



Joan DeJean

December 2, 2023

Joan DeJean, passed away peacefully at her home in Rittenhouse Square on December 2, 2023 at the age of 75. She was born in Opelousas, Louisiana to her late parents, George and Aline DeJean (nee Genin). Joan was a distinguished trustee professor of Romance Languages at the University of Pennsylvania since 1988 and previously taught at Yale and Princeton Universities. She is the author of twelve books in French Literature, history, and material culture of the 17th and 18th centuries. She has been recognized and widely respected in many universities in the United States and in France. She will be missed by all who knew her. Her services were private.

Tribute Wall

WJ

“ I just finished reading *Mutinous Women* and I was blown away by the depth and breadth of the work. Very sorry to hear of her passing. Thank you, Professor.

Warren Eugene Duclos Jr - August 03, 2025 at 10:23 PM

AK

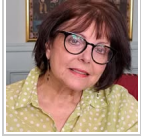
“ I am presently reading *Mutinous Women* and my ancestor Marie Grise is amply discussed. I have gone from knowing nothing about her to knowing more that I could have ever dreamed. And from her dedication I know that Marie Grise was one of Dr. DeJean's ancestors too.
Thank you.

Anastasia Kean - July 18, 2025 at 07:33 PM

ND

“ I am deeply sorry for only learning about Dr DeJean yesterday. I live near her hometown, Opelousas. In her book, "*Mutinous Women*", Dr DeJean spoke of my 8th grandparents. I descend from Laurent Laurent and Jeanne Mahou. Dr DeJean, in her book, revealed information about Laurent and Jeanne that I did not have. I am deeply grateful for her work, and sad that I cannot speak with her.
Nelson Durio
Opelousas Louisiana

Nelson Durio - May 01, 2025 at 12:02 PM



“ I am reading Joan's book," *Mutinous Women*". I am the proud ninth granddaughter of Anne Françoise Rolland! She was one of the survivors of the *Le Mutine* to reach New Orleans. There, her second husband was Laurent Bordelon of Le Harve, France. From their union became many descendants. You will find the name, "Bordelon" everywhere in Louisiana! I am so happy that someone, Joan, told the truth about these girls who were imprisoned and then shipped off, at that time, to a God forsaken land because their family no longer wanted them.

Thank you Joan! I know you have earned your place in Heaven along with other *Mutinous Women*!!

Wanda Bordelon Roussarie

Wanda Roussarie - March 30, 2024 at 01:08 PM

BH

“ Joan and I were roommates in our first two years of college. What fun we had! She was brilliant and knew even then what she wanted to do in life, and clearly accomplished all of that and more. I'm sorry we lost touch over the years.

Beth Henderson - March 24, 2024 at 01:01 PM

RB

“ I was assigned one of her books in our French history class in college-a true master of her craft.

Robert Baratheon - February 01, 2024 at 02:24 AM

HA

“ I'm so sad to hear of the passing of Joan DeJean. I am working on my second book, set at the turn of 18th century in Paris, and her books and writings have been so valuable in my research I was planning on reaching out to her to share my thanks. It's lovely to see how she has connected with so many researchers and writers throughout her career. Her work is extraordinary and I will be forever grateful to her.

Harriet Constable

Harriet - January 12, 2024 at 06:23 AM

JG

“ My sisters and I are descendants of Marie Daudin, one of the Mutinous Women. A mutual contact who was helping us sort out family history connected us with Joan. She became a dear friend and we even did an Alliance Francaise event together. Joan was an extraordinary historian and writer. Much more importantly, she was an extraordinary person. I feel truly blessed to have known her.
Joan Guttmann (Penn '75)

John Guttmann - December 08, 2023 at 10:03 AM

JG

Apologies. John Guttmann (Penn '75)

John Guttmann - December 08, 2023 at 10:35 AM

JG

Apologies for the typo. It is John Guttmann (Penn '75)

John Guttmann - December 08, 2023 at 10:36 AM

AL

Chère Joan, I wish I could have talked to you one more time before you left .. The best talks! About beautiful things, about Paris, about archives and your next project, along with a little gossip, of course. You are so much fun, so passionate, so erudite! We will miss you dearly here in Chicago , where you contributed to so many great events. Merci pour tout!

Aimée Laberge - December 11, 2023 at 06:53 PM

MF

My book group in Portland, Oregon plans to read her Paris book and I looked forward to talking again with her about her experiences. My exchanges with her about her life and books were so thoughtful and interesting!!! She is an eloquent writer. I am glad Penn honored her in the past year !! I shall miss her emails and calls but her writing will be a comfort to me and to others. I am sorry to learn of this loss!

Marcia Freed, MD

marcia freed - December 30, 2023 at 06:12 PM

AM

Querida Joan, aún tenía la esperanza de hablar contigo. Muchas gracias por todo tu cariño y ha sido un regalo conocerte. Seguirás escribiendo allí donde estés. Desde Madrid. Amalia

Amalia - January 08, 2024 at 06:20 AM



Searched for you today only to find your obit.. My your rest in peace . I wish I was able to meet you and learn more of my ancestry. After our Mayeaux family reunion June,2022, I learned of and purchased your book Mutinous Women. My great great grand aunt was Marie Louise Brunette. I will keep you in my heart .

Marcelle Arden - January 16, 2024 at 04:45 PM

BH

The Athenaeum of Philadelphia staff and board express their deep sympathies to Joan's family. She was a tremendous scholar and a beloved member of The Athenaeum for more than a quarter century. We were pleased to host her for a program on Mutinous Women last year. She will be greatly missed.

Beth Hessel - February 14, 2024 at 11:10 AM

JR

*I had hoped to write Joan and express my profound appreciation to her for her extraordinary book *Mutinous Women: How French Convicts Became Founding Mothers of the Gulf Coast*. As I was seeking Joan's address, I discovered that I was too late to give her my thanks. So now I must offer them only to her friends and family. What a fine gift she has given in putting flesh on the skeletal remains of these women lost in the archival collections of Paris and other obscure primary sources in Louisiana and elsewhere. In Joan's hands, these women are no longer mere names and dates on a descendant's genealogy chart. She breathes renewed life into them, especially the 61 (of 132) deported from France in chains who survived the voyage to Louisiana in 1720. She has rescued these women from the infamy of their alleged, indeed, invented crimes and debunked the narrative that has smeared them. The field of history is indebted to her, as both I and the many other descendants of these women are. --John Rachal, G8 grandson of Pierre Rachal and Marie Anne Benoist. (johnrachal923@gmail.com)*

John Rachal - October 07, 2024 at 01:58 AM

CA

“ *Such a lovely lady I had the pleasure to meet her at hup*

Cassie alfano - December 03, 2023 at 05:19 PM