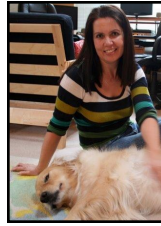


# Portrait

Mrs. Zsuzsa  
Pásztor Stanfield



Capable leader, excellent organizer, loving mother and wife who never shies away from challenges. The word “problem” doesn’t exist in her vocabulary. Her “Hungarian-ness” defines her. Since her husband is American, she considers it her lifetime mission to bring out and nurture the Hungarian identity in their three children, which she accepts with her characteristic enthusiasm. Her husband supports her efforts.

Where does her diverse talent originate? She was born in 1964 in Budapest, where she completed school and lived with her husband, Ken Stanfield, until 1993, when they moved to the USA. The Communists arrested her dad in 1956, ending his electrical engineering studies. Her parents instilled a love and appreciation of Hungarian language and literature. Her father read Endre Ady’s poems by the kitchen table at night. Her mother was a librarian and language lector. Her brother still lives in Budapest with his family.

Zsuzsa had a wide range of interests, including a desire to acquaint herself with the world beyond Hungary. After high school, she chose a profession that made travel possible even during the Communist era: she earned a double diploma from the Tourism faculty of the College of Commerce and Catering. Tourism went through a boom period then; many new hotels were built in Budapest with foreign investment. Zsuzsa, through her job, and later with Ken, was able to travel throughout Europe. Her knowledge of foreign languages helped her reach her goals.

Whatever she gets involved in; she does it with determination and 100% zeal. “I was always interested in many different things” says Zsuzsa. Besides her work, language studies and travel, she found time for sports, too, including orientation scuba diving in mine lakes.



While Zsuzsa is only midway through her life and career, it is difficult to list her accomplishments because of her varied interests. Before she met Ken, she’d been to the USA twice: as a camp counselor in Missouri and as a nanny to twin babies for a year in

Connecticut. The love of her homeland always brought her back to Hungary. Her homesickness only eased after the birth of their children (Sara 14, Julian 12 and Casey 11). Every three years she takes her children to Hungary. She feels that their cultural belonging is important in the formation of their identity.

Her first job was at Tourinform, a tourist information office in Budapest, then she worked as a tour organizer at Omega Tourist. When she was 26, she was the director of the Budapest International Book Fair. “It was a job with many facets, a good fit for me, full of challenges.” Next, she found employment at a startup American environmental remediation firm in Budapest where she met Ken. He managed the firm’s computer system. Later, Ken worked as a computer consultant in Budapest for the United Nations International Labor Organization and for several British banks. In 1993, they received job offers from a former employer in the USA and they moved to California.

The job in California did not work out, so in late 1993, they moved to Seattle where Ken had lived prior to moving to Europe. They started their own consulting business preparing bid proposals for engineering companies involved in environmental cleanup. Despite the initial difficulties, they were able to get on their own feet within a short time.



In California, Zsuzsa missed the Hungarian community. After settling in Seattle, she contacted past-president Paul Juhasz who referred her to the Csepregyhys. With that, her volunteer work for the Hungarian community began, and it still goes on to this day. First she taught in the Hungarian school. Then she became the school director. In 2003, she accepted a position on the HAAW board as treasurer, then vice president, and currently she is the president. In 2005, she organized a successful fundraiser – an auction for the association. She and her children also joined the Kisbetyarok Family Folk Dancers. In 2007 she reorganized Hirek and became chief editor for 2.5 years. Her work as board member and editor brought her closer to the members of the Hungarian community.

“I am fortunate that Ken and I met in Hungary because he was already open to Hungarian culture” says Zsuzsa. “His mother is Danish-born, and he doesn’t mind hanging out with native Hungarians even if he doesn’t speak the language fluently.”

Their modern home in a park-like neighborhood of Issaquah is evidence of a young, intellectual family. The visitor’s first glance falls on a vast, well-equipped office where husband and wife can work side-by-side on their computers, while the children have their own computer in another room. Zsuzsa recently decided to go back to work. She found contract work as a software tester at Cisco and Microsoft, where her husband also works.

“I was always persevering,” says Zsuzsa. As president of HAAW, she sees her main role in uniting the members of the community. “Because we don’t have a permanent Hungarian House, we miss out on many opportunities, but we can’t afford to sit by helplessly and wait until we have a house.” She is full of ideas for sub-groups to enrich our association. One of her main missions is to find a suitable home for the many Hungarian books owned by the HAAW, so the books would be easily-accessible to our members. Since no one has come forward with an offer, she currently is in negotiations with local libraries to develop an acceptable solution.

In November, on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the HAAW, she was honored as a “Lifetime Member” due to her outstanding leadership and volunteerism. We all congratulate her and wish her continued success. You make us proud, Zsuzsa Stanfield!