

NOTABLE MISSOURIANS AND TIGERS COLLECTION

Kate Spade, Founder of Luxury Fashion Brands *Kate Spade New York and Francis Valentine*



Katherine Noel Valentine Brosnahan (1962-2018) graduated from St. Teresa's Academy, an all-female Catholic high school in Kansas City, Missouri. She met her husband, Andy Spade, in 1983 while attending Arizona State University (B Jour '85), and in 1986, the couple moved to Manhattan where she worked as Senior Fashion Editor/Head of Accessories at *Mademoiselle* magazine. Kate Spade New York was founded in 1993, offering sophisticated handbags that became popular with both young and mature cosmopolitan women.

ARTIFACT: Pink, Black and White Vinyl Zip Wallet, Label: Kate Spade New York. c Late 2010s. Gift of L. Nichols. Portrait image: Kate Spade by Samantha Deitch/BFA.com.

In 1995, Mrs. Spade received a rising-star talent award from the Council of Fashion Designers of America and was named the Council's accessory designer of the year in 1997. By the next year, the company was earning \$28 million in sales. Her accessories empire helped define the look of the 1990s; her handbags became a status symbol and token of adulthood. In 2016, Spade launched a new collection of luxury footwear and handbags under the brand name "Frances Valentine." In 2017, she was inducted into the Entrepreneur Hall of Fame at the Henry W. Bloch School of Management at the University of Missouri, Kansas City.

Anna Wintour stated upon Spade's death in 2018:

"Everyone thought that the definition of a handbag was strictly European, all decades-old serious status and wealth. Then along came this thoroughly American young woman who changed everything. There was a moment when you couldn't walk a block in New York without seeing one of her bags, which were just like her: colorful and unpretentious."



In 2004, Spade published three books on etiquette, entertainment and fashion: *Manners*, *Occasions*, and *Style*.

ARTIFACT: *Style*
Book by Kate Spade. 2004.
Gift of N. Johnston.

Background Image Description: Kate Spade by Kenneth Willardt, Fifteenth Annual Council of Fashion Designers of America Awards Booklet, 1995.