

Reno remembered as 'Janny' by sister in Stuart

Former Martin Co. commissioner recalls life

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Throughout the nation Janet Reno is being remembered as the no-nonsense, first female U.S. attorney general.

Maggy Hurchalla of Stuart, a former Martin County commissioner, remembers her sister "Janny" paddling in the moonlight and playing "Sardines."

Reno, 78, died early Monday morning from complications related to Parkinson's disease at the family home west of Miami. Before serving as the country's top law enforcement official for eight years under President Bill Clinton, she was state attorney in Dade County for 14 years.

"She had a reputation as a hard-nosed prosecutor," Hurchalla said Monday, "but she was also a soft-hearted social worker who cared about people and cared about justice. Most people don't

know what a joy of life she had. She loved life and she loved Florida."

Hurchalla's fondest memories of her sister include the two kayaking out the St. Lucie Inlet before dawn to see the sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean.

"My sister was a great adventurer," Hurchalla said. "We've paddled on half the rivers in Florida. We've also gotten stuck in the mud on dirt roads and lost in the middle of nowhere several times."

Hurchalla, a stalwart of the Treasure Coast environmental movement, and her sister got their love of nature from their father, Henry Olaf Reno, and mother, Jane Wood Reno, who built the family's house on 20 acres bordering the Everglades.

"That's where Maggy and Janny ("I was the only one who got to call her that," Hurchalla said. "To everyone else, she was Ms. Reno or Janet.") played "Sardines" with gaggles of giggling children.



JASON NUTTLE/TREASURE COAST NEWSPAPERS
Former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno (right) laughs with her sister Maggy Hurchalla during a luncheon on Jan. 28, 2005, at the Hutchinson Island Marriott in Stuart.

"In Sardines, the person who's 'It' goes and hides," Hurchalla explained between laughs, "and everyone goes hunting, each one alone, to find 'It.' When you find 'It,' you hide with him. Pretty soon,

Remembering Janet Reno

First female U.S. attorney general dies at 78 from complications related to Parkinson's disease, **see Page 1B.**

you've got Janny and a bunch of kids packed in the hiding place like sardines, giggling and tickling each other until the last kid finds them."

Reno also was known for playing "Blackbeard the Pirate," who would draw mustaches on kids with burnt cork from a wine bottle and tell them stories around the campfire.

In a case of art imitating life, Reno (with help from her sister) played a children's court judge on a 2013 episode of the cartoon show "The Simpsons."

Reno, who had trouble speaking because of her Parkinson's, read one-liners; Hurchalla handled the longer passages of the script.

Reno and Hurchalla donated their pay

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82°/66°

Rain: 10%

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Reno

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for the work to the Innocence Project, an organization that uses DNA testing to exonerate people who are wrongfully convicted.

Georgetown University recently

established the Janet Reno Endowment, which will give an annual award to a woman working to help children at risk of entering the juvenile justice or child welfare systems.

Reno was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1995 while still serving as attorney general. For the past few years, Hurchalla has been dividing

her time between her home in the Rocky Point neighborhood of Stuart and the Reno house to care for her sister.

"She had a wonderfully good life for a number of years," Hurchalla said. "Just a week ago she was out on the front porch in her wheelchair, listening to the peacocks in the front yard and enjoying the breeze."