



Mrs. Sona Karakashian Johnston

January 29, 1939 - March 20, 2022

Sona Karakashian Johnston passed away on March 20, 2022 after a long illness. She was born in Boston in 1939 and raised in Newton, MA. Her parents, Karakin Karakashian and Menoush Nazaretian, were Armenian refugees, from Ottoman Turkey. In Newton, Karakin became a house builder and she, a housewife. Sona graduated from Newton High School in 1958 and, with a scholarship, enrolled at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY, studying painting initially and then art history. In 1961, she entered New York University's Institute of Fine Arts becoming its slide librarian. Two years later, Sona was hired as a lecturer by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In that capacity, in 1965 she helped to lead the first American museum tour of the Soviet Union traveling as far east as Samarkand and Tashkent.

Marrying Bill Johnston in 1967, Sona joined him in Baltimore and worked initially as assistant curator at the Peale Museum. Two years later, after the birth of her son, Frederic Nazar, she joined the staff at the Baltimore Museum of Art serving as an assistant curator and eventually as a senior curator of painting and sculpture. In addition to publishing the catalogue of American paintings, she organized numerous exhibitions, but she is probably most closely associated with her expertise on Theodore Robinson, the American Impressionist.

She is survived by her husband of 56 years, William R. Johnston, her son

Frederic Nazar Johnston and her daughter-in-law Teresa Alborn Johnston and their two children Elena and Benjamin Johnston. Her older brother Nishan Karakashian predeceased her.

Tribute Wall

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“ I am so sorry to hear of Sona’s death. She was a great friend at Sarah Lawrence. We were in different worlds at college, but our trips to NYC were memorable. We always ate at our favorite restaurant, The Golden Horn. Her warmth and laugh were infectious. She also lived across the hall so I saw her often. . To her family, I am sorry, she will be missed by many.

Nancy Townsend Wyman - June 21, 2022 at 07:18 AM