

## On New Canaan mother Jennifer Farber Dulos' 51st birthday, friends and family reflect on their loss

By DAVE ALTIMARI | HARTFORD COURANT



Jennifer Farber Dulos

For Jennifer Farber Dulos and her closest friends, her birthday every Sept. 27 was as much a milestone that marked the end of the hectic first month of school with their children settling into another year as it was a birthday celebration.

Friends said Farber Dulos spent much more time planning birthday parties for her five

children, including two sets of twins, than she ever did planning for her own. For her 50th birthday last year, there was no big party — she celebrated as she usually did with small gifts from her five children, a chocolate cake and maybe sneaking in a few of her biggest vice — peanut M&M's.

A year later, her 51st birthday

Norm Pattis issued a statement on behalf of Dulos, saying, “Fotis joins the family in thanking the police for their efforts. He has every hope that she will be found soon. He misses her and their children.”

Friday is a somber occasion for family and friends from Farmington, New Canaan and New York City coming only a few days after a darker reminder — it has now been more than four months since she was last seen on May 24. Authorities say she was a victim of a violent attack in the garage of her New Canaan home that occurred just moments after dropping her

children off at school.

“Sometimes it feels so surreal. It seems like only a few days ago I talked to her but then it also feels like it’s been years on this emotional roller coaster,” Caroline Buckley, one of Farber Dulos’ closest friends, said in a recent interview.

On Friday Carrie Luft, the spokeswoman for the Farber family, issued a statement commemorating Jennifer’s birthday, asking people to remember her by carrying out acts of kindness.

“Today, September 27, is Jennifer’s fifty-first birthday. We miss her more than words can say. In Jennifer’s honor, her family and loved ones would like to encourage gestures of kindness — send a loving note to a friend, assist a person in need, tell a child they’re special,” Luft said in the statement.

“Jennifer has now been missing for more than four months. The heartbreak goes on even as time moves forward,” she said.

The arrests of Farber Dulos’ estranged husband, Fotis Dulos, and his girlfriend Michelle Troconis, in connection with her disappearance and the widespread media attention surrounding the case has made it even more difficult for her

friends, they said.

Farber Dulos, they said, has almost become a footnote in the story of a missing woman who has become the subject of far-reaching theories about her disappearance by her estranged husband’s attorney, Norm Pattis. He has suggested that Farber Dulos may have staged her own disappearance in a plot similar to Gillian Flynn’s 2012 novel “Gone Girl,” in which a wife pretends to vanish to frame her husband for murder. Pattis also went public with a “revenge-suicide” theory, saying Farber Dulos may have taken her own life to prevent Dulos from getting custody of their five children.

“I miss my friend and her kids miss their mom and people can’t lose sight of the fact there are five wonderful children missing their mom,” Buckley said. “She had plans and dreams for all of her children and for herself and that’s all been taken away.”

As the summer melted away and more details came out about what state police believe happened in the garage of her New Canaan home, friends have come to realize that Farber Dulos may be dead and that they will never see her again.

The sadness of that thought is punctuated, they said, when

they see Dulos giving national television interviews and not expressing any concern for her. Privately they wait for “Justice for Jennifer” while also wondering if they will ever really know what happened to their friend in her final moments.

The case has received national attention and has prompted the creation of several private Facebook groups that post theories about the case daily. People in New Canaan are distributing bracelets that say, “Justice for Jennifer” and there signs around New Canaan honoring her.

In her statement Luft acknowledged the community support.

“Thank you to the New Canaan and Farmington-Avon communities for the ongoing support and solidarity. And, as ever, we are deeply indebted to the New Canaan and Connecticut State Police for their tireless and dedicated efforts in Jennifer’s case,” Luft said.

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