



**IWA**  
INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN  
ASSOCIATES

For Immediate Release

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For further information, contact:

Pilaar Pantoja

IWA Organizational Manager

312-263-1421, [iwa@iwachicago.org](mailto:iwa@iwachicago.org)

International Women Associates  
Sadly Announces the Death of Its Founder  
Doe Thornburg

International Women Associates (IWA) Founder Doe Thornburg, OBE (born August 2, 1922), died peacefully on May 25, 2018.

A major figure in Chicago's international community, Thornburg's legacy of working toward a more just and peaceful world will live on through IWA, which she founded in 1978. Thornburg continued to work in and inspire IWA until the week before her death.

An extensive obituary about Thornburg's life can be found below.

A celebration of life service is planned for September 12, 2018 from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. at The Arts Club of Chicago.

Contributions honoring Thornburg may be made to the *IWA Doe Thornburg Scholarship Fund* care of International Women Associates, 307 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 702, Chicago, IL 60601. For further information, contact IWA at 312-263-1421 or at [iwa@iwachicago.org](mailto:iwa@iwachicago.org).

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## Doe Thornburg – Founder of International Women Associates

Marie Dora “Doe” Thornburg died peacefully on May 25, 2018. Doe Thornburg (née Wettlaufer) was born in Boston on August 2, 1922, the eldest of eight siblings, all of whom preceded her in death.

Doe attended Boston’s Northeastern University, Chandler Business School, and Malkin Conservatory where she studied voice and piano. Her upbringing was greatly influenced by her paternal grandmother who, on numerous occasions, took her to Europe to complete her education in the fashion of the Grand Tour. As World War II was beginning, Doe joined the Red Cross as one of its spokespersons and organizers.

After Doe came to Chicago, she served on the Boards of the Lyric Opera Guild, Hull House, the Museum of Contemporary Art (Women’s Board), the American Cancer Society, International House, the International Visitors Center, and the Chicago Tourism Council, as well as on committees of Chicago Seminars on the Future and Know Your Chicago.

For a number of years, Doe was National President of the English-Speaking Union. For her untiring efforts on behalf of this organization in improving the relations between Great Britain and the United States, she was honored by Queen Elizabeth II as a “motivator of people” and was made an officer in the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.).

Doe also served on the national Board of COSERV, an organization affiliated with the U.S. State Department’s efforts to establish community cooperation for its Leaders and Specialists program. In 1978, while working with Chicago’s International Visitors Center (a member of COSERV), Doe recognized the need for a separate organization focusing exclusively on women from different international cultures and backgrounds living in Chicago and founded the International Women Associates (IWA). Its mission was “to promote understanding and cooperation among Chicago-area women of all nations.”

Of all Doe’s many contributions, International Women Associates was her proudest. Her vision was one of world unity in the face of cultural, political and social conflict. She believed that bringing women of diverse backgrounds together created opportunities for understanding and appreciating what makes us world citizens. At the time of her death, IWA membership had grown to over 500 women from 60 countries. Through participation in language, culture, and activity programs, as well as in larger public meetings, IWA members’ horizons are broadened, consciousness lifted, and friendships diversified. Its quest to put global understanding into action is inspired by Doe’s mantra, “to see the sacred in everyone.”



IWA honored Doe in 2012 on the occasion of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday by creating the IWA Doe Thornburg Scholarship. The purpose of the scholarship is to invest in students so that they become engaged global citizens. Doe believed that there is no better way to understand a

different culture than to have direct interaction with that culture. For this reason, the scholarship was created to help female college students pursue their dream of studying abroad. To date, the IWA Doe Thornburg Scholarship is offered at Columbia College, Northwestern University, School of the Art Institute and University of Illinois at Chicago.

Doe was “one in a million,” a truly remarkable individual in spirit and physicality right up until the end. She had a beautiful smile, exuded an elegant sense of style and lived an engaged, purposeful life.

In 1972 Doe married Robert Thornburg, owner and director of Thornburg Clinical Laboratory, who died in 1997. In “Bob” she met her soul mate.

She is survived by seven nieces and nephews: Catherine Wettlaufer Buehler (Jay), Robert Alan Doonan (Becky), Suzanne Marie Doonan, Andrew David Doonan (Sherron), William Lyons Doonan, Rear Admiral Michael Wettlaufer (Tina), and Professor John S. Wettlaufer (Ulrika) and their children, as well as by her cousins. She is also survived by stepdaughter Carol Kathleen Thornburg and stepson David Thornburg (Norma).

Doe will be interred in her family burial plot in Massachusetts during a private family service in the fall.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the *IWA Doe Thornburg Scholarship Fund*, in care of International Women Associates, 307 N Michigan Avenue, Suite 702, Chicago, IL 60601, 312-263-1421 or online at [www.iwachicago.org](http://www.iwachicago.org).

A celebration of life service will be held at The Arts Club of Chicago from 4-7 p.m. on September 12, 2018. For further information, contact [iwa@iwachicago.org](mailto:iwa@iwachicago.org)

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