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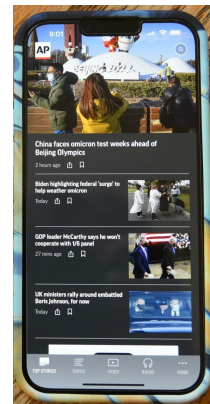
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# Connecting

May 13, 2023

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**Friday night in the Boston Red Sox Photo Pit. Courtesy of the Red Sox media team. AP Photo/Michael Dwyer**

Colleagues,

Good Saturday morning on this May 13, 2023,

**Elise Amendola**, one of the most talented and beloved stars in the AP photo galaxy, died on Thursday at her home in North Andover, Mass., at the age of 70 after a 13-year battle with ovarian cancer.

I decided that rather than wait until what would normally be the next edition of Connecting on Monday to tell her story, I am bringing it to you in this special Saturday edition. If you would like to share a memory of working with Elise, whose entire 38-year AP career was spent in Boston, please send it along for use Monday.

A Connecting colleague since 2016, Elise related memories of her career in the newsletter when she retired from the AP in 2021 and I am including them in this issue.

The AP community was notified of her death Friday by [J. David Ake](#), AP's director of photography and one of her early mentors. Here is what he had to say:

*I'm not really sure I have the right words for this one. Longtime and recently retired Boston photographer Elise Amendola passed this morning after a long battle with cancer.*

*The word legend is often overused, but in this case, it's not big enough. She was a superior photographer but, more importantly, a fabulous person. She had so many friends in the AP that as I write this, I keep stopping to acknowledge messages in*

*popup windows. That alone is a maker of what she meant to the people she worked with.*

*I have lots of memories of chasing candidates around New Hampshire with her every four years. Her coverage of the first Clinton presidential campaign should be a textbook. But my favorite memory is the look she gave me when I misspelled her name in a caption during The Masters. It was priceless. I never made that mistake again on countless sporting assignments we did together thereafter.*

*It didn't matter how cold, hot, wet, or miserable an assignment was; Elise never caved and stuck with it until a picture was made. If I had to describe what drove that determination, I would say "joy."*

*She will be missed.*

From her obituary, presented here after being shared by another of her friends and mentors, **Bill Sikes**, retired Boston photo editor:

*Elise preferred not to have a formal service or flowers. Instead, she'd love for you to go to the courts and shoot a basketball from the baseline, her best midrange jump shot. Or make an assist in some way, Elise loved to make a good pass. She'd also be grateful for donations in her name to St. Jude's.*

Some of the best of her news photos that moved on the wire are included in the AP story on her death, written by **Caleb Jones** of the Boston bureau. (A special thanks to Bill Sikes and Chuck Zoeller for providing photos.)

Paul

## Associated Press photographer Elise Amendola, who documented decades of sports and news, dies at 70



**In this image provided by Harvard University photo, Associated Press staff photographer Elise Amendola poses in Harvard Yard on May 2015, in Cambridge, Mass. (Stephanie Mitchell/Harvard University photo via AP)**

**By CALEB JONES**  
**The Associated Press**

Renowned Associated Press photojournalist Elise Amendola — a determined, joyous and patient journalist who masterfully photographed pivotal global news and sporting events spanning decades — has died. She was 70.

Amendola, who recently retired from the AP, died Thursday at her home in North Andover, Massachusetts, after a 13-year battle with ovarian cancer, her wife and fellow photographer Mary Schwalm said Friday.

Amendola documented many important moments in history, including the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Boston Marathon bombing, the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, U.S. presidential campaigns, and many Super Bowls, Olympics, World Series and other major sporting events.

“I owe the AP for our beautiful life,” Schwalm told the AP Friday. “I first met Elise when I was a photo runner at the Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia. By Athens in 2004, I was a staff photo editor on the sports desk and we’d become friends. I had the pleasure to edit her photos ... It was so easy, she never missed.”

The two worked together for years — Schwalm in New York and Amendola in Boston, often collaborating on assignments.

