

Unificationist Kaarina Jager Recognized for Community Service in New Mexico

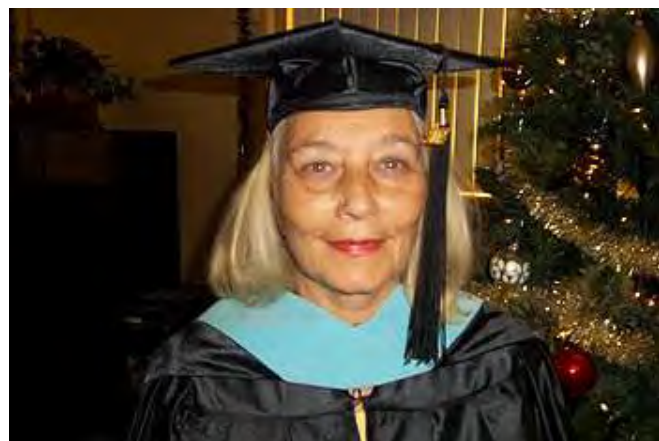
Krista Moon
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After being burglarized and terrorized in her neighborhood by gangs and vandals, Jager has volunteered for two decades in her local Neighborhood Watch organization.

A survivor of adversity, Unificationist Kaarina Jager was honored recently for outstanding public service at the 14th annual Women's History Month Celebration on March 23, 2013 in Roswell, New Mexico.

The Roswell Daily Herald published the story "Discover some unknown feats of local women during the 14th annual Women's History Month Celebration Brunch" on March 17, 2013 to highlight the extraordinary contributions of women whose "accomplishments are many and far-reaching; change[d] the Roswell landscape forever...and [made] Roswell a better place to live in."



Kaarina Jager, from Finland, dedicated the completion of her master's degree in education to her Austrian husband, Reinhard, who was killed by a drunk driver in 1985, and to her youngest son, who died of cancer in 2002. She graduated from Eastern New Mexico University on December 6, 2012, incidentally also Finland's 95th Independence Day, with a Masters in education.

Jager, born in Finland, was recognized for her "mak[ing] Roswell safer and its people more educated."

"As an educator, Jager has not only helped others up, but has skillfully turned negative situations into opportunities to do and share good," reported the Roswell Daily Herald. "When her house was burglarized, she started a Neighborhood Watch group where she lives. Her belief in two-parent families as part of a stable society prompted her involvement in Wings for L.I.F.E. [Life-skills Imparted to Families through Education]."

In an interview with Unification News, Jager said, "As other Unificationist families moved away from Roswell in the last 20 years, and I became the sole Unificationist family in my town, it gave me a desire to meet and get to know my neighbors, and I then got involved with my community in Roswell and my hometown in Finland, too."

Jager joined the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPUP) in Turku, Finland in 1973. She was a student pursuing her master's degree in business at Turku School of Economics and

worked as a tour guide when she met missionaries from the Unification Church. “I was at a point in my life where I was looking for deep answers, and one day I met two missionaries near ‘Archdiocese of Turku’ near the Turku Cathedral in the center of the city,” she told Unification News. “They had a center nearby, and I followed them. I was impressed with their teachings and I felt the spirit calling to join.”



Kaarina and her husband, Reinhard, (top right) were Blessed in marriage in 1978 as part of the 118 couples at Lancaster Gate, London, England.

“It took me time to get organized, and I soon joined in 1975 the International One World Crusade (IOWC) in Europe and traveled for several years,” said Jager.

Jager was Blessed to her Austrian husband, Reinhard, as part of the 118 couples Blessing in Lancaster Gate, London, England in May 1978. Her husband came to the United States as a missionary, and she came after him and they settled in Roswell, New Mexico as pioneer missionaries.

“I was never prepared for all of these things that were going to happen in my life,” said Jager. She continued: “Reinhard was struck and killed by drunk driver and died in 1985, leaving me alone with my two babies, aged one and two, at the time. Unificationist families helped me, but soon they moved away. I was determined to remain in Roswell, because it was the hometown where my children grew up.”

According to the Roswell Daily Herald, “Jager completed a K-8 teaching certification in 1998 and taught a few years at Chisum Elementary. Her youngest son was diagnosed with Ewing’s sarcoma — a type of cancer — around that time, and she became a substitute teacher, so she could care for him during his final years.”



District Pastor, Rev. Mark Hernandez (fifth from left) joined Kaarina Jager (fourth from left) when she was honored at the 14th annual Women's History Month Celebration Brunch on March 23, 2013 in Roswell, New Mexico.

“My widowhood/single parenthood has been a prolonged experience out of which you make the best possible life without a partner, son or funding,” she wrote to Unification News in an e-mail. “Life can be rich in other ways: helping others, seeing beauty in nature, arts and people. However for young children and teenagers losing a parent and a sibling is often a challenging experience. Our surviving son, Risun, teaches physics in Albuquerque, NM, and is getting his teaching certification.”

“Besides Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s life, [the founder of FFWPU], Finland has been a major source of inspiration in overcoming tough situations,” said Jager. “I am from Finland, and thought ‘Well, if they, [the Finns], can fend against the Russian armies in Karelia [the eastern region of Finland bordering Russia] for thousands of years, I too can continue on, even though I was pretty much on my own.’”

Finishing her education was a priority for Jager, since her husband was not able to complete his, and her youngest son was not able to graduate from high school. The Roswell newspaper reported: “In honor of

her deceased son and late husband, Jager decided to continue her education, completing a master's degree in education from Eastern New Mexico University in 2012. [Jaeger wrote to Unification News that she graduated on December 6th, 2012, incidentally Finland's 95th Independence Day.] She is now a teacher at the Creative Learning Center. She helps share and promote the arts to about 40 local first-graders. During the summer, she is a tour guide in her native Finland." This summer Jager will travel to Naantali, Finland, her ancestral hometown known as "Valley of Grace," to celebrate her mother's 100th birthday, she told Unification News.



Kaarina Jager received a recognition award for outstanding commitment and dedication to the community at the 14th annual Women's History Month Celebration Brunch in Roswell, New Mexico on March 23, 2013.

The article continues: “For women here there really are more opportunities,’ Jager said. She said she appreciates America and how it allows women of all ages to pursue studies and work at the same time. This is in contrast to Europe, she said where retirement at age of 55 is encouraged, especially for women. Being recognized by the Women’s History Month brunch is also special for Jager. ‘I am honored as an immigrant woman,’ she said.”

Jager said she is able to continue forward, but she added, “Our church has a lot to learn about how to give support for members who have different situations. We need to look more into how we can take care of those who have faced casualties.”



A newspaper clipping of the article from the Roswell Daily Record published on March 17, 2013. Kaarina Jager (far left) was recognized for "mak[ing] Roswell safer and its people more educated."

In the face of adversity, Jager says, “You have to tell yourself ‘I will go on and make the best of a miserable situation that I am in and live for the next generation to come.’”