



Nicole Valenta

1969 – 2010

Nicole Valenta, a national of Germany, had a decade-long career with the UN, most recently as a Best Practices Officer for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for a year.

Nicole was raised in the small German town of Ransbach-Baumbach. She studied law at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn and as a legal trainee at the High Court of Berlin for two years.

In the mid-1990s, she relocated to the United States, enrolling at Golden Gate University in San Francisco and graduating with a Master's in International Legal Studies. Her experience and credentials then earned her a post as legal advisor at the German, Italian and Swiss Consulates in San Francisco, and then at the German Embassy in Argentina.

Working for the UN remained a long-term ambition for Nicole, and she applied for an internship at the UN in New York which she undertook in the spring of 1999 within the Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). Colleagues there fondly remembered her as a conscientious worker.

In 2000, Nicole accepted a position as an Associate Programme Officer with the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in Geneva. After two years, she transferred to the New York office in 2002, in the same role, where she was responsible for trainings related to international affairs and diplomacy.

Always eager to challenge herself further, Nicole took courses at New York University and began studying for the New York Bar Exam, passing on her first attempt. Her colleagues greatly admired her discipline and commitment towards advancing her studies while maintaining a demanding full-time job.

Nicole then applied for UN field positions, and consequently was first stationed in Kinshasa and later in Beni in Ituri in 2006 as a Human Rights Officer with the UN Or-

ganization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). It was in the DRC that she met her life partner and fiancé George Scheibner Mesas, also a UN staff member.

In 2007, Nicole moved to Haiti as a Conduct and Discipline Officer. In February 2009 she became Chief of the Best Practices Unit for MINUSTAH.

Colleagues were quick to share their impressions of Nicole as "inspirational," "generous with her time," "intensely present," "dedicated" and "a remarkable person," who had a heartfelt impact on everyone whose path she crossed.

"Nicole had an amazing way to talk and listen to people and find a common language," said a colleague, who noted that she was fluent in German, English, French and Spanish.

A generous and caring person, Nicole always found a way to surprise people with gifts. "Her kindness and creativity went to extraordinary lengths," said a colleague.

With anecdotes of trips overseas to attend weddings, organizing personalized tours for friends visiting New York, and German-themed celebrations where everyone was invited, colleagues have endless tales of Nicole's kindness. Other colleagues mentioned the gifts Nicole showered on them even when she was serving in hardship duty stations.

"Her memory will continue to inspire those fortunate enough to have known her," said a colleague from Afghanistan.

"It feels as if our friendship was like an unfinished conversation," said another colleague from Lebanon.

A memorial service was held on 6 February 2010 in Ransbach-Baumbach. Nicole's parents, who had last seen her at Christmas a few weeks before the earthquake, spoke at the service of their daughter's joy and passion.

Nicole is survived by her parents, her brother Marcel, and her fiancé George Scheibner Mesas who survived the earthquake.