



Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown

August 19, 1948 - May 14, 2024

Retired U.S. Ambassador to Montenegro Sue Kathrine Brown died May 14 at her home in Arlington, Virginia, with her family by her side.

Ambassador Brown was born in Lubbock, TX, on August 19, 1948, where she and her older sisters, Mary Bolton and Martha Blue, were raised by their mother, Mabell Bolton (née Johnson). As a child in the segregated South, she overcame early hardships to excel personally and professionally as an esteemed public servant, eventually joining an elite group of African American women ambassadors.

She joined the diplomatic service in 1980 and rose through the ranks to enjoy a decades-long career as a United States Foreign Service Officer of the Department of State, serving in Asia, Africa, and Europe. Her overseas postings include the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Niger, Eritrea, Indonesia, France, and Montenegro. She served as Deputy Chief of

Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Eritrea (2004-2006) and Ghana (2006-2009) and was Office

Director for Southern African Affairs in the Bureau of African Affairs (2009-2011).

Ambassador Brown coordinated many U.S. State Department and congressional delegations, including President George W. Bush's 2008 visit to Ghana and President Barack Obama's 2009 visit to the continent, his first visit to the continent as president. She also coordinated Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's 2009 visit to China.

Ambassador Brown was appointed to the Montenegro post by President Barack Obama in 2011 and served until her retirement in 2015. As the second U.S. Ambassador to Montenegro, her appointment was particularly notable as she was only the second African American ambassador to serve in the region since 1977. She was also the first African American to serve as Ambassador to Montenegro and the first African American woman to serve in Southeastern Europe.

Ambassador Brown was pivotal in assisting Montenegro's government with rule-of-law reforms and integration into the European Union. She laid the groundwork for Montenegro's accession to NATO. She was a distinguished public servant recognized for her outstanding leadership, diplomacy, and counsel. She led significant aid relief efforts in response to natural

disasters in Indonesia

and Montenegro and public service campaigns to avert sex trafficking of young girls in Ghana.

During her career, she received the Meritorious Honor Award and the Superior Honor Award for

achievements at posts and the Montenegrin Flag Medal of Second Order from the government

of Montenegro. Ambassador Brown was also recognized for her commitment to supporting the

well-being of staff and families at her posts.

In retirement, she was dedicated to mentoring the next generation of Foreign Service Officers.

She firmly believed in diplomacy and civil society's essential roles in bringing about positive

change and that diverse representation in public diplomacy needed to become the norm.

While Ambassador Brown had many professional successes, she regarded her children and

family as her most significant personal accomplishments. She is survived by her children

Anthony, Tisha, Kevin, Ken, and Justin; eight grandchildren, her nieces Sheila and Paulette; her

nephew Rex; great-grandnieces and great-nephews; extended family; and many life-long

friends. She was preceded in death by her mother, sisters, and nephew, Terry Bolton.

Cemetery Details

Columbia Gardens Cemetery

3411 Arlington Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

Previous Events

Viewing

MAY 25. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Shiloh Baptist Church
1401 Jamieson Ave
Alexandria, VA 22314

Funeral

MAY 25. 11:00 AM (ET)

Shiloh Baptist Church
1401 Jamieson Ave
Alexandria, VA 22314

Interment

MAY 25 (ET)

Columbia Gardens Cemetery
3411 Arlington Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

Tribute Wall

ML

“ It is with sadness that I write this tribute in memory of Retired Ambassador Sue Brown. I met Sue when we were in Lagos, Nigeria and we shared many wonderful gatherings at different venues. I visited her when she was the Deputy Chief of Mission in Accra, Ghana and she shared her warm home and her household staff to take care of me during my visit. We met a few times in Virginia and Washington, DC for a meal and great fellowship. She has been in my thoughts, and I had not reached out to her since February 2023, when we said we hoped to get together sometime that year. It did not happen, but I will always have great memories of the times we shared. I send condolences to her entire family. Marva Long - Fort Washington, MD/New Bern, NC

Marva L Long - May 28, 2024 at 06:20 PM

MO

I only got to know of Sue's passing right now as I a lady that looks like her. I almost told her that she looks like my mentor but rather what was to goggle her name and to my surprise, she had passed on to her maker. I felt very sad, but at a second thought, I told myself that I am quite convinced that she is now in heaven.

I met Sue when she was serving as the Deputy head of mission at the American Embassy. Meanwhile, I was working for the UN peace keeping operation in Eritrea (UNMEE). She immediately took me as a young sister and from there we continued our friendship. She even introduced me to her daughter Tisha who was living in New York. I met Sue again when I was posted to the UN mission in Liberia and there I learnt that she was in Ghana so I visited her and she took care of me. I am very sure Sue is in heaven because while she was in this world, she made a great difference in people's life and in the world. I will never forget one ritual she taught me, to always drink warm water with lemon every morning as I wake before breakfast. That I have always done since then, and whenever I am doing it, I remember Sue. I was also following up with her when she was in Montenegro and that was when I lost touch with her. No actually I contacted her around 2019 and she told me that she was retired and to keep in touch. Well, I just found out now because I saw somebody that looks like her. I thank God for the beautiful life she lived on this earth and the many souls she touched in different positive ways. May her gentle and sweet soul rest in the house of the Lord forever and ever. Amen.

Maryjoan spiff Ononaji - October 23, 2025 at 10:09 AM

VY

“ Vivienne Y. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown.

Vivienne Y. - May 25, 2024 at 08:04 AM

RR

“ Regina R. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown.

Regina R. - May 24, 2024 at 06:57 PM

PT

“ Peace and comfort- Yvette Taylor purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown.



Peace and comfort- Yvette Taylor - May 24, 2024 at 11:30 AM

DM

“ Dr. Marguerite Mariama planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown.

Dr. Marguerite Mariama - May 23, 2024 at 11:09 AM

DM

“ Dr. Marguerite Mariama purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown.



Dr. Marguerite Mariama - May 23, 2024 at 11:09 AM

MF

“ Michele, Karen & Roslyn & Family purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown.



Michele, Karen & Roslyn & Family - May 23, 2024 at 08:24 AM

CI

“ Charlotte, Damon, & Lee Huggins in Indianapolis, IN purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown.



Charlotte, Damon, & Lee Huggins in Indianapolis, IN - May 23, 2024 at 08:08 AM

RP

“ Rev Dr Taft Quincey Heatley, Sr Pastor purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown.



Rev Dr Taft Quincey Heatley, Sr Pastor - May 22, 2024 at 11:35 AM

DO

“ Sue Brown will forever be our mentor, a trusted advisor, a person who inspired us to be better and challenged us to achieve what was hard. Our thoughts and prayers for Sue’s family, in respect for Sue’s gracious and kind soul. With the blessings of God’s grace, I am, Don Yamamoto, a friend who will always cherish Sue’s wisdom and memory.

Don - May 22, 2024 at 11:30 AM



I met Sue on my first overseas posting to Lagos and we also served together in Jakarta. Not only was she a source of wise counsel to this novice Foreign Service Specialist, but I was privileged to call her a friend. My deep condolences to her family. May her memory be a blessing. Ann Holland

Ann Holland - May 28, 2024 at 08:44 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown.



May 22, 2024 at 09:09 AM



“ *Naomi Tetteh* purchased the *Beautiful in Blue* for the family of Retired U.S. Ambassador Sue K. Brown.



Naomi Tetteh - May 22, 2024 at 08:50 AM