In the fall of 2006, Schwalm said she left her photo editing position in New York to live with Amendola in North Andover. “Seventeen years of pure joy, 11 of them as her



wife,” she said. “I am heart broken.”

Her longtime friend and teammate, fellow Boston photographer Charles Krupa, described one of his favorite photographs that Amendola made when the two were on assignment together covering golf.

Davis Love had just won the PGA championship in 1997.

“After a hard week of work in the rain,” Krupa remembered, “Love tipping his cap to the crowd with a panoramic rainbow tying the moment together as one.”

“I knew she had the angle on it, and when we were done with the day she absolutely nailed that picture. She nailed pictures like that throughout her career,” Krupa said. “(Love) found his pot of gold that day, and Elise did too.”

Amendola started her career with the AP wire service as a freelancer in the early 1980s before being hired onto staff in 1983. She retired in 2021. She was born in New York and was a graduate of Tufts University.

“The word legend is often overused, but in this case, it’s not big enough,” said Associated Press Director of Photography David Ake in a note to staff. “She was a superior photographer but, more importantly, a fabulous person.”

Ake remembered his days “chasing candidates” around New Hampshire with Amendola.

“Her coverage of the first Clinton presidential campaign should be a textbook,” Ake said. “It didn’t matter how cold, hot, wet, or miserable an assignment was; Elise never caved and stuck with it until a picture was made. If I had to describe what drove that determination, I would say ‘joy.’”

AP business photo editor Peter Morgan first met Amendola at the Boston bureau around 1980, when she brought in tennis photos for consideration. Morgan was trying to get started as a stringer at the time, and worked with her on dozens of assignments over the following decades.

“Elise was one of the greats — not just as a photographer, but as a person,” Morgan said. “It was a joy to know you would be working on the same assignment — her presence guaranteed good photos and good company.”

AP photographer Julie Jacobson said she admired Amendola and her work before the two ever met, when she was still working for a newspaper in the 1990s.

“There weren’t a lot of women photographers who shot sports back then,” Jacobson said. “But she did, was good at it and she was one of a few whose bar I looked to when setting my own goals.”

Then Jacobson was hired as a staff photographer at the AP, and said she was “star struck” when she met Amendola.

“Meeting Elise for the first time at the Salt Lake Olympics in 2002 was really exciting for me,” she said. “We would end up working together multiple times at various events through the next 19 years or so, mostly sporting events. And I was always star struck.”

Jacobson said Amendola was the “the epitome of team player, happy to shoot anywhere and share knowledge with the rest of the crew.”

More importantly, she said, Amendola treated everyone with respect. “As good as she was, no one was beneath her,” Jacobson said.

Bill Sikes, a retired Boston AP photo editor, recalled a moment after the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013.

“Elise and her longtime teammate Charlie Krupa slept in the lobby of the Westin Hotel overnight so not to be forced outside the police perimeter that had been set up around the site,” Sikes said. “The next morning, Elise went to the upper floors of the hotel and knocked on doors till she found a room that provided a view of both bombing sites. She rented that room so all AP platforms had that vantage point for the remainder of the week.”

Remembering her dedication to the craft, Sikes said, “There was never a doubt she would deliver compelling photos from every type of assignment, no matter the challenges.”

Amy Sancetta, a fellow retired AP photographer, remembered her friend on Friday.

“She fought her illness with the same tenacity, courage and good nature that she carried in all aspects of her life,” Sancetta said. “Elise never, ever gave up: not climbing the hill on 18 at Augusta, not freezing all day at the base of an Olympic ski mountain, and not with cancer. Working, playing hoops, enjoying her life and her friends and her beloved wife Mary Schwalm, Elise showed her joyous spirit and firm determination.”

Schwalm said Elise, who loved basketball, preferred to not have a service or flowers.

“She’d love for you to go to the courts, and shoot a basketball from the baseline, her best midrange jump shot,” Shwalm said in an email to the AP. “Or make an assist in some way, Elise loved to make a good pass.”

Click [here](#) for link to this story.

