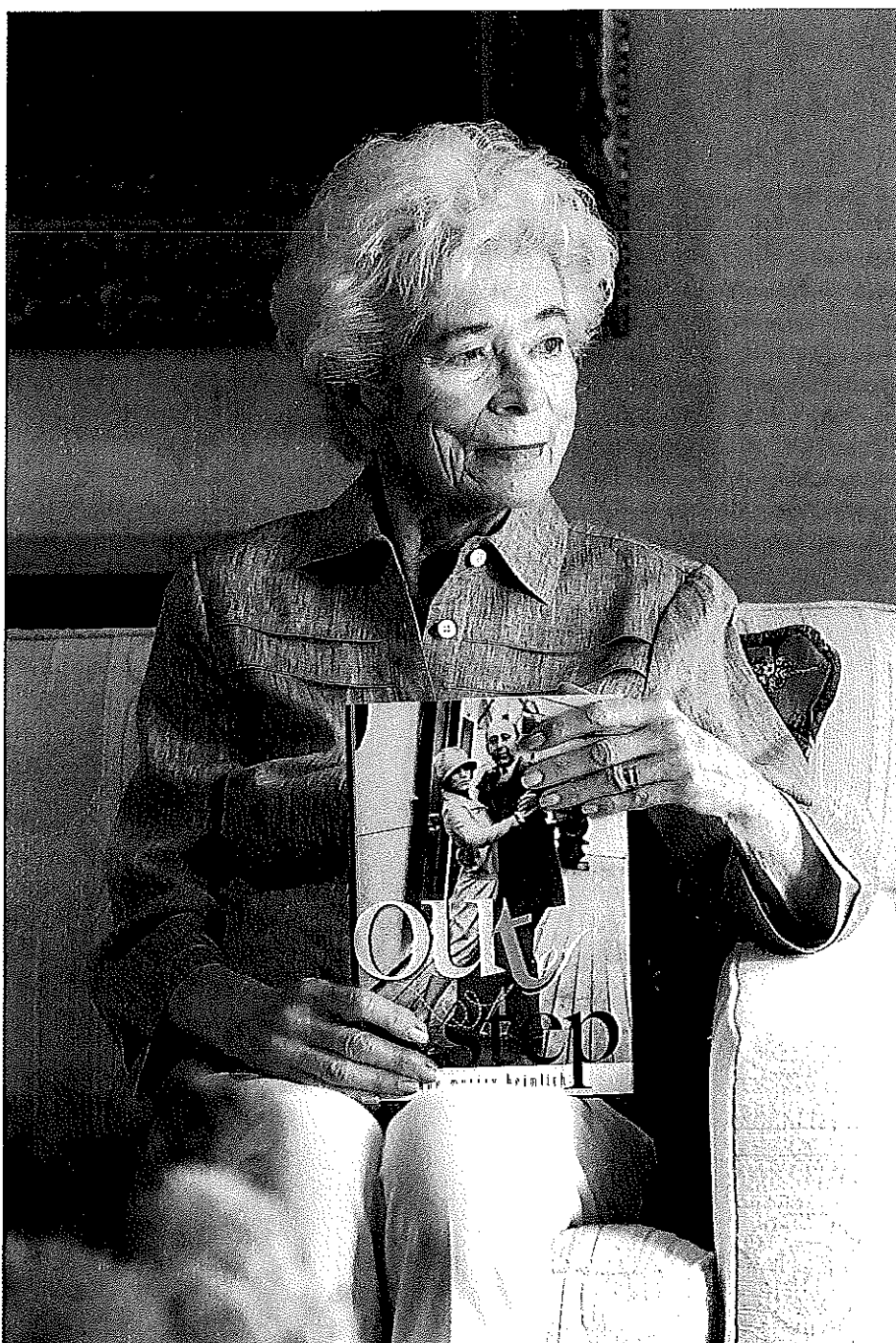


At Home at Last

Jane Murray Heimlich: No Longer "Out of Step"

BY PATRICIA GALLAGHER NEWBERRY

Photography by Ross Van Pelt



Jane Murray Heimlich has called many places home.

As a daughter of the famous dance couple Arthur and Kathryn Murray, Jane grew up in luxurious homes, apartments and schools, mostly on the East Coast.

After her marriage to Henry Heimlich, who would go on to become famous himself, came another set of addresses: A glitzy Madison Avenue apartment, a Rye, N.Y., ranch home, and then, after a 1970 move to Cincinnati, homes in Clifton and Hyde Park.

Now Jane calls the Deupree House in Hyde Park home. And as a new memoir lays out in poignant and sometimes painful detail, she finally seems to feel at home in a world where, as her book title discloses, she often felt "Out of Step."

Sharply pressed and fresh from the hairdresser, Jane answers the door of the Heimlichs' fourth-floor apartment at Deupree House and settles into one of two large white couches in the living room, where there is no orange in sight — but more on that later. Her voice is soft and low as she talks about the couple's early 2010 move to Deupree, her book and her life.

