full-time job and other volunteer commitments. We e-mailed or spoke almost daily, and I couldn't wait until the event was over so we could just have a good laugh about it all. I hoped we could become good friends once the chaos had passed.

On the morning of Dec. 13, when an incoming storm system threatened to spoil her evening soiree, Jordan acted fast to secure tents to shelter Palm Beach's rain-soaked Via Gucci. Pausing only to field cell-phone calls from her law firm, she handled permitting and delivery issues with grace and style (and a little help from other Junior Leaguers).

When Jordan slipped out to change into her cocktail dress for the evening, her husband of three months, Jebb McCracken, stayed on to help set up tables and linens. Her mother, Pam Evert (Jordan insisted we address her as "Pammie"), stayed on to sell copies of the *Worth Tasting* cookbook.

That night, despite the soggy weather, about 200 guests came to dine and dance with Jordan and the *Worth Tasting* committee. Nearly 100 cookbooks and thousands of dollars in raffle tickets were sold to benefit the Junior League's community programs.

At the end of the night, when the guests had gone and the music subsided, we toasted our committee's success. Jordan, known for marking every occasion with a celebration, had a more official after-party in mind - one with lots



Photos by In the Light Images

Jordan Evert and Jebb McCracken at Worth Tasting on Worth Avenue, a food and wine festival held Dec. 13 on Via Gucci to benefit the Junior League of the Palm Beaches. Chairwoman of the event, Jordan died on Dec. 15.



From left: Worth Tasting on Worth Avenue committee members Julia Heggen, Dana Schleicher, Aime Dunstan, Jordan Evert McCracken, Beckie Stoddard, Katie Gamble, Kate Merrell and Tanya Siskind.

Aime Dunstan





Photo by In the Light Images

From left: (in front) Chairwoman Jordan Evert McCracken, Raffle Chairwoman Beckie Stoddard, Worth Avenue Association President Sherry Frankel, Co-Chairwoman Dana Schleicher, Committee Co-Chairwoman Julia Heggen, (in back) Committee Co-Chairwoman Aime Dunstan, Jeremy Hanlon, of My Fresh Chef, Co-Chairwoman Katie Gamble, Café Boulud Chef de Cuisine Zach Bell, Sharithma Almodovar, of Lyon + Lyon catering, and Stephen Asprinio, of Forte di Asprinio

## Mrs. McCracken's spirit lives on

### ► DUNSTAN *from 3*

of champagne and no agenda.

The following Sunday night, we received the devastating news that Jordan had died. A weak blood vessel in her brain had burst. Our rising star had fallen.

In his eulogy – one of many that sang the praises of a woman who was clearly the object of myriad crushes beyond my own – Lake Lytal said the only notion that brings him peace is that perhaps it was the afflicted part of Jordan's brain that evoked her uncanny effervescence.

In any case, we pray, her spirit lives on in the lives she saved through organ donation.

I have never baked a cake or tried a court case or hosted tea for my girlfriends, but in memory of Jordan, whom I was blessed to have known however briefly, I hope to make 2009 a very sweet and bubbly year. If by age 40 I am half the woman she was at 27, I will consider it a great fortune.

*The family requests that donations be sent to the Jordan Camino Evert McCracken Memorial Fund of the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties (benefiting Guardian Ad Litem services and Jordan's other philanthropic interests), 700 S. Dixie High-*