## ELISE AMENDOLA OBITUARY



**In early April, Mary Schwalm posted on Facebook: Happy Anniversary to us! The 11 year anniversary gift is steel. This hard, tough metal is known for its durability and strength; the perfect metaphor for your marriage at this point. #truth.**

Elise Frances Amendola, of North Andover, MA, passed away peacefully at home with her wife by her side following a 13-year battle with ovarian cancer on May 11, 2023. Born in Queens, NY, and raised on Long Island, Elise graduated from Tufts University before embarking on a 38-year career as a staff photographer for the Associated Press. Assignments took her to many interesting places including the Berlin Wall during its fall; the UN as Colin Powell waved a test tube full of anthrax, Logan Airport for the arrest of the shoe bomber; Washington, DC for presidential inaugurations; all across the USA for political campaigns, and even to Julia Child's personal kitchen!

Based in the competitive sports city of Boston, Elise not only photographed news, but covered thousands of regular-season sporting events. She was tapped to cover numerous international competitions over the years, including World Cup Soccer, Summer and Winter Olympics, Ryder Cup, Super Bowls, Masters, and was named the Associated Press top sports photographer in 1994.

She fought her illness with the same tenacity, courage and good nature that she carried in all aspects of her life. Elise never, ever gave up; not climbing the hill on 18 at Augusta, not freezing all day at the base of an Olympic ski mountain, and not with cancer. While working, playing hoops, enjoying her life and friends and her beloved wife Mary Schwalm, Elise shared freely her joyous spirit and firm determination. Her loss will leave a great hole here on earth in so, so many hearts. I know that mine is broken.

Elise preferred not to have a formal service or flowers. Instead, she'd love for you to go to the courts and shoot a basketball from the baseline, her best midrange jump shot. Or make an assist in some way, Elise loved to make a good pass. She'd also be grateful for donations in her name to St. Jude's.

Elise is survived by her wife, Mary and their cat, Megabyte, her brother Carl Amendola of Los Angeles, and she also leaves behind cousins, nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her brother Edward Amendola of Shoreham, Long Island, her parents Ella (Galeano) and Edward Amendola of Massapequa, Long Island, and a beloved dog Jpeg.

Click [here](#) for link to this obituary.

## Elise's retirement farewell in Connecting issue of Oct. 15, 2021



**Me in my Miata ready to go work out.**





Patriots VP of Communications Stacey James presenting me with a Patriots' jersey at halftime of my last game.



Me on the Patriots Jumbotron during my last game (the Brady comeback to Gillette game).



**(Elise provided the above photos and captions that ran with her retirement story.)**

**ELISE AMENDOLA** - Vin Alabiso (Photo Editor in Boston) hired me as a “summer relief” photographer at first, and then transitioned me into full-time staff photographer at the Boston bureau in 1983. Technically, Hal Buell (Director of Photography in NY) hired me, but I don’t think he would have heard of me if it wasn’t for Vin.

I first met Vin while shooting tennis at the Virginia Slims event at Boston University’s Case Center as a stringer. I shot B/W film and shipped it by taxi to the bureau where Vin, as the new night photo editor, processed, edited and put pictures on the wire. After a week of covering the tennis and speaking to Vin on the phone, we met in person. He offered me more assignments.... especially spot news. I remember many phone calls in the early morning or late nights for big fires during the early 80’s because there was an active arson ring in Boston that took years to solve. Vin was my first and most significant mentor. He was a taskmaster and totally schooled me in the ways of journalism. I had been more of a PR-ish photographer (with an interest in sports), and he saw that I needed some toughening up! Vin was a fabulous editor over the lightbox, and also had an uncanny ability to foresee how events would unfold, which I think is an important skill for a photojournalist.

Other mentors over the years supported me and gave me opportunities to learn and improve....both locally and on travel assignments. I learned lots from Toby Massey during NH primaries, conventions and in DC. David Ake was super supportive while I was on the Hillary campaign in 2008. Brian Horton assigned me to many tennis and golf majors, including 10 Masters, and numerous post seasons of baseball, football and basketball, and was often on the scene as the editor in charge. Mike Feldman and, after him, Denis Paquin continued to offer those great sports assignments for me, including overseas coverage of a dozen Olympics and five World Cups. Working with photo editor Tony Hicks at British Opens, Wimbledon, Olympics and World Cups was an absolute dream. It was wonderful to be part of those assignments that required immense amounts of planning and technology. AP’s teamwork is truly amazing!

