



## M. Jane Lewis

April 18, 2026

M. Jane Lewis—who entered the world as Mary Jane Sullivan on October 29, 1946, in Fall River and later upgraded her name to just Jane—died peacefully on April 18th while in Panama, a place she had the good sense to visit annually when Rhode Island turned into a frozen tundra and the snow arrived like it had something to prove.

She was the daughter of the late James J. and Ruth C. Sullivan, and the sort of person who could look at a shard of sea glass and see not “trash” but “potential,” which tells you almost everything you need to know about her. She is survived by her husband, David H. Lewis—her third, and, most agree, an excellent choice—whom she met at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, proof that art school occasionally leads to something more practical than student loans.

Also surviving her are her daughter, Zoe Neves of Narragansett, and a small but lively assembly of grandchildren: Dorothy Lily Smith-Neves, Richard Xander Smith-Neves, Jonah Diakite, Courtney Smith, and Jacob Smith. She declined the title of “grandmother” entirely, preferring “Mimi,” which she wore with considerably more style and far fewer expectations. She had advanced to great-Mimi status with Ember Noel and Raiya Smith, a role she seemed to accept as an honor, if also with a certain resignation.

She is also survived by her brother Peter Sullivan; her brother Kevin Sullivan and his wife, Dale; nephews Liam Sullivan, Seamus Sullivan and his wife, Caroline; and her sister Louise Riley and her husband, John; as well as nephews Van Riley, John Patrick Riley and his wife, Karen.

Jane grew up in Fall River, where her love of art began. She graduated from MassArt in Boston and went on to build a life defined by making things: paintings, jewelry, and, occasionally, making a room feel more interesting simply by standing in it. Her sea glass jewelry, in particular, suggested that if you handed her enough broken pieces, she would return something beautiful—possibly wearable, and definitely better than what you started with.

Her career in fashion design took her to India multiple times, giving her both a global perspective and, one imagines, a much higher tolerance for long flights and strong opinions about textiles. Work, however, was only part of the story. Left to her own devices, she traveled extensively and with clear intention, making her way to Thailand, Pakistan, Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, and more—the sort of itinerary that suggests independence was less a trait and more a guiding principle.

In later years, she lived in Little Compton with her husband David and their dog, Blue, who, by all accounts, was very good at being a dog and less accomplished at sea glass selection. Before settling there, she made homes in Westport, Tomales, and Oak Bluffs—a sequence that leaves little doubt about her fondness for coastlines and a reluctance to stay put for too long. Wherever she landed, she continued to make art, take trips, and generally behaved as though doing what you wanted was a perfectly reasonable way to organize a life.

She will be remembered for her creativity, her adventurousness, and her deep, unwavering love for her family—along with strong opinions, a discerning

eye, and a tendency to place herself firmly at the center of any given story.

Plans for a celebration of life will be shared at a later date and will take the form of a gallery show of her artwork—which seems an appropriate way to gather, given that she spent much of her life creating things worth viewing.