At 83, with Parkinson's disease and an arthritic shoulder, Jane was ready to leave her Hyde Park condo, the couple's last address, for the conveniences of Deupree. "We didn't do a lot of talking about whether to move or not," Jane says of the move. "I think it just felt right to be part of the Deupree community."

Deupree House, in turn, felt right welcoming the Heimlichs. "The first time I came here a lot of people popped out of their apartments to tell me how much they like it," she says.

New neighbors seem to like Jane's book as well, with many attending a book signing and asking about her life. "It's like a giant book club," Jane says. "The remark I hear most is 'I couldn't put it down.'"



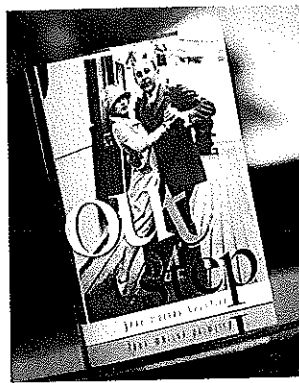
In some ways, Jane Murray Heimlich had been drafting "Out of Step" her entire life. A skillful writer from an early age, Jane stored away dozens of memories of the Murray family that came flooding back once she began the manuscript. She longed to write something personal after two-plus decades of medical writing. And she yearned to gain some understanding of her hypercritical father and lively-but-needy mother. "It sounds pat, but when I started researching my father, I learned how hard his early life was," she says.

Arthur Murray was born Moses Teichman in Austria-Hungary and raised, from age 2, in the Lower East Side slums of New York City. He escaped through dance, eventually creating an empire with more than 3,500 dance studios and the "Arthur Murray Party" on network television.

In public, Arthur and wife Kathryn were charming hosts of a popular TV show. At home, Arthur regularly berated his wife, Jane and her twin sister, Phyllis, "Out of Step" reports.

His lack of affection and controlling ways played a role in Kathryn's two suicide attempts, and left Jane feeling forced to play an unwelcome role as "Miss Sparkle Plenty" to please him.

"There was little nonsense in our house. There was always something to be achieved," Jane writes. "A subtle tension overhung the New York apartment: Father's abiding criticisms; Mother's needs to have him admire her, Phyllis and I suspended somewhere between."



"[Writing the book] was the happiest writing time I've ever had."

— Jane Heimlich

Thanks to her father's financial success, however, young Jane got a top education. With a newly minted degree from Sarah Lawrence College, she landed at *Look* magazine, answering readers' questions. By age 25, she met and married Henry Heimlich. Then came children, mentioned just briefly in her memoir: Phil, after two years of marriage; Peter, 15 months later; and twins Janet and Elisabeth, eight years after that. Writing periodically landed on the back burner.

Her parents' attempts to control her, meanwhile, remained constant. They orchestrated the young couple's wedding ("...which resembled an Arthur Murray convention," according to Jane); bought them the modern Madison Avenue apartment despite Jane's wish for Brownstone; decorated the apartment with nubby orange couches, which Jane considered hideous; and years later, when the Heimlichs had escaped the city for Rye, N.Y., built a weekend getaway of their own next door.

When Henry Heimlich was hired as chief of surgery at Jewish Hospital in 1970, Jane was more than happy to relocate — and leave the orange couches behind.



Life in Cincinnati was good. The Heimlichs found quality schools for their three younger children, while Phil, who would later become a Cincinnati politician, finished boarding school in New England. They explored Cincinnati's arts community and developed a circle of close friends.

For Jane, Cincinnati also brought new writing opportunities. Armed with

experience as a celebrity columnist in the East, she soon began a five-year stint as a decorating writer for the now-closed *Cincinnati Post*.

Then, in 1974, Henry Heimlich's discovery — that a sharp thrust to the abdomen could dislodge food and prevent choking — took the world by storm. "The Heimlich Maneuver turned our lives upside down," Jane writes.

As Henry enjoyed national attention, Jane suspected him of an infidelity that would remake her life. The rift in their marriage, she writes, "induced me to cut loose the shackles that bound me to the past and begin to become my own person."

An ensuing journey of self-discovery led to two books, and a turn as a health writer for the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. "Homeopathic Medicine at Home," published in 1980, and "What Your Doctor Won't Tell You," which followed in 1990, allowed her to both investigate the growing alternative medicine field and share her passion for it. But when her publisher suggested a revision of the 1990 title, Jane decided it was time for her own story. "Out of Step" was in her head, waiting to be told, she says now. "If it's inside you maybe it needs to be thought of."



Despite recalling some painful memories, writing the memoir did not evoke pain.

"It was the happiest writing time I've ever had," she says. "I didn't worry, 'What is my husband going to think, or my twin sister?' If you start worrying about people's reactions that throws you off track."

Still, she admits she could not have written the book while her parents were alive. Their deaths, in their 90s, gave her the freedom to speak her piece — with her husband's blessings. (He'll have a turn next, with "Heimlich's Maneuvers," a soon-to-be-released memoir of his own.)

What's next for the little girl who once felt so out of step? See more movies, watch more birds, perhaps teach writing — and revel, for a bit, in a limelight of her own making. Whatever feels most at home. ■

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