I enjoyed many travel assignments during my 38 years and 5 months as an AP photographer, but was always glad to come home to Boston. I never gave a thought to transferring to another bureau because I had the most awesome colleagues here and we continued to work hard on interesting and important stories. Starting out in the 80’s with Dave Tenebaum, Paul Benoit, and Peter Southwick.....continuing with more “transient” photo colleagues as Jim Gerberich, Susie Walsh, Lawrence Jackson, Chitose Suzuki.....and ending after many years with Bill Sikes, Stephan Savoia, Steven Senne, Charlie Krupa and Michael Dwyer. They’ve all been like brothers and sisters to me! Highlight stories for me included the fall of the Berlin Wall; NH Primary coverage and other election coverage in general; 9/11 aftermath; Boston Marathon bombing.

Among my favorite hobbies is playing basketball and working out at the Y. I will have plenty to do in retirement! The iPhone 13 Pro has an awesome camera, and I’ve already started to shoot with it. My wife, Mary Schwalm, (former AP staffer) is a professional photographer as well, and we have embarked on some great trips. A favorite was our trip to the Galapagos Islands. We’re now planning an Alaskan cruise in 2022. In the meantime, our dog, Jpeg, and cat, Megabyte, are glad to have me around the house.

Please keep in touch, everyone...

## A photo gallery of pictures of Elise Amendola



AP photographer Elise Amendola chats with Senior Photo Equipment Manager Tim Donnelly, center, and Director of Photography Santiago Lyon, right, at the Whistler Sliding Centre during the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, Feb. 13, 2010. (Photo by Tom Curley)



AP photographer Elise Amendola transmits remotely from the USS Constitution in 1997. (Uncredited)



Boston photographer Elise Amendola prepares her gear at John McCain's election night headquarters, the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix, Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2008. (AP)





Boston photographers Elise Amendola, left, holding her 35th-anniversary certificate, and Charles Krupa, right, holding his fifth APSE award for AP's best annual photo portfolio, share a high-five in the bureau, Thursday, May 24, 2018, in Boston. (AP Photo/Michael Dwyer)



Boston Associated Press staff photographer Elise Amendola kneels on the sideline to cover an NFL wild-card playoff football game between the New England Patriots and the Tennessee Titans, Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020, in Foxborough, Mass. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa)





Associated Press photographer Elise Amendola, second from right rear, photographs Villanova players celebrating their 71-59 win over Texas Tech in an NCAA men's college basketball tournament regional final, Sunday, March 25, 2018, in Boston. (AP Photo/Mary Schwalm)





Boston Associated Press staff photographer Elise Amendola photographs from center field at Fenway Park during Game 1 of the World Series baseball game Tuesday, Oct. 23, 2018, in Boston. (AP Photo/Bill Sikes)



Elise at Fenway -- Elise Amendola poses at Fenway Park's Green Monster during World Series festivities, Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013, in Boston. (AP Photo/Bill Sikes)



Elise covers NFL -- Elise Amendola photographs an NFL football game between the New York Jets and New England Patriots, Sunday, Sept. 16, 2012 in Foxborough, Mass. (AP Photo/Bill Sikes)

## Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that reaches more than 1,800 retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013. Past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Midwest vice president based in Kansas City.



Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

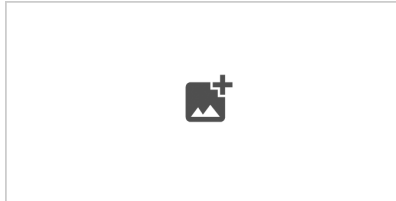
- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.
- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.
- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.
- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.
- **"A silly mistake that you make"** - a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.
- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.
- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

**Paul Stevens**

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