



DIPLOMATIC 911: Kathy Kemper's VIP neighbors to the rescue

By [The Reliable Source](#)



Kathy Kemper's Lowell Street home in flames. (Photo courtesy of Kathy Kemper)

One of the first on the scene: Eva Hafström, wife of Swedish Ambassador Jonas Hafström. She's a friend and client of Kemper, but also — who knew? — a former Stockholm police officer: A "very can-do, hands-on, seriously operational person," the coach told us Monday.

Hafström raced to the house and began coordinating with the firemen and police. Wearing Wellies, a thick rain coat, and a flashlight, the diplomat's wife was allowed to enter hours after the fire was extinguished. In the pitch dark, with water and smashed glass everywhere, she carried out clothing and art for safekeeping. "I brought some of the ballgowns home with me, so they were saved," said Hafström.

Kelsey and Christina Kemper Valentine, University of Southern California (USC) Trojans, 2013 and 2015 (Photo courtesy of USC)

A house fire, an absent family — and VIP neighbors to the rescue.

Kathy Kemper, a longtime D.C. tennis coach, was in California earlier this month when her cell phone started buzzing: Her Wesley Heights home was in flames. As firetrucks raced to battle the fire, Kemper — coach to local politicians and diplomats and fixture on the social scene — reached out to neighbors for information and help.





Tennis Coach Kathy Kemper
(Photo courtesy of Karen Ruckman)

It was a rare bright spot in the disaster, said Kemper: “I got a kick out of her because nothing fazes her.”

Another helpful VIP neighbor: Norwegian Ambassador Wegger Strømme (his wife is another client of Kemper’s) who came by to check on the wine cellar. “He thinks it’s probably going to be okay,” she said.

Officials believe the fire was triggered when a housekeeper cleaning Kemper’s fireplace dumped three-day old ashes in the trash not realizing there were live embers; the wind blew sparks onto the side of the house, setting the second and third floors ablaze. The family is moving into an condo.